

INSPECTION REPORT

FRONT STREET COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whickham, Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108350

Headteacher: Mr P Sergison

Lead inspector: Mr C D Taylor

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 November 2003

Inspection number: 262583

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:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	462
School address:	Front Street Whickham Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE16 4AD
Telephone number:	0191 433 5677
Fax number:	0191 433 5676
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Clr Mrs M Wallace
Date of previous inspection:	2 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Front Street Community Primary School is an urban primary school with a 30-place nursery. Most pupils join the reception class at the age of four and remain at the school until they are eleven. There are 462 pupils on roll (223 girls and 239 boys). Numbers have remained steady since 1998. The school serves Whickham and surrounding areas. The local area is a mixture of rented housing and privately owned property. Approximately one third of the pupils live outside the immediate catchment area. Ten per cent of pupils – broadly in line with the national average - are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils join the school with levels of attainment that are typical for their age. Fourteen per cent of pupils – broadly in line with the national average - are identified as having special educational needs. Six pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. The range of special needs includes speech and communication difficulties, behavioural problems, moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and Klinefelter's Syndrome. Thirteen pupils are from ethnic minorities. Only one pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The school has recently received the Basic Skills Award, the Healthy Schools Award and the Investors in People Award. It received a School Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23004	Christopher Taylor	Lead inspector	The foundation stage Science Music Religious education
19436	Michael O'Malley	Lay inspector	
32963	Joan Lock	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Geography History Physical education
31963	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Front Street Community Primary is a very good school. High standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. In Year 6 attainment is above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. Teaching and learning are good, so pupils achieve well. The school benefits from very good leadership and management and a commitment by all staff to improve the school further. Expenditure per pupil is below the national average and the school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching in the nursery and good teaching in reception means that young children get off to a good start.
- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, and nearly half the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good; this ensures that pupils learn effectively.
- The headteacher and other key staff provide very good leadership and management.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is very good; assessments are used very effectively to make sure work is well matched to pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good; this helps pupils to learn well.
- Provision for pupils' welfare is very good; good account is taken of pupils' views.
- Links with parents and the community and with other schools are very good.
- Standards in communicating and writing are below average for boys in Years 1 and 2.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used widely enough to assist teaching and learning across different subjects of the curriculum.

Since the previous inspection in 1998, the school has made good progress by maintaining high standards and in securing further improvements. There were no major weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, which were good, are now very good. There have been significant improvements in teaching and learning, and standards of attainment have improved further in the nursery and reception classes.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Achievement is good, overall. It is good in the nursery and reception and in Years 3 to 6, and satisfactory, overall, in Years 1 and 2.

Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment broadly typical for their age. By the end of the reception year, most children reach the levels expected in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy skills, and mathematical development are above average. In the current Year 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading and writing, though boys' communication and writing skills are below national expectations. Standards are above average in mathematics. In Year 6, standards are above the national average in English and science, and are

well above average in mathematics. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Overall, the school's results improved broadly in line with the national upward trend from 1998 to 2003.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Attendance is **above average** and punctuality is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching for children of nursery and reception age is good, overall, and is very good in social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, and mathematical development. Consequently, children learn quickly. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good in English, mathematics and science and pupils learn well. Teaching is good in English and science, and very good in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and pupils learn effectively. Teachers use assessments of individuals' progress very well to plan work that is appropriate for pupils of different abilities.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. There is a good range of visits and visitors, and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Pupils with special educational needs receive plenty of assistance and make good progress. Pupils' welfare and procedures for their personal support and guidance are very good. The school benefits from very good parental links and receives the valuable support of an active parents' association. Very good links with the community and with other local schools further enrich the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff are very good. The work of the governing body is also very good.

The headteacher has very high aspirations and has maintained the very good ethos of the school. Other key staff provide very good support. Governors carry out their statutory duties very well. They play an effective role in helping to shape the direction of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

There is very strong parental support for the school. Parents are particularly pleased that children enjoy school, teaching is good and that the school expects children to work hard. Pupils think very highly of their school because they discover lots of new things while there, and teachers help them effectively.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards of writing in Years 1 and 2, particularly for boys, by carrying through the school's action plan.
- Continue to develop the use of ICT more widely in different subjects to assist teaching and learning across the curriculum.

The school has already identified these issues as areas for development in the school improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In the current reception year, most children's personal and social development, communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical understanding are better than those expected for their age. In Year 2, standards are currently in line with the national average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. In Year 6, standards are above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. Pupils' achievement is good, overall, in the nursery and reception classes. Achievement is generally satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Boys and girls usually reach similar standards by the time they leave school, but boys' writing skills are not developed as quickly as girls'. Children from ethnic minorities achieve standards similar to other pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes and make good progress towards the early learning goals for young children.
- Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2; standards are above the national average in mathematics, history, art and design and design and technology, and average in other subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and achievement is good; standards in Year 6 are above the national average in most subjects, and well above average in mathematics and history.
- Boy's writing is below national expectations in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

1. Standards on entry to the nursery are broadly in line with national expectations, though there is a wide range of abilities. All children, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities, achieve well and make good progress towards the early learning goals for young children. By the end of the reception year, most children reach the levels expected for their age in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy skills, and mathematical development are above average for their age. This is an improvement on standards recorded at the time of the previous inspection.
2. Pupils make sound progress and their achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In the current Year 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading and writing, though some boys' writing is below national expectations. Standards are above average in mathematics, history, art and design, and design and technology. Pupils' attainment in ICT and other subjects is in line with standards expected nationally. This is not as good as the standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 at the time of the previous inspection. Standards are better than those in the national tests in 2003, however, when attainment was below average in reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. Pupils from ethnic minorities achieve standards similar to others.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.7 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (16.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. By Year 6, standards are above the national average in English, science, geography, art and design, and design and technology. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Achievement is particularly good in mathematics and history where standards are well above average. Attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in ICT, music, physical education and religious education. High standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. There are no significant variations in attainment by gender by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils from ethnic minorities achieve the same high standards as others. Overall, the school's results improved broadly in line with the national upward trend from 1998 to 2003.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (28.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.4 (29.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.8 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral, and cultural development is also very good. Their social development is excellent. The very high standards noted at the last inspection have been maintained. Attendance is above average and punctuality is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show high levels of interest both in lessons and in other school activities.
- Pupils know what is expected of them and behave very well.
- There are very good relationships and pupils respect one another.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. They are self-assured and keen to take responsibility.
- Attendance is above average.

