

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WOODLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Woodland, Bishop Auckland

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114108

Headteacher: Mrs M Gordon

Lead inspector: Mr P M Allen

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 258483

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	33
School address:	Woodland Bishop Auckland County Durham
Postcode:	DL13 5RF
Telephone number:	(01388) 718 271
Fax number:	(01388) 718 271
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Robinson
Date of previous inspection:	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a very small primary school which serves a village which is part of a farming community between Bishop Auckland and Middleton-in-Teesdale. Just under half the pupils live in the village itself. There are 33 pupils on roll with a similar number of boys and girls. Virtually every pupil is of white UK heritage background. The pupils are taught in two classes. The first is for Reception children and those from Year 1 and Year 2. The second class, which is taught for half the time by the headteacher and for the other half by the part-time teacher, contains pupils from Years 3, 4, 5, and 6. Eight pupils are identified as having special educational needs (this proportion being above the national average), mainly concerned with moderate learning difficulties. Some, although not all of the children, have had experience of pre-school education. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, often significantly, but overall is broadly in line with what could be expected. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well below the national average. The school gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17531	Peter Allen	Lead inspector	Foundation stage English Geography Music Physical education Religious education
11474	Peter Berry	Lay inspector	
17310	Ann McAskie	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology History Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school** with a caring, community ethos. Good leadership and management help it to provide a good quality of education in which every child is valued. The quality of teaching is good and this is the main reason why, overall, pupils achieve well relative to their capabilities, even though standards vary from year to year. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's good leadership and management have helped the school to improve significantly since its last inspection.
- Teaching is good with a high level of commitment to the inclusion of all the pupils.
- Although overall the pupils achieve well, there are times when more could be expected of the higher attainers.
- There is a need to continue to develop the curriculum co-ordination roles to promote more active involvement in school improvement.
- The pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships have a significant impact on their learning.
- There is a need to further develop the arrangements for the formal assessing and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The quality of handwriting and presentation of work is variable.

The school has made very good improvement since its last inspection in February 2002 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses in the teaching of Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2. The main issues from the report have been tackled effectively. As a consequence, the quality of teaching for the younger children in school has improved dramatically, as has the provision for Reception children. The governing body's involvement in the leadership and management of the school has increased, with scope for further improvement. This is a much improved school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	A	A
mathematics	C	A	C	C
science	E	C	D	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The very low number of pupils involved in 2003 (4 pupils) require the above figures to be viewed with caution. Similarly, the very small number of pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 means that it is not possible to make secure judgements about standards overall. Nevertheless, evidence supports the judgement that **pupils' achievement is good overall** in English, mathematics and science. This shows improvement, especially at Years 1 and 2. Although this is a positive picture, a detailed scrutiny of work undertaken during the inspection indicated that there are times when more challenging work could have enabled the higher attainers to achieve more. In the Reception Year, the children are on course to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. The indications are that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are likely to be in line with national averages, except in science where they are likely to be above. This does not reflect the picture at Year 6 in 2003 when pupils did less well in science, but were in line with all and similar schools in mathematics and well above all and similar schools in English. Standards, can and do, vary from

year to year, reflecting the small groups where the effect of one pupil's score on the rest can be dramatic. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and, as a consequence, they achieve well. In spite of the resource limitations, standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 will be broadly in line with those typically seen. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Evidence collected during the inspection indicates that standards in art and design are good. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are nurtured very effectively.** Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good. Each of these strengths contributes positively to pupils' learning. Attendance is overall satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good;** it is usually very effective in literacy and numeracy lessons. Expectations of the pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are not always sufficiently high. There is a high level of commitment to catering for the needs of every child, although there are times when more could be expected of the higher attainers. Systematic monitoring of pupils' progress is underdeveloped. The school provides an imaginative curriculum with a strong emphasis on the creative arts. The curriculum for Reception children is good overall and the school is currently developing more opportunities for self-directed creative and practical activities. There are good links with the local community. Partnerships with parents are good; most are appreciative of the improvements they have seen in school over the past two years. The school's arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher's **good leadership and management** have resulted in a 'new' team of teachers working closely together with clear aspirations to offer the best provision they can for the pupils. There is recognition of the need to continue to develop the roles of the curriculum co-ordinators to bring about further improvements. Governance is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements; it has improved since the previous inspection. The governing body could usefully further develop its monitoring role so that all governors are involved.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Overall, parents are happy about the school. They feel that their children are happy, well taught and well cared for. However, a significant minority of parents feel that there is too much homework. The view of the inspection team is that the amount of homework is broadly appropriate but that the expectations are not appropriate for all pupils. The school recognises the need to consult parents in a review of this provision. Pupils enjoy coming to school and speak highly of their teachers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school should do to improve are:**

- Consistently provide more challenging work for the higher attaining pupils.
- Review and develop the monitoring and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Continue to develop the co-ordinator roles.
- Improve standards of handwriting and presentation.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

The very small number of pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 means that it is not possible to make secure judgements about standards. However, evidence collected during the inspection indicates that pupils' achievement is good overall.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good teaching and the pupils' very good attitudes help them to achieve well overall.
- Although overall pupils achieve well, there are times when standards could be higher for the higher attaining pupils.
- The evidence indicates that standards are above average in science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are variable.

