

INSPECTION REPORT

AMBLE LINKS FIRST SCHOOL

Amble, Morpeth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122173

Headteacher: Mrs J Brown

Lead inspector: Mr P M Allen

Dates of inspection: 8th - 10th November 2004

Inspection number: 266306

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	177
School address:	Links Avenue Links Estate Amble Morpeth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE65 0SA
Telephone number:	(01665) 710 667
Fax number:	(01665) 711 116
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Dawn Groves
Date of previous inspection:	28 th October 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a below average sized First school catering for children aged between 3 and 9. It draws the vast majority of its pupils from the immediate area, which consists largely of local authority housing and has significant socio-economic difficulties. There are 177 pupils on roll, including 33 who attend part time in the nursery for between three to five terms. There are more boys than girls in all year groups, bar one. There has been much staffing instability and change during the two years previous to the inspection, when there had been four headteachers or acting headteachers. At the time of the inspection, the new permanent headteacher had only been in post for two months. Currently, apart from the nursery, there are five classes, one each for Reception, Years 1 and 2, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils. Virtually every pupil is of white UK heritage background. Twelve pupils are identified as having special educational needs, this proportion being below the national average; most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. There are six pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need, this proportion being above the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. Most pupils have experienced pre-school education through the school's own nursery class. Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, but overall it is below what could be expected, most notably in speaking and listening. The school was given the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001 and an Investor in People award in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17531	Mr P M Allen	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Music Physical education
19575	Mr A Sanders	Lay inspector	
29686	Mr J S Lord	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Geography Special educational needs
17310	Mrs A McAskie	Team inspector	English Design and technology History Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory school**, which is steadily improving following a very unsettled couple of years. The school is now on an even keel. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are below those expected but the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Overall leadership and management and the value for money provided by the school are satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are below average, most significantly in literacy and numeracy.
- In order to raise standards, the quality of teaching across the school needs to be more consistently good.
- Children are given a very good start to their school lives because of the high quality of work in the nursery class.
- The new headteacher is building a strong staff commitment to improvement.
- The very good support for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need enables them to make good progress.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- Assessment, tracking of pupils' progress and target setting are insufficiently developed.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are insufficiently high.

The school was last inspected in October 2002 when it was judged as having serious weaknesses because pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory by the time they left the school, some of the teaching was unsatisfactory and some aspects of leadership and management were unsatisfactory. A year later a monitoring visit by HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectorate) indicated that unsatisfactory progress had been made in improving the school. A great deal has been achieved in the subsequent year, especially given all the staff changes, but much still remains to be done. The issues have been partially addressed but there is still a need to raise standards. There have been good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of leadership and management. Overall, the school has made a good improvement since the last inspection, and no longer has serious weaknesses.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	E	D	C	B
writing	E*	E	D	C
mathematics	E	E	D	C

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E – very low. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with low levels of attainment, especially in language and communication skills. They are given a very good start in the nursery class and they achieve well. Around four-fifths of them are likely to reach the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 although standards at the end of Year 2 are still below average in reading, writing and mathematics and average in science. Even though pupils achieve better in Years 3 and 4, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 4 are still below those expected. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. Standards in information and communication technology, although improving, are below those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' **personal development is good.** It is well promoted by the **overall good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Most pupils have positive attitudes towards school and enjoy good relationships. Overall, behaviour in and around school is good. Attendance is satisfactory and the vast majority of pupils arrive punctually, eager to start the school day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory and improving. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, sometimes being good and occasionally very good. Virtually all the good teaching was seen in the nursery class and in Years 3 and 4. The very good teaching was observed in the nursery class where there is a strong teaching partnership between the teacher and the nursery nurse. Where teaching is good, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Where teaching is less effective, expectations are insufficiently high, pupils do not work sufficiently hard and consequently they make less progress. In Years 1 to 4, teachers too often accept work which is poorly presented. Teachers are conscientious and very committed to the school and its pupils. Classroom assistants provide good support. The school has made a good start in monitoring pupils' attainment, tracking their progress and setting targets, but more remains to be done. The breadth of the curriculum is satisfactory. The appropriate recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy is one of the reasons why most other subjects have received insufficient attention; the school plans to develop other curriculum areas imaginatively with more links between subjects. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The provision for care, welfare, support, and guidance is good overall. Although the school's partnership with the parents and the community are satisfactory, there are firm plans to strengthen these aspects of school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is providing good leadership and management. Well supported by other members of the senior management team, she is bringing a clear vision for improvement and beginning to have a very positive impact on the school's development. The new chair of the governing body is providing enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership. Governance meets statutory requirements and is developing effectively in its role of helping shape the vision and direction of the school. Satisfactory use is normally made of time, but teaching time is below national recommendation in Years 3 and 4.

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. A number have concerns about the consistency of homework. The inspection team feels that their concerns are justified; the school has firm plans to review the homework provision. The pupils enjoy coming to school and value the opportunities for learning and making friends.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise pupils' achievement and attainment by improving the quality of teaching so that it is more consistently good across the school;
- further develop the use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning across all curriculum areas;
- further develop procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment, progress and target setting; and
- raise 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

Overall, standards in English, mathematics and science are below those found in most schools nationally. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, most notably in the nursery class and overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory across the school. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average, most significantly in literacy and numeracy.
- Children make a good start and achieve well in the nursery class.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive.