Commentary

4. Pupils enjoy school. They work hard in lessons and many take part in the wide range of activities outside class. Pupils with special educational needs are well motivated. Behaviour is very good. Pupils know what is expected and teachers work consistently to maintain these high standards. Pupils' relationships with one another and with teachers are very good. There is very little bullying and any isolated incidents are quickly addressed.
5. Assemblies are planned well and include themes such as "new beginnings" and "being honest". They include stories, symbols, prayers and reflection and help pupils to consider values and beliefs. Pupils learn about the major world faiths in religious education and the school is very effective at promoting mutual respect and concern for others. Pupils readily accept differences between them and make sure that no one is left out. There is no racism. Pupils distinguish clearly between right and wrong, and they are encouraged to think through the consequences of their actions.
6. Pupils' social development is excellent. The school council, personal, social and health education, and class discussion times make very good contributions to pupils' social development. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and they carry out their duties well. The school is extremely effective at building self-esteem and, in consequence, pupils are self-assured and confident. Pupils take part in community projects

such as renovating a local garden, and members of the choir entertain the sick and the elderly. Through the award of *caring stickers*, fund-raising, and visits to the local special school, pupils develop a strong sense of social awareness and compassion for others.

7. There is a very good range of extra-curricular clubs to promote pupils' cultural development. Pupils visit the theatre and museums. They take part in music and sports festivals. Artists, musicians and theatre groups visit the school regularly, and there are dedicated weeks for music and art workshops. Pupils learn about their own traditions and other cultures through assemblies and by studying art, music, geography, and religious education. Pupils exchange correspondence and work with the Nomi elementary school in Japan.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

Attendance is above average. All unexplained absences are followed up, with phone calls to parents on the first day of absence where necessary. Any unsatisfactory attendance is addressed through discussions and letters with parents. Good attendance is rewarded with certificates. Punctuality is very good and lessons start promptly.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good, overall. Teaching and learning are good and there is a broad range of curricular opportunities. The school makes very good provision for the welfare of its pupils, and links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and there is much very good teaching, especially in the nursery and in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in reception and very good in the nursery.
- Nearly half the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good.
- Teachers' planning is very good and assessment is used very well to match work closely to pupils' needs.
- Teachers and classroom assistants work together very effectively.
- Throughout the school, teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour ensures that pupils work hard and make good progress.
- The teaching of reading has benefited from the introduction of daily reading sessions.
- The teaching of writing has improved, though there are insufficient opportunities to improve pupils' speaking skills through talking to adults, drama and role-play.
- ICT skills are taught satisfactorily, but computers are not used widely enough to assist teaching and learning across different subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

8. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in nearly all lessons and was good or better in over four out of five lessons. Teaching was very good in just over one in three lessons. This is a big improvement on the previous inspection when almost half the teaching was good and just over one lesson in five was very good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 59 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	21 (36%)	28 (47%)	9 (15%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

9. Teaching for children of nursery and reception age is good, overall, and is consistently very good in the nursery. Teaching is good in promoting knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development, and is very good in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical understanding. Teachers and classroom assistants have a very good understanding of how young children learn and they work together well as a team. They have very high expectations of children's attitudes and behaviour and constantly encourage them to increase their confidence. The curriculum is very well planned and co-ordinated. Lessons have clear objectives and, consequently, children build on earlier skills leading towards the early learning goals for young children. Staff frequently check children's knowledge and understanding, and provide tasks that are well-matched to children's individual needs. They give good support to those with special needs and these children achieve well as a result.
10. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, history, art and design, and design and technology. It is satisfactory in other subjects. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good in English, science, ICT, geography, art and design, and design and technology. It is very good in mathematics and history, and satisfactory in music and physical education. Insufficient lessons were seen to make overall judgements on teaching in religious education.
11. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils produce a happy and productive atmosphere. Highly effective behaviour management ensures very positive attitudes to work and pupils are keen to learn. In a very good numeracy lesson in Year 4, for example, effective discipline and a very good rapport between the teacher and the class meant that pupils made rapid progress when using cubes to make models of equivalent fractions.
12. Literacy and numeracy skills are generally taught well. The teaching of reading has benefited recently from the introduction of dedicated reading sessions every day. The teaching of writing has also improved, but many younger boys are still reluctant to speak at length, and there are still insufficient opportunities to develop their speaking skills by talking individually to adults, and through drama and role-play.
13. Assessment systems are very thorough and are used effectively to set targets for the whole school, for small groups and for individuals. Most pupils know their own targets and have a good idea how to improve. Learning is also assisted greatly by the careful marking of pupils' books, while the annotation of work by classroom assistants helps teachers to tailor their planning to support individual pupils. Teachers use the results of assessments very well to ensure that work planned for pupils of different abilities and those with special educational needs is well matched to their needs. Teachers make sure work for higher-attaining pupils is challenging enough so that they make good progress. In a very good literacy lesson in Year 3, for example, the teacher guided average pupils in their efforts to write a poem. Lower-attaining pupils identified adjectives, while higher-attaining pupils were challenged to use

interesting adjectives to create their own rhyming verse. The introduction of setting by ability in literacy and numeracy lessons in Years 4 to 6 has enabled teachers to plan successfully work that is more closely matched to pupils' individual needs.

14. Teachers who specialise in addressing learning difficulties have a good understanding of the complex learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and use a variety of appropriate strategies to help them learn. Pupils are encouraged, for example, to look, listen and to touch the shapes made by letters and words. Visual and listening clues are given to help children remember words and spellings, and one child communicates using sign language taught by the teacher.
15. Teachers make good use of a wide variety of teaching resources, and this helps to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. Staff have a sound knowledge of computer systems, and ICT skills are taught well. In a good ICT lesson in Year 5, for example, pupils learnt how to input and manipulate data in a spreadsheet by planning the food for a party. Pupils occasionally use the Internet to research information on different subjects, but, generally, there is insufficient use of ICT to assist teaching and learning across the curriculum.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum that is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation is satisfactory, overall, and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is very broad and provides a very good start to their education.
- English, mathematics and science make a substantial contribution to the curriculum, but the use of ICT as a tool for learning is underdeveloped.
- The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enrich provision.
- There is a very good range and variety of pre- and after-school clubs that involve a good number of pupils.
- The curriculum is very good for pupils with special educational needs.
- Accommodation is satisfactory, overall, and a good range of high quality resources supports the curriculum effectively.