#### **Commentary**

1. Because of the variation in the very small numbers of pupils involved, it is not possible to use performance data to reach secure judgements about standards and trends over time. Attainment on entry to the school can, and does, vary from year to year, sometimes dramatically. Some have skills in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in personal and social development which are higher than could be expected and some have skills which are well below. Currently, the relatively high number of children (seven) compared with most age groups, are in line to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals expected for children of this age, and a small number are likely to exceed them. Children's achievement is good because of the good quality of teaching they receive.
2. In the 2003 tests at the end of Year 2, the results of the very small cohort (just four pupils) were above national averages in writing and mathematics and below in reading. National data indicates similar standards when compared with those of similar schools. Results vary from year to year, depending on individual cohorts. This was dramatically the case in mathematics results in recent times; in 2001 the overall results were in the highest five per cent of all schools nationally whilst in 2002 they were in the lowest five per cent of all schools nationally. Currently, the indications are that standards at the end of Year 2 are likely to be in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics and above in science. This shows a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be lower, with pupils showing unsatisfactory achievement.
3. In the 2003 tests at the end of Year 6, the results (of just four pupils) were higher than the national average in English, in line in mathematics and slightly below in science. These standards are the same when compared with similar schools. Evidence collected during the inspection indicates that overall standards at the end of Year 6 are likely to be broadly in line with the national averages in English and mathematics and above in science. The standards in English and mathematics are not as high as those of the higher attaining Year 6 group identified in the previous report. Across the school there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards in science in both classes are higher than previously. The good and sometimes very good quality of teaching is having a significant impact on pupils' achievement and the high standards found.
4. The teachers work hard to set appropriate work for each of the wide range of year groups in both classes. Pupils achieve well overall because the teachers are largely effective in meeting individual needs; for example, in the questioning and in the work set. Pupils with special



educational needs are well provided for, enabling them to achieve well and sometimes very well. However, there are times when the tasks set are insufficiently challenging for the higher attainers, when more could be expected of them and they could be enabled to achieve more. The standards of handwriting and presentation of work by the pupils in the older class do not reflect the ethos of care so apparent in the school.

5. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 mainly match those typically seen, in spite of the provision of computers which is only adequate. Given the time constraints of the inspection, it was not possible to make firm judgements about standards in the other subjects, although there is evidence of good standards in art and design across the school.
6. Increasingly, the school is ensuring that the pupils' language and literacy skills and their competence in mathematics and information and communication technology are enabling them to make progress in all areas of the curriculum. The scrutiny of work undertaken during the inspection gave evidence of the effective promotion of writing skills in science and history. Overall, pupils are achieving well compared with their prior attainment. Pupils make similarly good progress irrespective of their gender and background. Good leadership and management of the school sets the tone for the high aspirations for pupils' achievement. The headteacher's own teaching inspires this. This is leading to the setting of challenging but realistic targets which are being well met. There is a shared commitment amongst the staff to continue to promote achievement and to further raise standards.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual development is good and their moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Attendance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show a keen interest in all that the school has to offer.
- Pupils behave very well, both in and out of lessons.
- There is an absence of bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour.
- There are very good relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and adults.
- Pupils work well, both independently and co-operatively.
- Pupils' personal development is very good, benefiting from the wide range of activities provided.
- Pupils' punctuality is good.

### **Commentary**

7. Pupils arrive at school enthusiastically, keen to participate in all the school's activities. They settle quickly into the daily routines, enabling a prompt, efficient start to the school day. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and they show pride when discussing their written work and their drawings. Pupils work well together, when required to do so; for example, when the Year 4 pupils were observed working in pairs, recording their 'television presenter' interviews with 'the first child on the moon'. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of pupils agreed that they like being at school and that the adults provide good support.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Black or Black British – Caribbean

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
32	0	0
1	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

- Behaviour is very good throughout the school and there have been no exclusions. There is an absence of all forms of oppressive behaviour and all pupils integrate successfully, despite the wide range of ages within each class. The youngest children were observed behaving impeccably during a period of free-choice activities, even though they were not directly supervised by the adults. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, allowing the school to function efficiently and effectively. Pupils have a high level of respect for each other and relationships are very good between the pupils and the adults.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. All aspects of personal, social and emotional development are well promoted in the Reception year and those children respond very well. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the revised curricular provision for pupils' personal, social and health education has made a positive contribution. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. The older pupils act as 'buddies' to their younger friends and this sometimes includes the 'buddies' presenting the school assemblies, based on themes such as friendliness, kindness and safety. The pupils benefit from their involvement in a wide range of charity work, community events and club activities. They learn to appreciate their own and others' cultural traditions.