Commentary

1. At the time of the previous inspection two years ago, the achievement of most pupils was judged as unsatisfactory. Achievement of most pupils is now at least satisfactory and in some cases, good. The main issue from the report was to improve standards in English, science, information and communication technology, art and design, history and religious education. Standards have risen slightly, but more remains to be done.
2. Children are given a very good start to their school lives because of the good and sometimes very good teaching in the nursery class. Overall attainment on entry to nursery is very low, especially in communication and language skills. The good teaching and a challenging and imaginative curriculum ensure that children make good progress in the nursery class. Nevertheless when they start their Reception Year, standards are still below what is normally expected for children of that age.
3. At the time of this inspection, the newly qualified supply teacher was effective in promoting children's achievement in the Reception class. Around four-fifths of the children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals, which children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. This is the case across the areas of learning, although children do better in the personal, social and emotional area of learning, which is less dependent on competence in language.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (14.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.1 (12.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.8 (14.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Even though standards vary from year to year, overall they are below average. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average in reading, writing and

mathematics and average in science. These standards are reflected in the 2004 results when standards in writing and mathematics were below the national average, but in line with those of similar schools. They are also reflected in the results of the teacher assessments in science. The results in reading were in line with the national average and above those of similar schools. For pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, achievement is satisfactory. The trend in the school's results at the end of Year 2 between 1999 and 2004 in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national trend. Nevertheless much remains to be done.

5. Pupils achieve better in Years 3 and 4 than they do in Years 1 and 2 because the overall quality of teaching is higher. Nevertheless, standards at the end of Year 4 are still currently below those found in most schools nationally in English, mathematics and science because the current Year 4 group is a low attaining group. There are no national data with which to make comparisons at the end of Year 4. There is clear recognition on the part of the staff of the need to raise achievement and standards amongst the pupils, most importantly in literacy and numeracy.
6. Standards in reading are below average, but improving partly through the better organisation of the teaching of reading. Pupils across the school attain better in reading than in writing, which is recognised by the school as a main priority for improvement. In literacy, a significant number of pupils have poor speaking skills. In writing, many pupils require help to develop the language skills needed to put their thoughts into words. Below average reading and writing ability has a negative impact on pupils' attainment in most areas of the curriculum and in their use of literacy across the curriculum. The below average standards in mathematics are due to the poor numeracy skills shown by many pupils; many pupils lack real understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and often have below average mental skills. Standards in science are rising, promoted by a stronger emphasis on practical work. The school is developing focused strategies to address the weaknesses in literacy and numeracy.
7. Although standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 4 are below what is found in most schools, standards are rising rapidly. The new co-ordinator for information and communication technology has had a very significant impact since his recent appointment. Much has been achieved in a short time with staff gaining in confidence. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Given the time constraints of the inspection, it was not possible to make secure judgements about standards in the other subjects.
8. Pupils with special educational needs attain well below the levels expected nationally for their age, but most make good progress, and achieve well, because their needs are carefully identified early and they benefit from good quality support as they progress through school. The clear and appropriate targets for improvement on their individual education plans enable them to make good progress in their learning. These targets are reviewed and revised termly. The support is very effective with those pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
9. The school is beginning to develop its own 'value-added' analysis to monitor how pupils achieve compared with their prior attainment and ability on entry to school. The school has a clear aspiration to raise achievement and standards and is beginning to set challenging targets for improvement. The leadership of the school is building a strong commitment amongst the staff to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good; their cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- School systems for promoting attendance are good.
- Pupils' punctuality is mostly good.
- Pupils' independence and initiative are being fostered well, particularly in those pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are good.
- Pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong and about the responsibilities of living in a community.
- Pupils could benefit from more opportunities to explore the beliefs, festivals and customs of a range of faiths.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.5
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

10. Over the last two years attendance has been broadly in line with the national average and this represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Staff continue to monitor attendance carefully and receive support from the education welfare service, who visit families when requested. A small number of children whose attendance was poor have been identified and the school has successfully worked hard to ensure that they attend school regularly. Pupils' punctuality is also closely monitored and lateness is followed up quickly, with the result that punctuality during the inspection was satisfactory. There have been three exclusions during the last year. The headteacher, appropriately, has stressed the need to work more constructively with pupils who do not behave well enough and this has resulted in behaviour now being good in the school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
120	3	0
2	0	0

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

11. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and most pupils try hard in lessons. Their achievement is enhanced by the positive way they approach lessons. Boys and girls both commented on their enjoyment of school and, in particular, the class and music assemblies. The school is becoming increasingly effective in fostering pupils' capacity to work independently. Pupils have responsibilities in the school, such as 'playground friend' and classroom monitors. Pupils also assist and take part in whole school assemblies. The School Council meets regularly and always consults each class about important issues. The School Council is beginning to work well and raises matters important to pupils for the senior staff to consider.
12. Pupils' behaviour is good, which is a big improvement overall since the time of the last inspection. Pupils play well at lunchtime and playtimes and move around the school calmly. Pupils are very polite. Behaviour is especially good when the work pupils have to do is well matched to their abilities. Pupils are aware of the school's rules and reward systems and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. Teachers overall manage any difficult behaviour effectively.
13. Pupils' moral development is good and it is promoted well by the school through whole school assembly themes. For example, during the inspection the theme for the week was about 'Remembrance' and this depicted not only why we have Remembrance Day in memory of the World Wars but also to remember how their own actions can affect others. Teachers encourage pupils to think of others by raising money for charities, such as the NSPCC.
14. Teachers explore the spiritual dimension of collective worship themes and pupils are developing their self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. They have opportunities to reflect on issues raised in assemblies. However, opportunities to explore the beliefs, festivals and customs of a range of faiths are few, so limiting pupils' capacity to develop a wider understanding of the multicultural society in which they are growing up.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides a good level of pastoral care, and the support, advice and guidance given to the pupils are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The school's partnership with parents and its links with the local community are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The overall good teaching in the nursery class and in Years 3 and 4 leads to good learning. The teaching is satisfactory in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. The assessing of pupils' attainment and progress is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching was seen in the nursery class and in Years 3 and 4.
- Very good teaching was seen in the nursery class.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the quality of the support is good.

- There is effective use of the interactive whiteboard to support learning.
- The marking of pupils' work is not consistent enough.
- Teachers accept poorly presented work from pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	2 (8%)	9 (36%)	14 (56%)	0 (0%)	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.