Commentary

16. The quality of learning opportunities in the nursery and reception classes promotes the Early Learning Goals for young children very effectively. A very wide range of well-planned activities and experiences gives them a very good start to their education.
17. The National Curriculum is fully covered in the school's provision, which is socially inclusive and pays appropriate attention to equality of opportunity for all pupils. Planning is very good and ensures that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills build progressively as they move through the school. Well-written, established schemes of work provide a good base for teaching that presents appropriate challenges to all. Teachers identify and plan good links between subjects. Literacy and numeracy, for example, are well promoted in other subjects, but more use could be made of ICT as a tool to aid learning across the curriculum.
18. A good range of visits and visitors, together with many clubs and activities, enhances pupils' learning well. Visiting artists provide an extra dimension to the very good range of art studied in school. The school makes good use of qualified coaches to extend pupils' skills in basketball, gymnastics and judo. The school choir performs in a variety of venues and a number of older pupils are involved in a community project to improve a patch of wasteland.

19. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and ensures that they make good progress. Teachers make sure the work these pupils are given matches their ability. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in helping to raise standards. They are well deployed not only to assist pupils with special educational needs but also to help others as the need arises.
20. The modern nursery unit provides excellent accommodation for the youngest children. Elsewhere, the school makes the best use of the accommodation available, though the small hall and the lack of a playing-field restrict the opportunities available during physical education lessons. The caretaker and his staff maintain the facilities to a very high standard. Teachers fulfil their duty of care to the letter and cope well with difficulties caused by the split site. Teachers responsible for the many attractive displays work hard to provide pupils with a stimulating environment that celebrates their achievements and promotes further learning. The headteacher has been very effective in securing funds to provide good quality resources that support the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. The provision for support and guidance is very good. The school has maintained the very high standards noted at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very good care of pupils and takes good account of their views.
- Pupils' achievements are monitored very well and they are given very good support to help their progress.
- There are very good induction arrangements for new pupils.

Commentary

21. There are very good arrangements for health and safety. Staff make sure that pupils learn and play safely. There is very good first aid coverage and staff know which pupils have medical conditions. Premises are checked systematically for hazards and improvements are made where necessary. There are effective procedures for child protection. The school has received its eighth award for promoting healthy and safe living. Pupils are confident there is someone to turn to if they have problems. The school takes good account of their views and concerns via the school council, during class discussion times, and through pupil surveys.
22. Pupils' achievements are monitored very well through class data books, and extra support is given through additional programmes in literacy and mathematics. Pupils have specific targets, which are discussed with them and their parents. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' individual education plans, which are reviewed termly, are used well to track pupils' progress and to focus learning more precisely. Targets are shared with the pupils so that they know what they have to do to improve, and all pupils receive full recognition for their achievements.
23. There are very good arrangements to help pupils settle into the school. Parents are kept very well informed through visits to the school, meetings, and booklets. The school seeks parents' views about their children's development and there are home visits for pupils starting in the nursery. Pupils start school in small groups so that they can be given additional attention and support. The school then works closely with parents to make sure children are settling in well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school continues to maintain a very effective partnership with parents. There are very good links with the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept very well informed.
- The school works closely with parents and responds to their concerns.
- Parents are much involved and give good support to the school's work.
- The school makes very good use of community links and works closely with other schools.

Commentary

24. The school has very effective links with parents, and they are very pleased with its work. Parents are kept very well informed about what is going on in school through notice boards and regular newsletters. The prospectus and the governors' annual report are informative and well written. There are very good arrangements for keeping parents informed about their children's progress, including very effective end-of-year reports and the use of targets.
25. The school works closely with parents, seeks their views and addresses their concerns. There are very good arrangements for introducing parents and their children to the school. Parents are kept very well informed about what their children are learning and how they can help. They are encouraged to keep teachers well informed about their children, and the school is quick to involve them when there are problems. Parents of children with special needs are kept well informed and they are fully involved in setting targets for improvement.
26. Parents are much involved and give good support to the school's work. There are good arrangements for homework, including homework diaries and reading records. Many parents encourage their children to take part in after-school activities, and they support them at events such as school productions and local festivals. Some parents help regularly in school. The very active *Friends of the School* look after the purchase of school uniform, organise social events and raise funds.
27. The school makes very good use of community links. Many visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Pupils take part in festivals and competitions, and enjoy carol singing in the local church and in Eldon Square. The choir entertains the sick and the elderly, and the school supports the Hermitage garden project. There is a very good partnership with the local secondary school, including specialist sports coaching and very good arrangements to help pupils transfer. There are very good links with Gibside Special School and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good. The school is managed very well. The governance of the school is very good. Very high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very high aspirations and a very clear vision for the school.
- Senior staff provide excellent motivation and inspiration for other staff and pupils.
- Well-focused strategic planning clearly reflects the school's aims and values.
- The governing body provides very good support and carries out its duties very well.
- Good financial planning supports educational priorities very well.