### **Attendance**

#### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

The majority of pupils have a good attendance record. However, the level of attendance at the school is, overall, just satisfactory because of a relatively high absence rate due to holidays. This is despite the school's promotion of the importance of good attendance.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The good quality of the teaching and learning and the very good levels of care and support help to ensure that, overall, pupils are able to learn well. There is a good partnership with the parents and the school works closely with the local community.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning is consistently good across both classes, including the Key Stage 2 class which is shared by the headteacher and a part-time teacher. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, most significantly in Reception and Years 1 and 2 where teaching was judged unsatisfactory in the previous report. Pupils are now achieving better than they were previously. Although much informal assessment goes on, there is a need to establish a more structured programme for monitoring attainment and progress.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good with a high level of commitment to the inclusion of all pupils.
- Although teachers work hard to cater for the wide range of age and ability in each class, there are times when more could be expected of the higher attainers.
- There is a need to further develop the formal arrangements for assessing pupils' work.
- The pupils' learning is enhanced by their very good attitudes, relationships and behaviour.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4	12	2	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

## Commentary

10. The teachers work very hard, with a strong commitment to every pupil. The quality of teaching is good which is why pupils achieve well, overall. The older class benefits from the consistently good teaching which is shared equally by the headteacher and the part-time teacher.
11. Teachers have a good knowledge of all the areas of learning and subjects and this is especially evident in literacy and numeracy. The two national strategies are adapted well to fit with the school's needs. Teachers are increasingly making effective use of the new interactive whiteboards, especially in presentations in literacy and numeracy lessons. The planning is detailed, with clear learning objectives which usually take good account of the wide range of age and attainment within each of the two classes. The teaching assistant makes a good contribution, usually providing good support to groups of children in the younger class.
12. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection, most significantly in the younger of the two classes. The teacher of the class with Foundation Stage children (Reception) and pupils in Years 1 and 2 has worked diligently to cater for the different needs of the two groups and with significant success. Excellent relationships and a close knowledge of individual children and their needs underpin the teaching and learning which are very effective in promoting personal and social skills and self-esteem. The activities are usually imaginative and, currently, the provision is being improved by offering the Reception children more opportunities to learn through structured play, much of which is self-directed.
13. All staff make effective use of time and insist on high standards of behaviour. Each pupil is valued equally. Although teachers generally use methods and resources that enable the pupils to learn effectively, there are occasions when more could be expected of the higher attainers. In the scrutiny of work undertaken, there were instances of similar work being set for pupils of differing abilities, where more challenging work with higher expectations would have enabled pupils to achieve better, helping the pupils to reach higher standards. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, enabling them to achieve well and make good progress. Expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation need to be higher, most notably with the older pupils.
14. Pupils' very good attitudes enable them to respond well to the teaching. They usually show enjoyment and application, enabling them to be productive. Teachers are skilled at helping them to develop the skills to work both independently and also co-operatively as part of a group. When pupils work in groups the very good relationships are apparent.
15. Teachers use time, support staff and resources well; there are firm plans to increase the use of information and communication technology to further support the teaching and learning

across all areas of the curriculum. Homework is set on a regular basis, but sometimes the expectations are too high for some pupils. The school plans to review homework in consultation with parents to improve the situation.

16. Teachers mark work carefully, giving pupils a good picture of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The pupils are aware of, and work towards, their individual targets in literacy and numeracy. The staff's close knowledge of each individual results in much informal assessment which informs their planning and target setting. However, there is a need to review and develop formal assessment. The school's policy for assessment is out of date and does not reflect current practice. There is a need to formalise the arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress in a more systematic way.

## **The curriculum**

Curricular provision throughout the school is **good**. The school offers its pupils a broad, well-balanced, interesting curriculum with good opportunities for enrichment. The spacious well-maintained accommodation fully supports the curriculum.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- This is an inclusive school with good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is much improved.
- The effective links between subjects enhance learning.
- There is a strong emphasis on the creative arts.
- The school plays an important part in the life of the local community.
- Planned written activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for the higher attainers.

## **Commentary**

17. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including those for provision for religious education and collective worship. The curriculum is inclusive by ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The school has successfully addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection. The improvement in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is particularly significant.
18. The school provides an interesting range of activities which captures the pupils' interest and imagination and contributes very well to achievement in the school. Much work has been done to strengthen planning in order to provide programmes of work which ensure that learning is continuous. National guidance has been adapted to reflect the particular needs of mixed-age classes. Useful curriculum maps outline links between curriculum areas. In the Foundation Stage, there is a need to continue to ensure an appropriate balance between activities led by the teacher and those which children choose for themselves. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to achieve well.
19. Co-ordinators work very hard to cover all their areas of responsibility, but their roles need further development. The governing body curriculum committee oversees curriculum development and governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs monitor work in school. It would be beneficial if all governors could be more actively involved in this work.
20. The school provides well for personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. Good opportunities are provided both during and after the school day to develop learning through the very good use of visits and visitors to the school, a variety of clubs and inter-school sports activities. Of particular note is the value of the school's provision for the creative arts. All these activities make a very positive contribution to the pupils' personal development and their overall progress and achievement.

21. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The school's involvement in 'workforce remodelling' is leading to efficient use of particular curricular strengths. The accommodation, indoors and outdoors, is spacious, clean and 'child friendly'. The range of attractive displays of artefacts and pupils' work enhances the environment. Resource levels and quality are good, with the exception of some information and communication technology equipment which is old and unreliable and which the school intends to replace. The quality and range of reading and non-fiction books need review.

### Care, guidance and support

The school has **very good** procedures for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Within its caring, friendly environment the school provides good support, advice and guidance to its pupils. There are good procedures for involving the pupils in school affairs.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good procedures for pastoral matters.
- All staff provide a high level of supervision and they know the pupils very well.
- There are good procedures for the induction of new pupils into the school.
- Healthy lifestyles are very well promoted.
- Health and safety matters are, overall, well covered.

### Commentary

22. The school has a friendly, family atmosphere, in which staff know the pupils well. The parents gave high praise for the strong pastoral support and guidance given by the caring staff. During the inspection, very good supervision by each of the teachers and the other adults was observed.
23. The school has appropriate procedures to promote pupils' wellbeing. Encouragement and motivation of pupils is underpinned by a successful system of points and certificates, which rewards pupils' good work and other positive attributes, such as acts of particular friendliness to others. Cups are also awarded; for example, the Jubilee Shield for the Year 6 pupil who has demonstrated a particularly caring and helpful attitude. The pupils understand and appreciate the reasons for these awards. Older 'buddy' pupils make a significant contribution to the amiable and social environment within the school. Pupils' own views and ideas are sought and valued by the teachers.
24. Child protection measures are fully in place and welfare matters are given suitable priority; however, there is scope to further improve provision by enhanced training of all staff. The school makes very good use of the personnel of external agencies, notably the school nurse. The school's provision of personal, health and social education for its pupils is very good, including matters of safety and drugs awareness. Health and safety matters are generally well covered, although more regular inspections on housekeeping details would be beneficial. Healthy lifestyles are very well promoted, with an emphasis on sport and exercise. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are enhanced by the staff's personal knowledge of the pupils.
25. There is effective support for the particular needs of all the pupils, including those with special educational needs. Each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with the adults in the school. The good use of support staff allows the pupils to be given tuition in small groups, working on basic literacy and numeracy skills; this is particularly important given the wide spread of age and ability in each class, because it enables pupils to work at levels suited to their individual needs.
26. The induction procedures for those children starting school are very good and allow pupils to settle well and make immediate progress in their education. The school is successful in

meeting its aims and, overall, the very good care, guidance and support makes a positive contribution to the quality and standards of the education provided.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has **good** links with parents and its community. Parents have positive views of the school and they appreciate the recent improvements in the school's educational provision. There are good links with other schools and with the local community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The majority of parents expressed very positive views about the school.
- The school staff are easily approached and have close, regular contact with most parents.
- The homework requirements are appropriate for most pupils, but for some they may be excessive.
- There are good links with the pre-school groups, other primary schools and the two local secondary schools.

### **Commentary**

27. The high response rate to the inspection questionnaire was indicative of the very keen interest that parents have in the school's affairs. The majority of parents are enthusiastic about the school's educational provision and, in particular, about the improvements that have been made over the last two years. All parents praised the school's family, community atmosphere.
28. Whilst most parents indicated that the school staff are easily approached and matters of concern are dealt with promptly, there was a small number of individual concerns raised. The school needs to ensure that all parental concerns are dealt with immediately. Some local parents have daily contact with staff, but others, particularly some of those from further afield, are not always able to gain the same benefits. The school acknowledges that it could be more pro-active in seeking the views of parents.
29. The school provides a suitable range of information for parents, including regular newsletters and a good prospectus. The curricular information provided to parents is satisfactory. The school only holds one formal parent evening, at the end of the school year, but there is an informal evening in the autumn term and an open day is held each term. The pupils' end-of-year reports have useful comments on progress and future work targets, but there is less detail on attainment or achievement; the reports are enhanced by the contribution of pupils' own assessments.
30. The school has strong links with the local pre-school nursery and with the area's other primary schools. There are very good links with the two secondary schools, which enable a smooth transfer of the older pupils into the next phase of education. Community links are good, including regular visits from the 'neighbourhood engineer', who makes an important contribution to the school's science and technology work. Pupils benefit from many educational visits into the local area and the pupils undertake occasional environmental work, such as litter picks or bulb planting, to enhance and improve their local surroundings.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management of the school are **good**. The school has successfully overcome the serious weaknesses found at the previous inspection. The school is well managed and governance is satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clarity of vision of the headteacher has helped the school to move forward quickly in addressing the issues from the previous inspection.
- The headteacher is well supported by enthusiastic colleagues who are fully involved in all planning and decision making.
- There is effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's work by the headteacher.
- The role of the governing body has been significantly improved but all governors need to be involved in monitoring the work of the school.
- Co-ordinators need to be more actively involved in monitoring work in the classroom.