- The table shows the range of teaching seen during the inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and this is critical to raising standards. The good and sometimes very good teaching in the nursery class leads to very effective learning. There is a strong teaching partnership between the teacher and the nursery nurse; both have high expectations and a very good understanding of how children learn and this strengthens the quality of the teaching and learning. With a calm approach a very good ethos has developed within which children are happy and secure and are gaining rapidly in confidence. Staff use skilful questioning to extend children's learning. Children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and they work hard to succeed. In all activities, learning is built very successfully on children's previous experiences and good use is made of effective assessment procedures.
- Across the school, where teaching is effective teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and plan carefully to interest the pupils and move learning on at good pace. Classroom assistants support pupils in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils to work hard and to behave well and, as a result, the pupils apply themselves to their activities and tasks and, work well both individually and in groups and achieve well.
- In Reception and Years 1 and 2, the teaching is generally satisfactory, with strengths outweighing weaknesses, resulting in satisfactory achievement for the pupils. In some lessons, time is not used efficiently such as when the introduction to lessons is too long, causing pupils to become restless. The teachers usually explain group tasks carefully but sometimes do not ensure that the pupils listen carefully enough to be sufficiently clear about what to do and, as a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they might. The organisation of lessons provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to work together and for classroom assistants to give good support to individual pupils; however, sometimes the pupils' behaviour is less well managed and a few pupils need too many reminders about their behaviour.
- Each lesson starts with the teacher sharing the learning objectives with the pupils. This helps the pupils be clear about what is expected of them and often helps them to relate to the time they have available to complete their tasks. Review time at the end of the lessons gives teachers insights into how much the pupils have learnt and this also adds to the pupils' ability to understand what they have learnt.

19. All teachers cater well for the varying needs and abilities of the pupils to ensure equality of opportunity. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported, often through the effective work of classroom assistants, to meet the targets on their individual education plans. Communication between teachers and support staff is good, ensuring consistent good quality instruction, especially for the lower attaining pupils. Teachers need to raise their expectations in the way pupils present completed work; too often teachers accept work from pupils that is poorly presented. The setting of homework is inconsistent; the school recognises parents' concerns about this and plans to remedy it.
20. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard in the information and communication technology suite to support the pupils' learning. This facility effectively supports the learning of all pupils, especially lower attaining ones. The teachers have high expectation of the pupils' use of this interactive resource, allowing them access to it. There are firm plans to equip each classroom with an interactive whiteboard to further support the quality of teaching and learning. The teachers are also aware of the need to further develop the use of computers to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.
21. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Sometimes the lack of marking limits the pupils' understanding about what they need to do in order to improve. The school has made a good start in monitoring pupils' attainment and progress and setting individual targets, but there is a clear recognition that more needs to be done.

The curriculum

The breadth of the curriculum is satisfactory. There are many good opportunities for curriculum enrichment including a good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy an exciting and imaginative curriculum in the nursery class.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good help and guidance, enabling them to make good progress.
- Teaching time is below national recommendations in Years 3 and 4.
- The school makes too little use of information and communication technology to support work across all curriculum areas.

Commentary

22. The Foundation Stage curriculum is covered imaginatively in the nursery and Reception classes through a wide range of well-thought-out topics. The previous report identified serious shortcomings in the way the curriculum in Years 1 to 4 was organised and managed, highlighting a lack of balance in time allocated for the various subjects. Although there is now a better balance, the school recognises the need to further develop its curriculum. Nevertheless, the curriculum meets statutory requirements, including those for religious education and collective worship. The appropriate recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy is one of the reasons why most other subjects are underdeveloped; the school plans to develop other curricular areas imaginatively with more links between the subjects. A good start has been made so that, for instance, growing use is made of other subjects, such as history to develop writing skills. Although the information and communication technology curriculum has been significantly developed by the new co-ordinator, the school recognises that more

use should be made of information and communication technology to support all the curriculum areas.

23. A good programme to develop pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship, including sex education and drugs awareness, is in place. The school respects the individuality of all pupils and understands that confidence aids pupils' achievement. The school's good, caring ethos helps pupils to be prepared for their move to the next stage of education. The school supports learning outside the school day through a good range of extra-curricular activities; these include information and communication technology, football, French, Spanish, art and netball. The school actively promotes participation in sport and in the arts.
24. The school is inclusive by ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. It provides well for pupils with special educational needs; the provision has been much improved since the involvement of the current co-ordinator. These pupils achieve well because of the good quality of support they receive; the support given to the pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is one of the strengths of the school. The school is beginning to develop strategies to cater for the needs of the higher attaining pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, although this has yet to have a significant impact.
25. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff with appropriate qualifications and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum. It is adequately resourced to teach most areas of the curriculum. The school has not checked the amount of teaching time it has available and pupils in Years 3 and 4 spend less time in lessons than national recommendations. This clearly has an impact on curriculum coverage over time. The accommodation, which benefits from many recent improvements, allows the curriculum to be taught efficiently; the information and communication technology suite is having a positive impact, as is the new interactive whiteboard.

Care, guidance and support

The school has good procedures for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils; it provides satisfactory support and guidance. There are satisfactory and improving procedures for the involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting upon their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good health and safety arrangements.
- The provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is much improved.
- The school is well maintained, clean and tidy.
- The school works well in partnership with external agencies to ensure that pupils are well cared for and supported when necessary.
- The School Council provides valuable opportunities to consider pupils' views.