Commentary

28. The headteacher is very experienced and provides very good leadership. He has a very clear sense of purpose and has maintained the very good ethos evident at the previous inspection. By his constant encouragement and commitment, he has succeeded in improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour even further. He has realistic plans for the future and is flexible enough to amend these to incorporate new ideas. He is committed to meeting the needs of pupils of different abilities, including those with special educational needs. He has very good relationships with parents and keeps them well informed of school events. His consultative style of leadership encourages wide discussion and ownership of decisions by staff. He is very well supported by senior colleagues and the deputy headteacher who provide excellent motivation and inspiration for other staff and pupils.
29. The school has very good aims and values that are clearly reflected in all its work. It aims to develop every child to his or her full potential academically, socially, emotionally and physically. It does this by creating a caring and stimulating environment where pupils are encouraged to value people as individuals, irrespective of their colour, creed, gender or cultural background. The school is very successful in achieving these aims.
30. The management of the school is very good. The headteacher works closely with other staff and has a clear overview of planning across the school. Children's work is monitored regularly, and standards are checked by external headteachers who provide an independent opinion. The headteacher observes teaching in all classes and makes suggestions to raise pupils' attainment. Some of these observations form part of the performance management programme that operates successfully. The headteacher and other key staff have a good grasp of pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science. They analyse National Curriculum test results and identify areas of the curriculum needing further attention.
31. Responsibility for curriculum areas is delegated to subject co-ordinators who co-ordinate teachers' planning, monitor schemes of work, check pupils' work and share their subject expertise. Co-ordinators take their responsibilities very seriously, and several are having a very positive impact on raising standards in their subjects. Others, such as the music co-ordinator, could have even more impact if additional time was allocated to share their expertise.
32. The special educational needs provision is managed very well, with good support from the headteacher. The co-ordinator ensures that there is good liaison between staff so that teachers and classroom assistants are well aware of pupils' needs and how to help them. Pupils' special needs are identified appropriately and their individual education plans are updated regularly.
33. The governing body provides very good support for the headteacher. Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities well. They have a very good working knowledge of the school and a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They visit the school regularly, take part in training sessions, debate standards and budget issues and play a full part in helping to determine the priorities facing the school.
34. These priorities are well supported by effective financial planning. The school improvement plan identifies well-chosen targets and ensures that resources are directed towards raising pupils' attainment. The school makes good use of the limited additional resources allocated to assisting specific groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs. The governors' finance committee monitors the school's budget regularly and there are satisfactory financial controls in place. The large balance carried forward into the current financial year is earmarked for maintaining current staffing levels. The principles of best value are applied very well. The school seeks competitive tenders for all major spending decisions, so it receives good value for money. It assesses its performance well in comparison with other schools, sets challenging targets and consults widely to gain the opinions of parents and

children. Day-to-day administration is efficient and computers are used effectively for handling invoices and for keeping pupils' records.

35. Staff and governors work well together and share a firm commitment to maintaining the high quality of teaching and learning. Appropriate targets have been set for English and mathematics in the national tests in 2004.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	832,364
Total expenditure	936,923
Expenditure per pupil	1,925

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	104,559
Balance carried forward to the next	74,148

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The very good provision for young children in the nursery and reception classes is a strength of the school. The quality of teaching is consistently very good in the nursery and is good in the reception classes. The curriculum is very well planned to help children learn effectively, and is very well co-ordinated. The excellent nursery accommodation provides plenty of space for an unusually wide range of activities, while the reception teachers make the best use of their smaller classrooms, and often overflow into the infant hall to accommodate role-play and other practical activities. Many informative displays and high quality resources help to stimulate the imagination. As a result, children make good progress and achieve well. High standards of provision have been maintained since the previous inspection.

Most children attend the nursery and join the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. A few join other local primary schools, and several children attend a privately run nursery before joining the reception class. When they join the nursery, most children's attainment is typical for their age, though there is a broad range of abilities. They learn quickly and make rapid strides towards the Early Learning Goals for young children. By the time they leave reception, most children reach the levels expected in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical understanding are better than those expected for their age.

The teachers and classroom assistants have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They plan and work together very effectively, providing a very good range of interesting activities. Staff ensure that children from different ethnic backgrounds are fully included in all activities and have suitable opportunities to share their own experiences with other children. All children play very happily together, co-operate sensibly and are very well motivated. This is because teacher's expectations are high, children are constantly encouraged, staff check and record children's progress regularly and work is matched very well to the needs of individual children. Children with special educational needs have appropriate targets in their individual education plans and receive plenty of individual assistance from teachers and other adults.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children often select their own activities and use resources independently.
- They form very good attitudes to work and co-operate sensibly with others.

Commentary

36. The teachers and classroom assistants help children to develop very good social skills. Nursery children are happy to leave their parents on arrival, and are quickly involved in choosing from a wide range of activities. The teacher carefully nurtured their confidence and self-esteem when she asked them to look at *a very special person* in the back of a book they were sharing together, and the children discovered they were looking at *themselves* in a mirror. Reception children eagerly await the start of the morning session. They sit quietly and listen attentively to their teachers. They soon learn to put their hands up when answering questions and to take turns when sharing resources with other children. They get changed for physical education sensibly and put their own coats on at playtimes. They are encouraged to

organise their own programme of activities, and this helps them to become responsible for their own learning. Children make good progress and their level of personal, social and emotional development is better than expected by the end of reception.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop good speaking and listening skills.
- They enjoy looking at books and learn to read simple words and sentences.
- Children recognise the initial sounds of words and identify similar endings.
- By the end of reception, most can write their own simple sentences.

Commentary

37. Communication, language and literacy skills are taught very well. Staff constantly talk with the children to broaden their vocabulary. They ask many open-ended questions and encourage children to explain their activities. One girl in the nursery, for example, explained how she was building a 'town' with wooden blocks that she confidently identified as squares and rectangles. Children take part in role-play activities to develop their speaking skills. Several in the nursery weighed parcels on the scales in the *post office*, while reception children played happily together wrapping up 'Christmas presents'. Outside, several nursery children chatted happily together as they 'painted' the playhouse 'red' and 'green'. Children who are more hesitant are given additional encouragement. Consequently, all children achieve very well, and language development is above expectations by the end of the reception year.
38. Children enjoy listening to stories. Nursery children joined in all the actions and listened carefully to a story about the Mum who wanted *Five minutes peace*. The children anticipated well what might happen next, and were confident to explain how their own mothers look for 'a bit of peace'. In reception, children enjoyed sharing their books with the inspector. One boy read a simple story confidently, while others turned the pages carefully, looked closely at the illustrations, and made sensible observations. In one lesson, children followed the text as the teacher read from a large print book about *Funny bones*, and then discussed what the skeletons might be saying in the 'speech bubbles'. In the nursery, children have fun learning the sounds made by each letter. In reception, children take reading books home regularly to share with parents and other adults. They consolidate their learning of letters and sounds, and soon recognise a variety of simple words. Some begin to use a range of strategies to identify unknown words and to read simple sentences. Children achieve very well, and by the end of reception, many read better than expected for their age.
39. Children are given many opportunities to develop their writing skills. In the nursery, children use emergent writing to send 'letters' from the *post office*, and learn to write their own name. In reception, they write the letters of the alphabet and are taught the sounds associated with each letter. They identify words with similar sounds such as *pig* and *pin*, and make up their own words beginning with *ch*. By the end of the year, most children can write simple sentences such as *A bat went up a tree* in a legible script, while higher-attaining children use capital letters and full stops in longer sentences such as *In my zoo I have a cat and a tiger*. Children achieve well and most achieve standards in writing better than those expected nationally.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teamwork ensures that children are taught effectively in small groups.
- Children enjoy practical investigations such as weighing 'light' and 'heavy' objects.
- They solve simple problems by adding and subtracting within ten, and estimating numbers within 20.
- Higher-attaining children add three numbers together, and can tell the time at the hour and half-past.