## Commentary

31. The headteacher provides a clear, shared educational vision for the school along with a determination to raise standards in all areas of the school's work. She has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is a close partnership between all staff members and this has led to a shared sense of purpose and has created an effective team with clear aspirations to offer the best provision for the pupils. Together the staff provide a very inclusive school, with a caring ethos, where every individual pupil is valued.
32. Intense monitoring by the headteacher, local education authority and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) has led to very rapid improvement. There is a clear agenda for continuing improvement. The school improvement plan is a useful tool which includes a thorough review of previous developments to establish a context for improvement. A professional development grid is regularly updated enabling the school to closely monitor progress in objectives set for the year. There is a sense of collective responsibility amongst staff fostered by the involvement in 'workforce remodelling'. Governance meets statutory requirements. The governing body is very supportive and now has a greater awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and also the role it has to play in the further development of the school. Good emphasis has been placed on addressing the issues identified at the previous inspection. The governing body could usefully further develop its role in monitoring of teaching and learning to include all members.
33. Management is thorough. Clear systems and procedures effectively underpin the work of the school. Governing body sub-committees meet each half term to discuss improvements and developments. They are very actively involved in spending decisions and are aware of the need to promote the school in order to maintain pupil numbers. Subject co-ordination is a developing area. The multiple responsibilities of staff make for difficulties. Some subjects have good action plans which indicate clear understanding of strengths and areas for development. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning effectively, but other staff are not yet fully involved in this process. Although the analysis of performance data has limitations with such small numbers of pupils, information is used to set targets for learning and to track pupils' progress through the school. Performance management strategies and professional development are being used effectively to acknowledge strengths and improve weaknesses.

### Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	146,634	Balance from previous year	14,136
Total expenditure	126,274	Balance carried forward to the next	20,360
Expenditure per pupil	*4,465		

*\*The high expenditure per pupil (as is usually the case in small schools) has a negative effect on the judgement about the value for money the school gives.*

34. Sound approaches to financial and resource management help the school to achieve its educational priorities and the principles of best value are well applied.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

35. At the time of the inspection there were seven Reception children in the younger of the school's two classes. Working alongside Year 1 and Year 2 pupils has a positive impact on the youngest children who aspire to do the tasks that their older classmates do. Over the two days of the inspection there was insufficient time to form secure judgements about each of the six areas of learning. However, the overall picture is a positive one, with children achieving well because of the good teaching they receive from the teacher and the classroom assistant.
36. Children make good progress in the Reception year. There are clear indications that they are in line to reach the Early Learning Goals (the standards children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception) and a small number are likely to exceed them. The standards reached and the quality of provision, which were criticised in the previous report, have improved significantly. Although the staff have a very close knowledge of the children and note progress in the planning, making a great deal of informal assessments, there is need to formally develop the means of monitoring individual progress through the 'stepping stones' which lead to the Early Learning Goals. Leadership and management are good. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator is very committed to the children, with very high aspirations to enable them to achieve as well as they are able.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching and learning are good, enabling the children to achieve well.
- The relationships between the teacher and the children are excellent, promoting the children's self-esteem.
- The children's very good attitudes and behaviour have a strong impact on the quality of their learning.
- The school is addressing the need to ensure that children have enough time for self-directed play.
- The outdoor play area is barely adequate.

### **Commentary**

37. The provision for children's **personal, social and emotional development** is **good** and permeates all areas of learning. The children make good progress because of the quality of teaching they receive. Children are given opportunities to show independence and equally they are encouraged to take turns and co-operate with others. The staff are currently developing more opportunities for children to make choices in the activities undertaken so that the work becomes more self-directed. The teacher and the classroom assistant constantly provide very good role models; they listen carefully to what the children have to say. They teach children friendliness, very good social skills and ways of relating to others with tolerance, consideration and respect.
38. The provision in **communication, language and literacy** is **good**. A good emphasis is given to developing the children's speaking and listening skills. The adults are modelling language all the time and the children listen well. The teacher's expectations are so subtle that the children, as young as they are, learn when they can speak out informally and when it is inappropriate to 'call out' when the whole class is together. Through favourite stories such as 'The Little Red Hen' and 'On the Way Home', they are developing a love of books. Role play is promoted



through good provision, such as that for a garden centre, a surgery and an airport. During the inspection, the children would have gained more benefit from the 'Chinese Restaurant' if more time had been allowed for an adult to develop the role play. Early reading and writing skills are being well developed, with children making good progress, often aspiring to the writing achievements of the oldest pupils in the class.