Commentary

26. Procedures for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils are good. Pupils feel well cared for and this sense of belonging has a positive effect on their attitudes to school. The school is well maintained, clean and tidy, and a happy place to be in. The school's procedures for ensuring health and safety are good. Designated staff have completed first-aid training and first-aid boxes are mounted in prominent locations. Good procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils are in place; for example, through controlled entry to the school. There are clear and well-understood procedures for child protection. Partnerships with outside agencies work well and the prompt support given is appreciated by the school.
27. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. Pupils are confident of support if they are worried or upset, and know that any problems will be handled sensitively. The School Council provides a good voice for pupils to raise concerns and other points, and staff take their opinions seriously; for example, the school has introduced new rules for playtime, suggested by the pupils.
28. Procedures for the monitoring of any incidents have been revised effectively. For example, any bullying is dealt with promptly by the teachers and all pupils understand that poor behaviour will not be tolerated. Lapses in pupils' behaviour are carefully monitored and recorded. At lunchtime there is a good family atmosphere in the dining room. Pupils are well mannered and respect each other's points of view when discussing what they have been doing during the day. Lunchtimes run smoothly and are well supervised. Induction procedures include visits to the school by pupils with their parents thus boosting their confidence and knowledge of the school.
29. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs well and uses the expertise of the local education authority to assess their difficulties effectively. Liaison with outside agencies is well established and effective in providing good support for pupils with specific difficulties, such as those needing speech therapy. The school continues to maintain a detailed register of pupils with special educational needs and regularly reviews their progress with parents and outside agencies. This ensures that effective support is provided for pupils as required. Provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is very good and appropriately uses the school budget given to provide additional support. There is an on-going programme of training for the staff that further strengthens the school's procedures and strategies for pupils' guidance and support.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are satisfactory links with parents who are supportive of the school. There are satisfactory links with the local community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents support the school and hold it in high regard.
- Improved information is provided for parents in the prospectus and governors' annual reports to parents.
- Parents receive much improved information about what is being taught to their child and about school events.
- A number of parents have a concern about the consistency of homework.

- Parents are becoming more involved in the life of the school.

Commentary

30. Relationships with parents are satisfactory. Links have improved well since the time of the previous inspection. Nine parents attended the parents' meeting. There has been a good improvement in information sent home from school about what pupils are learning and about events. However, there are still a number of parents who have concerns about the inconsistency in the setting of homework. The inspection team feels that their concerns are justified and the school is to review its homework provision.
31. A small number of parents help in school or on trips into the community. Parents are welcomed into the school and any assistance offered by them is much appreciated. Social occasions are organised and class and whole-school assemblies are well supported. Appropriate information is provided for parents in the prospectus, and the governors' annual report to parents. End of year reports about pupils' performances describe the curriculum covered and give details about how pupils have progressed over the year. There are firm plans to involve parents in the setting of targets for improvement for their children.
32. Parent questionnaire responses were mostly positive and very supportive of the work of the school. Parents approached at the school during the inspection had no concerns. They felt their children had settled and that the induction process had worked well. When parents have raised specific concerns, they have been dealt with promptly and mostly to the satisfaction of the parents. Overall, the school is working hard to empower parents, to give them the confidence to become involved with the school, and to encourage a better home-school partnership.
33. Relationships with the wider community are satisfactory. Pupils go out into the community to visit, for example, the surrounding coastline and the local church, and the vicar visits the school to take assembly. Projects involving the community are being widened to ensure that local culture is explored as much as possible. The school raises money for national charities, and pupils participate enthusiastically in local sports competitions with other schools. Relationships are being improved with the other first, middle and secondary schools in the area and these links are being further strengthened.
34. The school is careful to ensure that parents are well informed about the procedures for the identification of, and provision for, pupils with special educational needs. The school encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning, and most make every effort to attend review meetings.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school is making good progress in addressing 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 new headteacher is helping the school to move forward effectively.
- The senior management team has a strong, clear, shared vision for school improvement.
- Effective teamwork throughout the school and the determination of the staff is helping in the effort to raise standards.
- Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning need further development.
- The role of the subject leaders needs further development.

Commentary

35. Since the previous inspection, the school has suffered from a period of turbulence, including three changes of headteacher in two years. Effective leadership for the past year has helped the school to move forward. The school now has a permanent head who is providing good leadership and is addressing the long-term future of the school. The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and, together with an effective senior management team, is beginning to provide a clear, shared vision aimed at raising standards in all areas of the school's work. The close partnership with an enthusiastic staff, who are fully involved in all planning and decision making, is leading to a shared sense of purpose and clear aspirations to offer the best provision they can for the pupils. Together the staff provide an inclusive school, with a caring ethos, where all pupils are valued.
36. Intense monitoring by headteachers, the local education authority and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) has led to significant recent improvement. There is a clear agenda for continuing improvement. The school improvement plan is a useful working document, which clearly addresses issues from the previous inspection, but is not a strategic plan for the future. There is need for a significant amount of self-review in order to set long-term ambitious goals understood by all. There is now a sense of collective responsibility amongst staff fostered, by the collegiate approach of the new headteacher.
37. Governance meets statutory requirements. The governing body is very supportive and through the strong leadership of a knowledgeable chair have quickly gained an awareness of strengths and weaknesses, and also the role they have to play in shaping the vision and direction of the school. The governing body is becoming effective in challenging and supporting the senior management team.
38. Management is effective. Systems and procedures are being developed which underpin the work of the school, along with good application of the principles of best value. Day-to-day running of the school has continued efficiently despite the difficulties elsewhere. Governing body sub-committees now meet each half term to discuss improvements and developments. Subject co-ordination is still a developing area aimed at raising expectations. Co-ordinators are currently updating policies and schemes to ensure consistency across subjects and continuity and progression through the school.
39. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs is very conscientious and has made significant improvements to the provision by reviewing procedures and resources to enable her to effectively manage the support programme. The arrangements have a positive impact

on pupils' learning, where good progress is made and pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem.