Commentary

40. The teaching of mathematical concepts is very good. Children enjoy investigating numbers and exploring shape and size. In a very good lesson in the nursery, for example, one group of children, working with the teacher, sang a counting song to reinforce numbers to ten, then threw a dice and counted the correct number of mummy animals and *the same number* of baby animals. Meanwhile, the other children, working with the classroom assistant, placed a series of 'Christmas presents' on the weighing scales to see which were *lighter* or *heavier*. In reception, one group of children estimated up to ten objects with the classroom assistant, while higher-attaining children estimated up to 20 objects with the teacher. Very good teamwork ensures that teaching meets the needs of individual children. By the end of reception, most children add and subtract numbers within ten correctly. They recognise common two-dimensional shapes and place 5p, 10p, 20p and 50p coins in the correct order. Higher-attaining pupils add numbers within 20 and tell the time on the hour and at half-past. Children achieve well, and by the end of the reception year, most children have mathematical skills above those expected for their age.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn effectively from practical activities and their own investigations.
- A good range of visits and visitors helps to broaden children's experiences.

Commentary

41. Teaching is good and involves plenty of opportunities for children to learn through practical investigations. In the nursery, children explore trees during an *autumn walk*, and make rubbings of different leaves. They visit a nearby *Sealife Centre*, and learn about traffic hazards from a visiting road safety officer. Children in reception conduct a survey of their favourite foods, examine X-ray photographs, and label different parts of the human body. They construct pictograms to show the results of an investigation into the colour of their eyes, and use wooden blocks to design and assemble a bridge. They visit a farm, St Mary's Church and the local library, and enjoy visits from the vicar and a fireman. Children achieve well, and their levels of knowledge and understanding are broadly in line with those expected at the end of the reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children handle tools and small equipment safely and with increasing control.
- They develop co-ordination by engaging in a variety of energetic activities.

Commentary

42. Good teaching ensures that children have many opportunities to develop their manipulative skills and co-ordination by using the computer 'mouse', pencils, crayons and paint-brushes. They pour water into containers, cut shapes out of Play Dough, assemble jigsaws and model railways and learn to use scissors correctly. Children take part in more energetic activities, both indoors and out of doors. Nursery children, for example, improve their co-ordination as they pedal tricycles and cars around the playground and attempt to knock skittles down with a ball. Children achieve well and their physical development is in line with that expected nationally by the end of reception.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers introduce children to a wide variety of materials, colours and textures.
- Children enjoy singing simple songs and playing percussion instruments.

Commentary

43. Good teaching ensures that children develop their creative skills well. Teachers introduce a wide variety of paints, paper, card, fabrics and construction materials for children to choose from. They use buttons, felt and pasta, for instance, when creating 'smiley faces' and produce colourful collages by combining different shades of tissue papers and shiny papers. In the reception classes, children used their fingers, hands and feet to print attractive patterns. They used white chalk on black sugar paper to create effective pictures of skeletons and used a painting program on the computer to create a variety of patterns. Nursery children enjoy making appropriate animal noises when they sing *As I went for a walk one day*. Reception children identify *high* and *low* notes, sing simple songs and nursery rhymes from memory and enjoy playing a variety of percussion instruments. Children achieve well and their artistic and musical skills are typical for their age by the end of the reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**. High standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.
- Standards of attainment are above the national average by Year 6.
- Standards of attainment in Year 2 are average, the main weakness being writing, especially that of boys, which is below average.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and towards each other are very good.
- Leadership of the subject is very good; the co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of how attainment can be raised and is putting a series of well-considered actions into place.
- Teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT as a tool to aid learning in the subject.

Commentary

44. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 2 and good in Year 6.
45. Pupils in Year 2 are encouraged to give extended responses during the question and answer sessions at the beginning and end of literacy lessons. Teachers often provide word banks to give pupils the vocabulary needed in discussions. Teachers occasionally set up special activities to stimulate further discussion. In one lesson, the teacher showed a box said to contain a chameleon. On opening the box, it was found to contain nothing. The excitement that resulted drew out a stream of responses from the pupils, and the teacher carefully shaped the discussion into a lively inquiry about what *might* have happened. Despite provision of this quality, many younger pupils - especially boys - lack confidence when talking about things outside their own immediate interests. Though their responses to direct questions are usually appropriate, they rarely offer extended comments. In a well-structured situation where pupils worked together to recount a story, pupils in Year 2 found it difficult to discuss with one another what to do. By Year 6, pupils are much more assured during conversations. They take an active role during discussions in pairs, and in group and class contexts. The school makes good use of the concept of *Premiership* words where pupils are encouraged to use the *best* words for given situations. This helps them become increasingly confident and accomplished speakers and listeners.
46. Standards in reading are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 2 and good in Year 6.
47. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' reading skills. Teachers listen to every child reading at least once a fortnight. Pupils who experience difficulties in learning to read are given extra help and, consequently, make good progress. There is a daily class reading time for all pupils. The school has an adequately stocked library that the children appreciate and use well. By Year 2, most pupils read and understand simple texts. They talk about the main characters and recall the main events with a fair degree of accuracy. They are taught to use a range of approaches when tackling unfamiliar words. By Year 6, the standard of reading is above the national average. Most pupils read independently and most read books that provide suitable challenge. This is because teachers track what they are reading and help them choose books that will interest and engage them. Pupils in Year 6 make good use of their alphabetical skills to locate information in non-fiction books.
48. Pupils' standards in writing are below average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Year 2 but good in Year 6.