39. The provision in **mathematical development** is **good**. Mathematical experiences are well planned and taught, enabling the children to achieve well. When the full class is together, the teacher is successful in asking focused and appropriate questions; 'What do you think Reception?' she says and the children respond well. They become confident in their use of mathematical language; they recognise common shapes such as squares, circles and triangles with many showing an understanding of the difference between a square and a rectangle. Virtually all of them can count with some understanding from one to ten and back. Children are given good opportunities to practise the skills of counting, sorting and measuring.
40. Very little was seen in the area of **knowledge and understanding of the world**, although the planning and the work on display indicate that the children are provided with many valuable experiences to contribute to their knowledge of this area. They gain early geographical and historical skills by studying Victorian artefacts, visiting museums and finding out about the local area through visiting the local village and nearby Barnard Castle. They grow seeds and bulbs, build with construction kits and use the computers to develop early information and communication technology skills.
41. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on provision in the areas of **physical development** and **creative development**. Although the school has improved the provision for outdoor play, giving better opportunities than previously, it is still barely adequate. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling pencils, felt tips, scissors and brushes; they manipulate small construction equipment with dexterity. Many of them show good mouse control when working with the computer. In the creative area, work on display indicates a good standard, with children having opportunities to work, often creatively, with a good variety of media, including paint, chalk, clay and collage materials. They benefit from opportunities for creative work in the role-play area and opportunities for singing and playing percussion instruments.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching enables the pupils to achieve well overall.
- Teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 have improved significantly.
- More could sometimes be expected of the higher attainers.
- The quality of handwriting and presentation are variable and could be higher.
- Clear strategies for the correction of spellings are needed.
- Pupils' very good behaviour, attitudes and relationships underpin the quality of learning.

#### Commentary

42. The very small numbers of pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 mean that it is difficult to make a secure judgement about standards overall. Notwithstanding that, evidence collected supports the judgement that pupils' achievement is good overall in English. This is an improvement on the judgements made at the previous inspection, most notably at Key Stage 1 when pupils were underachieving with standards judged unsatisfactory overall.

43. The indications are that standards are now broadly in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing. Given the small cohorts, overall standards vary from year to year; for example, in the case of the 2001 cohort, reading standards were in the top five per cent nationally, whereas in 2002, they were well below the national average. The important judgement is that pupils usually achieve well relative to their capabilities.
44. The indications are that standards at the end of Year 6 in English are likely to be broadly in line with the national average. This does not reflect the picture at Year 6 in 2003 when the performance of the small number of pupils was, overall, well above all schools and similar schools nationally. Standards in speaking and listening across the school are similar to those expected, although most pupils show good listening skills.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with examples of very good teaching. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, most notably in Years 1 and 2. The high quality of the teaching, coupled with the pupils' very positive attitudes, has a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. The work is planned carefully to allow for the needs of the wide range of age and attainment in each class. Although teacher expectations are generally high, there are times when more could be expected of the higher attainers, with more challenging work being set and a greater quantity of work produced. Reading is given a high profile with timetabled 'guided reading'. Teachers and parents make good use of the individual reading records. The quality of presentation and the standards of handwriting are variable and need improvement, especially at Key Stage 2. Teachers mark work regularly, often providing helpful comments. There is a need for a more consistent approach to the marking and correction of spellings; there are occasions when children misspell the same word over a period of time. The use of information and communication technology is beginning to contribute to an improvement in standards.
46. Pupils respond well to the teaching; they are usually well motivated and engaged. They join in discussions with enthusiasm and respond well to the expectations that they will, on some occasions, work co-operatively as a part of a group, and sometimes will work independently. Pupils usually show enjoyment in their work. Homework is used to practise skills, although, with the tasks set, there are times when too much is expected of some of the pupils.
47. Pupils' overall performance is tracked, leading to appropriate predictions about future levels. Pupils are a party to individual targets for improvement. Although much informal assessment is undertaken and pieces of writing are assessed on a termly basis, there is now a need for a clear policy to guide the assessing and monitoring of individual pupils' attainment and progress. The subject, which meets statutory requirements, is well led and managed, with plans to further develop the co-ordinator's role. Resources are good in many respects, but there is a need to review and develop the range of non-fiction books, notably in the library, and a need to update some of the reading materials.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

48. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking, listening and reading skills in other subjects. The school is committed to giving pupils more opportunities to make a personal response in writing in other subjects. Good progress is being made in this respect, with good examples of pupils writing very effectively in science and history lessons.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning.

- Teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 has improved considerably.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the classroom, enabling them to make good progress.
- The work set does not always challenge the higher attainers sufficiently well.
- The very good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils promote good learning.
- The school provides a good range of interesting activities which motivate the pupils.