40. The monitoring of teaching and learning needs further development. The headteacher and deputy have made a good start, but other staff are not yet fully involved in the process. There is a need to identify and share good practice in order to raise teachers' expectations. Although performance data are analysed, the information is not yet being used sufficiently effectively to set targets for learning and to track pupils' progress through the school. Performance management strategies and professional development are now being used effectively to acknowledge strengths and improve weaknesses. Financial management is satisfactory; both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher acknowledge that they need further training in some aspects of financial planning.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	533,994
Total expenditure	552,057
Expenditure per pupil	3,346

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	54,210
Balance carried forward to the next year	36,147

41. The only barrier to raising achievement is that parental aspirations are sometimes insufficiently high. The school has firm plans to develop its partnership with parents, partly in order to raise aspirations.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for the Foundation Stage is very good and a clear strength of the school. It is better than at the time of the previous inspection. Children spend between three and five terms in the nursery class on a part-time basis. The provision for Reception observed during the inspection was satisfactory and improving day by day, because of the efforts of the relatively new supply teacher. The children start in the Reception class each September. Attainment on entry to Reception varies from year to year but overall it is below what could be expected, especially in language and communication skills. The quality of teaching by the teacher and the nursery nurse in the nursery class is good and sometimes very good, and children make very good gains in their learning. The quality of teaching observed in Reception was satisfactory with a number of good features. Across the Foundation Stage there are good systems for assessing and monitoring children's progress through the 'stepping stones', which lead to the goals for each of the six areas of development. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well planned and implemented and all areas of learning are given appropriate attention. Activities provided are interesting and stimulating. The co-ordinator is experienced and enthusiastic. Her very good leadership and management contribute to the good provision and to children's good achievement. Around four-fifths of the children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals across the areas of learning, although fewer will reach the higher level competencies in communication, language and literacy. Children achieve best in personal, social and emotional development. A small number may exceed the goals in personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve best in this area of learning.
- Teaching and learning are good and adults provide good role models.
- A stimulating, vibrant and secure environment for children to learn has been created.

Commentary

42. This area, which underpins all the teaching and learning, is rightly a priority and most children achieve very well. Most nursery children are happy to leave their parents and become well engaged in the activities on offer. In a very good lesson on a group of furry creatures called 'The Querks', the children were helped to recognise the differences between the 'Querks' which made them unique, and therefore, special. Through this, the children begin to understand that they themselves are special. Reception children enter the school confidently and are learning to listen sensibly, to take turns and to co-operate with one another. The teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very effective in promoting good behaviour and self-esteem. Children's success in this area of learning has a positive impact on all their learning in the Foundation Stage.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in nursery is very good; in Reception it is satisfactory and improving.
- Support staff and parent helpers make a valuable contribution to this area of learning.
- Often from a low starting point, children make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

43. The teachers and other adults provide very good opportunities to develop children's language skills. The good teaching engages the children and holds their interest and attention, enabling them to achieve well overall. Most children demonstrate good listening skills. In all areas of learning, vocabulary and speaking skills are effectively promoted. Most children are keen to answer questions and put their ideas into words. In nursery, children begin to develop confidence in speaking out. They gain enjoyment from books with favourite stories such as 'Percy the Park Keeper' and 'Can't You Sleep Little Bear?'. They begin to use a pencil for their own 'writing', sometimes in role play such as in a 'hospital' or a 'shop'. In Reception, children further develop their skills; they learn most of the sounds of the alphabet and most learn to identify initial sounds in words. The higher attainers write simple sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in nursery is very good; in Reception it is satisfactory and improving.
- Mathematics is experienced through a wide range of activities.
- Most nursery children are able to sort and match flat solid shapes.
- In Reception, most children can name shapes and their properties.

Commentary

44. Children achieve well and make good progress because of the overall good teaching where staff capitalise on the mathematical opportunities in many activities, such as opportunities to count; this makes learning fun. In nursery, the children learn to count up to ten and some beyond that. The higher attainers recognise numerals from 1 to 9 and gain an understanding of 'more than' and 'less than'; through simple practical activities they can find one more or one less than a number from one to ten. Reception children consolidate their early learning, recognising and matching numbers up to twenty and beyond. They become familiar with language such as 'more' and 'less' and 'heavier' and 'lighter'. Higher attainers start to record their calculations. Learning is reinforced through good use of counting songs such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and 'Ten in a Bed'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall good teaching provides children with an imaginative range of practical learning activities.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to learn about the festivals of other cultures.
- Children begin to consider features of their own local environment.

Commentary

45. Children achieve well in this area of learning, which is well covered through the interesting range of topics covered across the two classes. In nursery, in early geography work, children consider the location of their homes and the environment of the school; Reception children learn about the broader area and, through local walks, learn about the local harbour and lifeboat station. Nursery children consider their own family members, including grandparents, and Reception children create simple family trees. Through these activities children find out about past and present events in their own lives and in those of their families and other people they know. The work provides good opportunities for baking, building and construction and developing mouse skills at the computer keyboard. They learn about the cultural beliefs of other people; for example, during the inspection week a wide range of imaginative activities including painting, baking sweets, making diva pots and enjoying the story of 'Rama and Sita', gave the children insights into the festival of Diwali.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children handle tools and small equipment safely and with increasing control.
- Children use larger equipment with increasing confidence and skill.

Commentary

46. The overall good teaching ensures that children refine their physical skills across the Foundation Stage and achieve well. Children have many opportunities to develop their manipulative skills and co-ordination using pencils, paintbrushes, glue spreaders and scissors. When using scissors, they cut with increasing levels of accuracy. Children pour water and dry sand into containers and carefully assemble models using pieces from construction kits. Children take part in more energetic activities out of doors in the two designated areas. They ride on wheeled toys, carefully steering around obstacles. Adult involvement improved the quality of learning by adding new challenge and interest to on-going activities. There are firm plans to further develop outdoor play.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children experience a good range of materials, colours and textures.
- Children have good opportunities to be creative through imaginative role play.
- Children thoroughly enjoy working in this area of learning and they achieve well.

Commentary

47. Children enjoy the creative area of learning, which is well provided for. The quality of teaching and learning is good and all children are enabled to achieve well. Children paint and experiment with a good range of resources. Children can recognise the primary colours red, blue and yellow. They use crayons and felt tips to create increasingly colourful drawings. They use paints to mix dark and light shades. They enjoy using lots of materials to create collages and enjoy printing.
48. Children increasingly use their imagination in art, dance, imaginative play and 'small world' play. They sing simple songs from memory and match movements to music; they enjoy playing a range of percussion instruments. They sing a good range of number rhymes, action songs and nursery rhymes. The quality of imaginative play is generally good and children enjoy playing in the role play area. The provision for the creative area of learning offers a good variety of experiences and is well taught, being an important part of the provision for the Foundation Stage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are below what could be expected in reading, writing, speaking and listening throughout the school.
- Target setting to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve is not sufficiently well developed.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are not high enough.
- Classroom support staff provide good support for the lower attainers.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Good links are being made with other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

49. Although considerable progress has been made in addressing the issues raised at the previous inspection there is still much to do in order to raise standards of attainment and levels of achievement in English.
50. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average in reading and writing. These standards are reflected in the 2004 results in writing, which were below the national average but in line with similar schools. The results in reading were in line with the national average and above those of similar schools. Standards have gradually improved since 2002. Standards at the end of Year 4, are below those found in most schools nationally. Achievement across the school, whilst satisfactory overall, is slightly better in Years 3 and 4 because the teaching and learning are more effective.