49. The school has identified writing, especially by boys in Years 1 and 2, as a weakness. The English co-ordinator has drawn up an excellent action plan to address the shortcomings, and suitable measures are currently being put in place. One improvement being introduced is the institution of a regular writing time. This follows the success of a daily reading time that has raised standards of reading. Another measure suggested to improve writing is for pupils to write a regular journal, writing about the things that matter to them and about which they can easily be encouraged to expand at length and with enthusiasm. In this way, pupils' awareness of themselves as writers can be built up, and pupils in Years 1 and 2 can move beyond the simple phrases and sentences that many produce. By Year 6, pupils are much more confident writers and work in a wide range of styles. Their writing is interesting and often makes good use of different effects and unusual vocabulary. This was seen in the leaflets they produced that used persuasive language to advertise a locality. More use could be made of ICT, however, to help develop writing in all years.
50. Teaching is consistently good, so pupils achieve well, especially in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. Planning is very good and this ensures that lessons are very well structured and offer pace and sufficient challenge to all, including higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Introductions are clear and a range of activities is offered to match pupils' individual abilities well. Lessons invariably end with well-considered summaries of the progress made. Teachers often reinforce pupils' learning by judiciously singling out the work of individuals for commendation. This helps to encourage individuals' progress. Marking of work is very good and gives pupils a clear idea of what they have to do to improve. Assessment of pupil's standards is also very good and is used very well to ensure that pupils progress at the pace at which they are capable. Relationships between pupils are very good. Teachers spend little time reinforcing classroom conventions, such as putting hands up to answer questions, because pupils do it as a matter of course.
51. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has already overseen the introduction of various measures to improve the teaching of literacy and has produced a very good action plan to raise standards further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Teachers use a number of strategies to develop language and literacy across the whole range of subjects. They make good use of role-play in history, for example, to encourage the development of speaking and listening. In assemblies, the headteacher introduces stories about his own childhood experiences to encourage pupils to identify their own feelings and to express their own thoughts. Teachers frequently provide pupils with word banks for the various subjects they study, providing pupils with the technical terminology to discuss, for example, aspects of the design process. In geography, pupils are encouraged to share the results of their research into estuaries with the whole class. In most lessons, question and answer sessions are used very well to develop pupils' responses, whether verbal or in writing. More use could be made of ICT, however, to enhance pupils' literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good** and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and are well above average in Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Assessment procedures are very good and inform planning well.
- Good planning ensures that individual learning needs are met and that pupils make good progress.
- ICT is not used enough to help pupils extend and develop their skills.

Commentary

53. Standards are above average in Year 2 and are well above average in Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good in Year 2 and very good in Year 6. Pupils learn skills in a well-organised way, building on previous understanding. They think about problems creatively, and explain what they are doing and why. They do quick mental calculations, understand and use number facts fluently, and use appropriate vocabulary to explain their methods. When asked about the translation of shapes, one girl explained, *We move shapes to set points using the x and y axes*. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and is very good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' relationships with pupils are very good and this encourages children to work hard and to learn well. Good planning includes work at varying degrees of difficulty so pupils, including those with special educational needs, have their learning needs met accurately. Work for the most able is planned to extend and challenge them appropriately. Teachers are confident in their use of the National Numeracy Strategy, and give clear instructions and explanations to improve pupils' learning. A good range of interesting resources is used to motivate and engage pupils and to help them learn independently. Teachers pace lessons well so no time is wasted. Assessment is used well to ensure that all pupils are challenged and supported appropriately. Pupils have individual targets and know how to improve. They do not mind being tested regularly because, as one boy said, *It makes you brainy*. Class work is reinforced well by regular homework. However, ICT is not used enough to help pupils extend and practice their mathematical skills.
55. The management and leadership of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator ensures that very good planning is in place, pupils' progress is monitored regularly and learning tasks are carefully matched to learning needs. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 are taught successfully in ability sets to help them achieve good results with well-focused teaching. Regular testing helps to monitor progress towards group and whole-school targets and helps identify priorities in the school improvement plan.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Pupils use mathematical skills satisfactorily across the curriculum. They use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science, for example, and they measure materials accurately in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science, as at the last inspection, is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn effectively because they conduct many practical investigations.
- Detailed planning ensures that pupils learn in a logical progression.
- Teachers do not use ICT resources sufficiently to assist teaching and learning.
- There is insufficient guidance on how to record the results of investigations.

Commentary

57. Standards in science are in line with the national average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils of all ages are achieving well. Standards are not as good as at the last inspection when they were exceptionally high, but they have improved this term in Year 2 compared with standards in the national tests in 2003. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and classroom assistants and make good progress as a result.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2. Detailed planning, based on a good scheme of work, ensures continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Pupils make good progress because there is a strong emphasis on conducting practical investigations. In a good lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils described the characteristics of a piece of bread and predicted what would happen when it was heated. After the bread emerged from a toaster, they described the changes that had occurred, noting the new texture and colour in their exercise books. Pupils in Year 1 explore the five senses by smelling, touching and tasting different foods, and classify different materials according to their strength and texture.
59. Teaching and learning are good, overall, in Years 3 to 6. There is a good emphasis on pupils carrying out their own practical and investigative work and, as a result, all pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs, are currently making good progress. In a very good lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils planned their own investigations to test the rate at which a variety of solids dissolve. They discussed what evidence to collect, were careful to conduct a fair test, and drew sensible conclusions from their results. Teachers make very good use of assessments to ensure that work is appropriate to the needs of individual pupils. Most teachers, however, do not use computer programs sufficiently to assist teaching and learning.
60. Pupils work enthusiastically, are very well-behaved and achieve well. However, they are not always given sufficient guidance on how to record their observations. For instance, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed dissecting a variety of flowers and labelled parts such as the stamen and carpel accurately, but they were not given sufficient guidance on how to draw a table to record the functions of each part. In Year 3, pupils carried out their own experiments to determine the strength of different magnets. Some pupils wasted time writing detailed accounts or plotted their measurements incorrectly because there was insufficient explanation of how to record the results and no standard recording sheet to assist lower-attaining pupils.
61. The subject is led well. Good use is made of high quality resources, visits and visitors, though more resources for investigative work are required for younger pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**, as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is well equipped with a computer suite and there are computers in all classrooms.
- Some of the computers are relatively old and are in need of replacement.
- Schemes of work include opportunities to use ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects, but not all teachers are making full use of ICT across the curriculum.