## **Community**

49. Very small numbers of pupils in each year group mean that overall standards can, and do, vary from year to year. Work seen during the inspection indicates that most pupils achieve well and currently are likely to reach standards in line with national averages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These are similar judgements to those made in the previous report. The Year 2 cohort in 2003 reached overall standards which were well above those of all and similar schools nationally. The 2003 Year 6 cohort reached overall standards which were in line with all schools nationally and slightly below those for similar schools. The school has successfully adapted the National Numeracy Strategy to meet the needs of the small school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their abilities because of the help they receive.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teachers plan effectively and make the learning purposeful by providing interesting practical activities. There are plans to further develop work on problem solving. Staff ensure that pupils know what is expected of them through clear learning objectives and precise explanations. Time is used well and lessons move at a good pace. In some oral sessions, there is difficulty in providing sufficient challenge for the very wide age and ability range in the Key Stage 2 class. A review is needed of the match between some tasks and pupils' needs to ensure sufficient challenge for the higher attainers. Sessions at the end of lessons are used well to review learning and to further develop work done during lessons. Both teachers and pupils make good use of the new interactive whiteboards. Teachers mark work regularly and make good use of comments which help pupils to improve. Their weekly assessments are used to plan future work. Homework in mathematics is used appropriately to reinforce and extend learning.
51. Pupils respond well to the teaching, showing good levels of motivation and interest. Most, although not all, of them take sufficient care when presenting their work. Well-established routines and expectations are reflected in the pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes and they work well, both independently and in groups.
52. The leadership and management of mathematics are developing. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the role and has not yet had the opportunity to be fully involved in monitoring teaching and learning in the classrooms. She is knowledgeable, well organised and very enthusiastic. Her audit of progress and further needs informs the school improvement plan. There is a need to review and extend the arrangements for monitoring individual pupils' attainment and progress. Resources are good. There are firm plans to further develop the use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in mathematics. The subject meets statutory requirements.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Pupils make effective use of mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and this helps them to begin to develop an appreciation of the practical uses for their skills. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science and they use measuring skills in design and technology.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are good across the school.
- The good quality of teaching enables most pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils' positive attitudes make a significant contribution to their achievement.
- The science curriculum provides a range of interesting investigations.
- There are good links with other curriculum subjects.

### Commentary

54. Notwithstanding the small number of pupils involved, the indications are that standards of attainment will be above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement over previous years, indicating that standards are rising. Science has a higher profile than previously and most pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
55. There has been a significant improvement in teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection when standards were found to be unsatisfactory. Pupils' knowledge is now more secure and they are given good opportunities to develop enquiry skills. Whole-school planning has been developed significantly and there is now good continuity in learning across the school.
56. The good and sometimes very good quality of teaching is having a significant impact on pupils' achievement and the high standards now found. Good quality programmes of work ensure that learning progresses well as pupils move through the school. The good range of well-prepared and interesting activities, together with appropriate teaching methods and very good relationships, help to engage pupils' interest and are reflected in their enthusiasm and quality of response. Pupils become aware of the need to select appropriate equipment for their work and to control variables when devising a fair test. Good instruction is enabling them to plan well and record their findings systematically.
57. Pupils concentrate and persevere. They work well collaboratively, willingly sharing ideas. Older pupils become responsible for planning and recording their work. They comment on how much they enjoy the challenges given. A science club for Year 6 pupils is helping to extend their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support and achieve well. Where possible, teachers mark pupils' work with them, giving immediate feedback on how to improve.
58. The science co-ordinator is leading and managing the subject very effectively. She is well informed about the strengths and weaknesses and has high expectations. Assessment practices are in need of review. Evaluations of lessons are used to plan the next steps in learning. Good links are made with other subjects such as design and technology, geography and information and communication technology, and science is used well as a vehicle for developing writing skills. The subject meets statutory requirements.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information and communication technology is used effectively to support work in literacy and numeracy.
- The pupils behave well and show enthusiasm in their work.
- There are too few reliable computers.
- Good use is made of interactive whiteboards by both staff and pupils.

### **Commentary**

59. The limited amount of work seen indicates that pupils are attaining standards which mainly match those expected for their age in Year 2 and Year 6 and that achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Weaknesses found at the previous inspection have been addressed. Whole-school planning is now effective, especially in the class of younger pupils where it has improved significantly. The school now has adequate resources for work on control and the use of sensors.
60. Insufficient teaching was seen to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. The very limited amount of teaching seen was good. Teachers are committed to raising standards. Work is well planned and instruction clear. Good organisation enabled pupils to make the best use of their time. Both teachers and pupils make very good use of the new interactive whiteboards. Pupils co-operate well and enjoy the interesting challenges provided.
61. The three teachers at present share joint responsibility for leadership and management of the subject and this works well. Consequently, they can maximise their particular strengths. They have received guidance from other schools and currently have access to the expertise of a technician who provides support and assists with developments. Monitoring of teaching and learning has, so far, been the responsibility of the headteacher. A new assessment system is shortly to be introduced. The number and quality of the computers is barely adequate and the school recognises the importance of improving its computer provision. The teachers try to ensure that pupils receive their entitlement by creative use of time and resources. The subject meets statutory requirements.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

62. Information and communication technology is used well to support literacy and numeracy and other areas of the curriculum. Pupils use the Internet to access information for history and geography topics and use data handling programs in mathematics and science. They used a digital camera and word processing to create photographs and descriptions of 'true friends' as part of their personal and social education. There are firm plans to further develop the use of information and communication technology to support the teaching and learning across all the curricular areas.