There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive.

51. A significant number of pupils enter school with attainment below that expected for children at the start of the Reception Year, especially in language and communication skills, and this has an impact on standards. Standards in speaking and listening need to be higher. Although most pupils listen well and are ready to contribute in class, there are a small number, notably boys, who find sustained concentration difficult. The school has identified speaking and listening as a priority and is taking appropriate action. The use of 'talking partners' and 'paired talking' are promising developments but teachers need to monitor more closely the quality of the interactions between some partners to ensure that they are on task and achieving the objective set. There is also need for a more consistent whole school approach to increasing vocabulary.
52. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in reading. Few read with sufficient fluency and confidence, though they show a satisfactory level of comprehension. They use a variety of strategies to read unfamiliar words, including phonic sounds, picture and textual clues. Older pupils know how to use the non-fiction section of the school library and use it for selecting books for research into topics. Pupils have the opportunity to read at home. The good reading partnership between home and school found at the previous inspection still exists and pupils take home books and reading records on a regular basis.
53. Standards in writing are improving but remain an area for continued development. There are now better opportunities to write for a good range of purposes; for example, the journalistic writing displayed as a newspaper describing the Roman invasion of Britain and instructions for making chocolate bars. Spelling is an area for further development and, as at the time of the previous inspection, standards of handwriting and presentation are not sufficiently high.
54. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory, although there is some good teaching in Years 3 and 4. Teachers give clear instructions and use effective questioning techniques to check on learning and to further develop pupils' thinking. The good teaching has better pace and makes use of special interests and humour to help keep pupils focused. Teachers make sure pupils know what they are going to learn at the beginning of the lesson and check with the pupils at the end of the lesson whether the learning has been successful. This helps them to focus on important aspects of lessons. In some lessons, more rigour is needed when making judgements about the pupils' success. Teachers assess pupils' work on a regular basis and track their progress through the school. Pupil target setting is in an early stage of development and needs to reflect higher teacher expectation of both amount and quality of written work. Throughout the school, there are times when written tasks are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, some pupils achieve too little. The quality of marking needs to focus more on helping pupils to make their work better and ensuring that suggestions for improvements are followed up.
55. During the past year literacy has had a very high profile in school and has benefited from considerable input from the local education authority literacy consultant. There is now a whole-school approach to planning. The new headteacher has now assumed the role of subject co-ordinator. She has a clear view of standards and future needs,

including a recognition of the need for more rigorous monitoring of standards and teaching. Resources are adequate. The new library is a useful resource providing better opportunities for research skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Growing use is made of other subjects to develop writing skills. It is currently an important focus for work in literacy. This ensures that pupils begin to develop the ability to adapt their writing to a wider audience and for a greater range of purposes. Year 4 pupils used research on the Romans to practise non-chronological writing. Work on teeth was a focus for note-taking in Year 3. Younger pupils write about important people in history; for example, Florence Nightingale. Information and communication technology is increasingly playing a part in supporting literacy. The provision of better resources in the new computer suite, together with the support and development provided by the new co-ordinator is ensuring that information and communication technology has a higher profile, which needs to be raised further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although achievement is satisfactory, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are below those generally found nationally.
- Good improvements have been made since the last inspection.
- In some classes, information and communication technology is being used effectively to support teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management are good and beginning to have a positive impact on the raising of standards.

Commentary

57. Although standards in mathematics are low, they are higher than they were previously, including at the time of the previous inspection. Just prior to the previous inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 were in the lowest five per cent of all schools nationally.
58. Standards have gradually improved since, so that in 2004, whilst the results were still below the national average, they were in line with those of similar schools. Currently, standards at the end of Year 2 are below the national average with around a quarter of the pupils unlikely to reach Level 2, the expected level for most seven year olds. The school recognises the importance of continuing to target raising levels of attainment with this year group. Standards at the end of Year 4 are below those found in most schools nationally.
59. The previous report indicated that teaching in mathematics was not monitored often enough and that, as a consequence, some unsatisfactory and poor teaching had gone

unchecked, which impeded pupils' progress. Monitoring by the co-ordinator and the local education authority have had an impact on the quality of teaching, but more remains to be done. The quality of teaching and learning observed in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory, with some good features; pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Some of the teaching observed in Years 3 and 4 was satisfactory and some was good with pupils achieving well.

60. Across the school, lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives; the teachers explain to the pupils what they are expected to learn. Teachers' expectations and demonstrations are usually clear. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed and make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need benefit from very good support. Although good use is made of information and communication technology in some lessons, sometimes making very good use of the interactive whiteboard, information and communication technology is not used consistently well across the school to support learning in mathematics. In the extra support activities for Year 4 ('springboard'), the pupils observed were achieving well.
61. In the most effective lessons, such as a Year 3 lesson on solving problems involving subtraction, pupils work hard, co-operate well together and make good progress; they become well engaged in activities and achieve well. Sometimes, in less effective lessons, the pupils do not listen carefully enough and so they are not sure what is expected; they are not sufficiently productive and so achieve less. In a lesson with mainly Year 1 pupils, a good number were not able to cope with independent work in groups. In mathematics work in Years 1 to 4, teachers too often accept work which is poorly presented and shows a lack of care.
62. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Sometimes it is good, giving constructive and clear guidance on how pupils can improve, but sometimes providing very little feedback. A new system of assessment has been introduced, which involves half-termly testing; this is leading to a review of individual achievement and the setting of targets. A good start has been made although the co-ordinator, who is leading and managing the subject well, is aware that there is a need for further development in the monitoring of attainment, tracking of pupils' progress and target setting. The subject provision is improving overall with teaching which is becoming more focused on raising achievement and standards in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Pupils are increasingly using mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and are developing an appreciation of the practical use of these skills; for example, older pupils use mathematical skills to interpret old census information about Amble. Pupils use their measuring skills in design and technology. There is need for more routine use of information and communication technology in mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving as a result of improved teaching.
- Teachers provide interesting practical, first-hand experiences for the pupils.
- Teaching assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning.
- The tracking and recording of pupils' progress is underdeveloped.
- The presentation of work is insufficiently high.
- The subject is effectively led and managed.