Commentary

62. Standards in ICT are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and cover the full range of National Curriculum requirements. In Years 1 and 2, for example, they begin to combine text and graphics in ways that will appeal to a given audience by producing posters to advertise a school production. By Year 6, they use spreadsheets to model the costs of a party. They store and retrieve information in a database and write simple procedures to control the movements of a cursor around a computer screen. They use ICT to communicate in a variety of formats including text, graphics and charts. Good use is made of the Internet in a range of contexts, including research into Victorian England.

63. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. Teachers plan thoroughly, though, in the lessons seen, they did not always pitch the degree of challenge appropriately for high attaining pupils and for those with special educational needs. The use of question-and-answer sessions to introduce and conclude lessons makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils are expected to give extended answers to questions, asking them to recall earlier learning or probing their understanding. Lessons are well-structured and teachers use the final sessions to highlight progress, often singling out individuals for commendation to encourage individual progress. Teachers make good use of a digital projector to demonstrate teaching points. One teacher, for example, showed pupils her attempts at producing an attractive poster, and suggested they incorporated some of the effects. This gave pupils a clear standard to aim for. On the other hand, teachers do not make sufficient use of the interactive whiteboard. More training is needed to exploit its full potential as a teaching aid and as a highly motivational tool for learning.
64. The subject is co-ordinated effectively. Sound schemes of work cover appropriate techniques and build on pupils' skills progressively. A suitable number of networked machines are located in a dedicated computer suite and these operate a good range of software. Pairs of pupils often have to share computers, but this presents few problems as they work well with each other, taking turns when appropriate. One hour per week is allocated to each class in the computer suite, though sessions are mainly in the afternoons, leaving some unallocated time in the mornings. Other computers are located in the classrooms. Insufficient use is often made of these computers, particularly where they could be used to broaden studies across a range of subject areas.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The use of ICT as a tool to aid teaching and learning is not developed sufficiently well across the curriculum. Some teachers make good use of it, for example, when pupils research life in Victorian England for a history topic. ICT is well used in art when pupils learn how Hockney used computers to explore images of his mother. Pupils use ICT in geography to present the findings of a survey about ways of improving the local area. However, there is no systematic approach to developing the use of ICT across the full range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

Three lessons were seen in geography and two lessons in history. Only one lesson was seen in religious education, but inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and spoke to pupils about their work.

Geography and History

Provision is **good** in geography and is **very good** in history. This is in line with the provision at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is above average in geography and well above average in history.
- Pupils benefit from good quality teaching in geography and very good quality teaching in history.
- A wide variety of visits and visitors makes work more enjoyable and memorable.
- Pupils have little opportunity to use ICT to develop and extend their skills in these subjects.

Commentary

66. Pupils achieve well. Standards are well above average in history and are above average in geography, especially among older pupils. Planning is good in both subjects and enables pupils to develop a good understanding of appropriate knowledge and skills. In a lesson on Victorian Britain, pupils in Year 6 displayed good factual knowledge when producing an

extended piece of writing. They showed a clear understanding of cause and effect and linked life in Victorian times to how things have changed. In geography, pupils in Year 5 conducted their own research into the main stages of a river's development and showed a good understanding of how erosive processes change the features of the landscape.

67. Teaching and learning are very good in history and are good in geography, especially for older pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their own enthusiasm rubs off on the children. They provide interesting and stimulating resources, and the good relationships ensure that children are keen to learn. Geographical field trips and visiting speakers, such as a local retired resident who shared his experiences as a young lad in Whickham, help to bring these subjects alive. ICT resources could be used more widely, however, to help pupils develop skills such as map reading and historical research.
68. Co-ordination of the subject is good in geography and very good in history. Good planning ensures that pupils have an imaginative variety of opportunities to develop their knowledge and experience. There are good systems of assessment that inform planning well and ensure that the individual learning needs of the most able and those with special educational needs are fully met.

Religious education

There was too little evidence to make an overall judgement about provision in religious education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils study Christianity and three other major world religions in line with the recommendations in the Gateshead Agreed Syllabus.
- The subject is very well co-ordinated and there is a good variety of teaching resources.

Commentary

69. Only one religious education lesson was observed during the inspection. While teaching in this lesson was very good, it was not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. An examination of teachers' planning and pupils' books, however, confirmed that work throughout the school covers the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject is well led and managed, and the co-ordinator ensures that there is a good range of artefacts and other resources relating to the major world religions.
70. Standards are in line with expectations in the local syllabus in all year groups, as at the time of the last inspection. Younger pupils study some of the main characters, stories and celebrations of Christianity and Judaism. Concepts such as creation and human feelings are covered in Years 1 and 2, together with comparisons between major festivals such as Easter and Purim. Older pupils study topics such as signs and symbols with reference to Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. In a lesson in Year 5, for instance, pupils recalled the story of Rama and Sita, and discussed the significance of candles in the celebration of Diwali. Pupils explore the meaning of pilgrimage, write their own prayers, and compare their classroom rules with the Ten Commandments. They understand some of the main beliefs of the major world faiths at a level appropriate for their age, and explore the similarities and differences between them. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Three lessons were seen in art and design, and four in design and technology. Three were seen in music, and five in physical education.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**, as at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above national expectations.
- The school enhances classroom provision very effectively.
- Displays around the school are improved considerably by good co-ordination.

Commentary

71. Standards are above expectations in all years and achievement is good. Pupils use a wide range of materials and techniques, and draw on a good variety of influences. In Year 6, they work from Brazilian images to design an inventive and very colourful collection of hats. Pupils in Year 2 study the use of line and colour by Mondrian, and use his vision to produce their own work that closely resembles the original. Pupils produce a good range of both two- and three-dimensional artwork. They study the work of the local artist Anthony Gormley and apply what they have learnt to their own sculptures. Some teachers encourage pupils to use ICT when designing clock faces or the layout for a classroom of the future, but more use could be made of ICT to help pupils explore and experiment with images.
72. The day-to-day provision in the subject is considerably enhanced by a series of exciting and stimulating events. Every year, the school holds an Art Week. During the week, each year group works with a visiting artist. These artists offer a wide range of specialisms and work with the children to produce a whole array of exciting outcomes. The school displays the results of much of this work in the murals, tapestries and banners found on the walls and in the playground.
73. Teaching is good. Teachers are generally confident in their delivery. They enjoy the creative aspects of teaching art and attempt a good range of approaches. In a lesson that began with a careful consideration of the way in which David Hockney used digital techniques to deconstruct an image of his mother, for example, the teacher and the classroom assistant got thoroughly involved in the activities. Pupils, who might have lacked confidence in their ability to create something worthwhile, enthusiastically followed the example of their teacher and assistant. This helped to promote the progress of individual pupils, including those with special needs, by encouraging them to experiment. In another lesson, which explored paper modelling, the teacher showed obvious enjoyment when demonstrating the various techniques, getting sticky and excited in the process of creating the model.
74. The subject is led well by an enthusiastic and capable co-ordinator. She is also responsible for co-ordinating displays and does much to make the school a stimulating, lively environment in which to work.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**, as at the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and teachers' enthusiasm for the subject encourages good achievement.
- Good attention to the design process in Years 1 and 2 prepares pupils well for later study.