### **HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

The work in geography and history and in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education meets statutory requirements. These subjects were not specific areas of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. As a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on the quality of the provision.

### **Geography**

63. Geography is taught through a series of topics, mainly based on national guidance. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils access an interesting range of activities, such as those to plot the locations visited by 'Barnaby Bear' as he is taken to and photographed in different parts of the world. The local village is well used as a resource and the nearby city of Durham is used to provide opportunities to study a contrasting area. The older pupils benefit greatly from visits to a residential field study centre where they learn about rivers, woodlands and lead mining.

## History

64. Although no teaching was seen during the inspection, a scrutiny of pupils' work and planning documents indicate that pupils are receiving an interesting curriculum and that history is being used well to develop literacy skills. Good use is made of the local environment and also of visits further afield to enhance the work done and make lessons more exciting. A visit to the school by a Greek theatre group enabled pupils to experience the life led by different classes of people in Greek society.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to learn about world faiths.
- There are too few books and artefacts to fully support the various elements of the work.
- There is need for clearer guidance to support the teaching and learning.

## Commentary

65. Although an appropriate amount of time is given to religious education, during the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons. Consequently, it is not possible to make judgements on teaching and learning. However, a close scrutiny undertaken of the pupils' work indicates that standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. These standards are similar to those seen at the previous inspection.
66. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are helped to consider the significance of the cross and fish symbols to Christians. They enjoy stories from different faiths, such as the story of St Francis of Assisi and the story of Siddhartha and the Swan. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are helped to compare a Christian wedding with Sikh and Hindu weddings. Similarly, they compare pilgrimages undertaken by different faiths.
67. As part of their study of Hinduism, both classes have visited a temple and, as part of their study on Sikhism, the older class has visited a gurdwara. These visits serve to give the pupils a deeper understanding of the multi-faith and multi-cultural world in which they are growing up. Visits to the two local churches and visits by the two local ministers valuably help pupils' understanding of the Christian faith.
68. The quality of curriculum leadership and management is satisfactory. The school's priorities have, understandably, focused on the national initiatives concerned with literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Now the profile of religious education in school needs to be raised. The subject policy and scheme of work need to be developed together with the further development of resources to support the teaching and learning.

## Art and design

69. No art and design lessons were observed during the inspection. A scrutiny of pupils' work, including that on display, indicates that standards are good throughout the school and that the pupils achieve well in this subject. Examples of work on display throughout the school are of a good standard and the careful presentation of displays helps to create a stimulating environment in keeping with the ethos of the school.

70. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils experience a wide variety of media. They have recently made clay models of dancers, stimulated by the work of Degas. Participation in a recent national art project focusing on the painting 'The Stonemason's Yard' was of particular significance, producing not only good quality pictures, but also a range of work in other areas of the curriculum, such as literacy and information and communication technology.

### **Design and technology**

71. Planning documents and photographic evidence show that pupils are given a stimulating range of activities covering the full range of the curriculum. Older pupils write useful evaluations of their work indicating how they could improve their models. Teachers invite local engineers to school to share their expertise and enhance the curriculum; for example, the building of pyramids and making of three-dimensional models of electricity pylons for an interesting project on turbines which usefully combined science, technology and mathematics.

### **Music**

72. In music, appropriate use is made of a scheme of work to guide the teaching and learning, based on a commercial scheme which is linked to the national guidance for music. This helps to ensure that pupils have access to the appropriate range of experiences in performance, composition and the appraisal of music. A small number of pupils benefit from peripatetic teaching in clarinet. Resources have recently been improved. Performances, such as those at Christmas and at the leavers' assembly, are enjoyed by the pupils.

### **Physical education**

73. Physical education is a current shared priority of the local cluster of schools which has led to an improvement in resources, including significant local sponsorship for gymnastic equipment. The school has recently produced an action plan for improvement. There are extra-curricular activities in gymnastics and football, including matches against local schools. Pupils in the older class benefit from weekly swimming lessons at the local leisure centre, where they also enjoy opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities including badminton, short tennis and basketball.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

74. No lessons were observed in this area of the school's work and so no firm judgements can be made about provision. The staff have a very positive approach to the work and plan carefully for the lessons which are timetabled on a weekly basis; 'circle time' is well developed in the sessions. The school works hard and successfully to promote pupils' personal development and encourages them to make an active contribution to the life of the school. Older pupils receive good opportunities to learn about sex and relationships education, drugs awareness and healthy eating. Pupils across the school co-operate very well together and show a very good awareness of how to behave in a community.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*