Commentary

64. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally. These standards are reflected in the results of the teacher assessments of 2004. This shows a good improvement on those seen at the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be well below those expected. Standards at the end of Year 4 are lower than those expected although, they are higher than those seen at the previous inspection. Improved standards are a result of an improvement in the quality of teaching and effective planning for science. An analysis of pupils' work shows that they make good progress and achieve well, including those pupils with special educational needs, from, initially, a low level of understanding. No significant differences were observed in science between the achievement of boys and girls.
65. In the two lessons seen, one in Year 2 and one in Year 4, the teaching was good; this is an improvement on the previous inspection when no good teaching was seen. In the good teaching observed, the lessons were well planned with clear learning objectives and statements of success, making good use of the appropriate resources. There was good pace and provided constant encouragement, which enabled pupils to achieve well. Teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboard to help pupils to understand difficult concepts. In the Year 4 lesson, for example, linking a digital microscope to the interactive whiteboard enabled pupils to understand how particle size enables some solids to behave like liquids. Good attention is paid to developing appropriate vocabulary; for example, in the Year 2 lesson the teacher quickly seized on one pupil's correct use of 'positive' and 'negative', which acted as a catalyst to others. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the effective deployment of teaching assistants. Teachers manage their pupils effectively so that pupils work well together.
66. Pupils enjoy their science lessons, which often involve them in practical activity and first-hand experiences, resulting in good achievement. For example, Year 2 pupils investigate how to construct a simple circuit to make a bulb light and many come to understand why the brightness of the bulb changes when a second bulb is added to the circuit. This emphasis on investigative science throughout the school is leading to an improvement in pupils' enquiry skills; for example, Year 4 pupils are aware of the need to control variables when devising a fair test. The written recording of investigations is often adversely affected by limited writing skills. Where pupils' written recording is more successful, key words and a structure are provided. A variety of presentation methods are used by the pupils to record investigative work including tables, drawings, and graphs, which represents an improvement on the 'limited' methods seen at the previous inspection. However, pupils' work is not always well presented and teachers do not question work that is unacceptable. Information and communication technology is underused as a way of recording information.

67. At the end of each science topic, teachers carry out assessments of pupils' learning and use the results to plan future teaching and learning. However, the tracking and recording of pupils' progress is not yet fully embedded into current practice and this reduces the progress the higher attaining pupils make. Marking does not consistently record the next steps in learning so that pupils understand what they need to learn next. The school has identified these as areas for development in the drive to raise standards.
68. The science co-ordinator leads and manages the subject effectively with valuable recent support from the local education authority's science consultant. There are firm plans to improve continuity and progression in the teaching and learning of scientific skills, knowledge and understanding across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although achievement is satisfactory, overall, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are below those expected.
- The new computer suite and staff training are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, especially in word-processing skills.
- Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard to present ideas.
- Older pupils have insufficient experience in the control and data-handling strands of information and communication technology.
- Leadership and management are now good.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

Commentary

69. Overall, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are below those expected. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. These judgements on standards are the same as those made in the previous report where it was judged that pupils had too little time to develop their information and communication technology skills and knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is no longer the case; the situation has vastly improved with the recent installation of a very good computer suite, which has resulted in regular sessions in which pupils can practise to improve their skills. Effective training has contributed towards the confidence of teaching and support staff when teaching skills to the pupils. Very good support is being provided by the new information and communication technology co-ordinator whose knowledge and skills provide continual training opportunities for all staff and are beginning to have a very positive impact on pupils' achievement and standards. Pupils' word-processing skills are now in line with those expected at the end of Years 2 and 4 as a result of a whole-school approach to skills development.
70. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy using computers and their achievement is good in word-processing skills, especially given that many do not have access to computers at home. Year 2 pupils handle the keyboard and mouse confidently to write a list and many use the underline function for the heading. Most

Year 4 pupils use a word processing program to organise their work in the style of a newspaper to include different font types, sizes, colour and graphics. Pupils throughout the school are gaining confidence in using painting tools but discussion with older pupils shows that they have not made the expected progress in the control and data-handling strands of the subject, which limits their attainment.

71. The new computer suite is efficiently used and provides very good opportunities for all pupils. In the three lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, with some good features. Good use was made of the interactive whiteboard to help present ideas to pupils, helping to engage them quickly as they enjoyed the visual approach to learning. The subject knowledge of the teachers is good with each feeling confident in presenting new material, often through demonstration on the interactive whiteboard. Teachers begin their lessons by revising previous work. They explain which new skills the pupils will learn, thereby providing a clear focus and purpose for the lesson. Teaching is less effective when expectations are not as high as they could be for the higher attaining pupils, to achieve as well as they are capable. Overall, pupils are making rapid progress as a result of improved access to computers. The pupils are given appropriate opportunities to consolidate their knowledge and skills and there is good support for those experiencing difficulties.
72. Leadership of the subject is now good. The co-ordinator has only recently started managing this curriculum area but he has a clear and detailed action plan for the development of the subject, which will help to further raise standards across the school. There are plans to increase the resources, which include providing an interactive whiteboard for every classroom to help to raise standards across all curricular areas. Assessment procedures are in place and a well thought out electronic system for recording progress has recently been developed to track pupil progress in the drive to raise standards. A very good start has been made to improve the provision and raise standards and this augurs well for the future.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The use of information and communication technology across all subjects is underdeveloped. There are some attempts made to link on-going work with information and communication technology, especially in Year 4 in mathematics and science for example, but this is not consistent throughout the school. There are missed opportunities to help pupils learn through using their information and communication technology skills and the school has identified this as an area for development.