- Planning is good; pupils benefit from schemes of work that increase in challenge as they get older.

Commentary

75. Standards in design and technology are above national expectations and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress by describing their plans in words, drawings and models. This helps to develop their literacy skills. By Year 2, pupils are producing well-annotated drawings that clearly demonstrate their design intentions. They learn to plan their work thoroughly and write lists of the things they will require for the construction process. They are genuinely concerned about the quality of their work and strive to finish it well. By Year 6, standards are above national expectations. Pupils work with a variety of materials and a broad range of techniques. They have a good knowledge and understanding of how structures such as bridges derive their strength. They talk with confidence and understanding about the things they make.
76. Teaching is good. Teachers ensure that pupils of all ages learn the correct stages in the design process. Good resources to support learning mean that pupils are able to work with a wide range of tools, materials and equipment. Teachers produce good quality worksheets that pupils use effectively to record their design ideas, their working drawings and their evaluations of the completed product. Pupils' speaking skills are encouraged well through the question and answer sessions that introduce and conclude lessons, while the use of writing frames help pupils to develop their ideas in a logical order. Lessons are well planned and have good pace and sufficient challenge for even the most able pupils. Plenty of time is spent on practical tasks, while teachers put due emphasis on the acquisition of skills. Classroom assistants help pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, to succeed by providing good advice and encouragement.

Music

There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision in music, though some aspects are very good. There have been some exciting developments since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching resources enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
- Some teachers lack sufficient expertise to teach the subject successfully.
- The subject is led well, but the co-ordinator's expertise is not used in the most effective way.
- An exciting programme of workshops and visiting musicians broadens pupils' experiences of music from around the world.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument.
- There is insufficient use of ICT resources to assist teaching and learning.

Commentary

77. Standards are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, overall. In a well-taught lesson in Year 1, pupils developed a good sense of rhythm by clapping, singing and tapping out the beat. They composed their own rhythmic patterns and performed these using a range of percussion instruments. High quality commercial resources are used well. In Year 2, for example, good use was made of recorded music to clap out a constant beat and to demonstrate changes in pitch. The teacher lacked sufficient expertise, however, to translate the children's observations into a suitable symbolic representation. Insufficient teaching was seen to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6. Only one music lesson was observed and this was unsatisfactory. Pupils listened to cyclic patterns in the rhythms of traditional African music, and played the underlying beat on bells or tapped it out on their knees. The teacher had not realised, however, how difficult the song would be to learn, and the words (in an African

dialect) had not been written up in advance. While a number of

teachers lack confidence in the subject, the co-ordinator teaches music to her own class only. She has little opportunity for team teaching or assisting other colleagues during lessons and her expertise is under-utilised.

78. Pupils develop their musical appreciation by listening to a wide range of music. A variety of recorded music is played as pupils enter and leave assemblies, although opportunities to talk about the composer or the style of music are frequently missed. Pupils sing a good selection of modern hymns and songs. They sing tunefully and have a good attitude towards singing together. Pupils with special educational needs join in confidently and enjoy their music making.
79. The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who organises regular music workshops led by specialists from the local authority music service and an annual *Music Week* when visiting musicians demonstrate instruments from Africa, Asia and other parts of the world. Music makes a strong contribution to extra-curricular activities. Pupils in the choir enjoy carol singing and achieve a good standard in school concerts and at charity and fund-raising events. There are many opportunities for pupils to receive instrumental tuition from visiting teachers. The school has a good range of percussion instruments, but there is a need for more tuned instruments. Insufficient use is made of computers to assist with musical composition or to carry out research into different composers and musical styles.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**, as at the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned lessons ensure a good coverage of skills and activities.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities, good links with the local sports' college and participation in local sports competitions make good contributions to pupils' learning.
- The small hall, a sloping playground and the lack of a sports field hamper effective delivery of the subject.

Commentary

80. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with national expectations, as at the time of the previous inspection. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and lessons are planned to include a good range of skills and different activities. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities. All teachers use warm-up and cool-down sequences to give pupils an understanding of how to exercise safely. In Year 1, pupils jump in different ways, showing a reasonable degree of control and co-ordination. In Year 4, pupils produce star, pin and tuck shapes with some precision and control. Three pupils who attend the gym club were able to demonstrate these actions with a good level of fluency, accuracy and creativity. All teachers place a great emphasis on safety so pupils have a good awareness of the dangers of unsafe manoeuvres and practices. However, in most lessons, achievement was hampered by the very cramped space of the main hall, which is also a thoroughfare, and learning was interrupted too often by the movement of other classes or adults through the hall on their way to other rooms. The lack of a sports field, and the steep slope of the playground, add to the unsuitability of the facilities for teaching physical education more effectively. The school tries hard to overcome these difficulties by making good use of a nearby swimming pool and other local facilities.
81. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has ensured that good planning is in place so that pupils build on existing skills. Effective links with the local

secondary school, which has sports college status, means that pupils receive specialist sports teaching and coaching to help them experience new skills. The highest-attaining pupils attend additional coaching sessions at weekends. A wide variety of sports clubs, which are extremely well attended, extend pupils' learning after school and at lunch-times. Extra-curricular activities include football, basketball, rugby, gymnastics, dance, judo and cross-country, and pupils have a good record of success in local sports competitions.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision in personal, social and health education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-planned and comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education that follows national guidelines closely.

Commentary

82. No lessons were seen during the inspection due to the timetabling arrangements for the subject. Discussions with pupils and teachers, however, confirmed that the school's programme is effective in raising pupils' awareness of a variety of issues, including the misuse of drugs, the need to adopt healthy life styles and concerns such as bullying, racism and sex education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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