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

74. No lessons were observed during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make judgments about standards and the quality of teaching and learning. However, a review of pupils' work in exercise books and of teachers' planning indicate that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum.

75. The pupils in Year 2 are developing an awareness of localities beyond their own through the topic 'An Island Home', which is linked to literacy, and most can draw a simple, pictorial map to record the main places on the island. Within the Year 4 work on 'Rivers', pupils use an atlas effectively to locate rivers in Europe and they can name and understand the main features of a river, such as source and mouth. When describing a river's impact on the landscape, poor literacy skills limit the quality of their work. The quality of pupils' work is variable and, in general, teachers accept work that is poorly presented. This is an area for development, as is the marking of pupils' work. More could be expected of the higher attaining pupils to ensure they achieve as well as they could.
76. The subject leader has introduced a scheme of work based on national guidance for the subject, which gives adequate structure to teaching and learning and promotes continuity and progression. This is an improvement since the last inspection, as are assessment procedures.

History

77. Just one lesson was observed during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards or the quality of teaching. Evidence from pupils' work, displays and planning documents, indicates that pupils are receiving an appropriate curriculum. Assessments are made at the end of each unit of work and these identify specific needs for future lessons. The assessment system is relatively new and needs further development.
78. Work in history has improved since the previous inspection and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved and sufficient time is now allocated to the teaching of history. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of achievement and an appropriate action plan for future development. The policy needs updating.
79. The school follows national guidelines to promote continuity and progression. Appropriately, there is currently a focus on cross-curricular links. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils study old and new houses in the area, combining local history and geography. Older pupils use mathematical skills to interpret old census information about Amble. Although pupils have the opportunity to write on various historical topics, this work is not contributing sufficiently well to developing writing skills. Tasks are not always well matched to pupils' needs and the quality of handwriting and presentation is not sufficiently high. Pupils make some use of information and communication technology to research projects but this needs further development. There is a satisfactory range of resources and the school makes use of visitors to the school and visits to places of historical interest in order to widen the pupils' experiences. A link is being fostered with other primary schools in the area and a joint 'Roman Feast' is planned for the near future.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' literacy skills are insufficiently developed in the work set.

- The co-ordinator has a clear agenda for improvement.
- Resources need further development.

Commentary

80. Although no lessons were seen at the previous inspection, provision in religious education was considered to be unsatisfactory. There has been considerable improvement since that time, most notably in the past year. Sufficient time is now allocated to teaching the subject and care is taken to ensure that lessons are not always at the end of the school day.
81. Evidence from the two lessons seen, from a review of pupils' work and from teachers' planning indicates that standards are broadly in line with the requirements of the new locally agreed syllabus. Achievement is satisfactory overall, though some pupils could sometimes achieve more. In the written work seen, there were occasions when only a limited response was expected from the pupils and more could have been expected of the higher attainers.
82. The quality of teaching and learning seen was satisfactory. Both lessons focused on the Jewish New Year but studied different aspects. One lesson made good use of artefacts to illustrate the importance of light in the celebration and made reference to the importance of light in other faiths.
83. Opportunities for spiritual development have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are given time for reflection in oral lessons and through written work and also enabled to appreciate the similarities and differences in the religions studied. The work in religious education is well supported by acts of collective worship.
84. Curriculum leadership is good. The new co-ordinator has worked hard to implement the new guidelines, which she feels better highlight the main world faiths. She has an appropriate action plan for future development. Simple assessments are made. Resources need updating in light of the new syllabus. There are some useful links with religious institutions, but these could be further developed.

Art and design

85. No lessons were observed in art and design therefore it is not possible to form secure judgements about teaching and standards. However, evidence from samples of pupils' work on display and curriculum plans indicates that pupils receive a curriculum which is broadly appropriate.
86. Pupils in Year 2 are given opportunities to use pencil, pastels and crayon to record their observations of, for example, cut fruit, but the quality of this particular work is below what could be expected in the use of line, shape and texture. Some good work is on display in the Year 3 classroom. The drawing skills of the Year 4 pupils do not show sufficient detail or care in presentation. Pupils use the work of famous artists as a stimulus for their own work; for example, Year 4 pupils created a 'Cubist Portrait' after studying the work of Pablo Picasso. Art from other cultures is also celebrated; for example paintings in the style of Aboriginal art, and similarly a study of African masks led to the art club making masks and embellishing them with paint, feathers, rice, pasta and wool to create a colourful and welcoming display in the entrance hall. Pupils need to use a wider range media and techniques in developing their skills in art and design.

87. A new scheme of work has been introduced by the co-ordinator based on national guidance; this is giving more structure to the teaching and learning and represents an improvement since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Although no firm judgements were made about standards in design and technology in the previous report, the report was very critical of the provision. No teaching was observed during this inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards or the quality of teaching. Evidence from the small amount of pupils' work on display and planning documents, indicate that pupils are now receiving an appropriate curriculum, although most improvements have been made recently. Assessment is underdeveloped. There is evidence of an effective recording system for the various stages of projects being used in Year 4.
89. A new policy and scheme have been introduced aimed at providing challenge. The school has begun to use national guidelines to better ensure continuity and progression. There is some evidence of the use of designs and evaluations in connection with work on making puppets and money containers. The quality of written work and presentation needs to improve. Opportunities for developing food technology need a higher profile. Whole-school planning is being developed with a focus on cross-curricular links. Links are being fostered with a local secondary school that has recently gained the status of a technology college. Resources are adequate.

Music

90. As just one lesson was observed during the inspection, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on standards or the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils were observed singing in assemblies, although their singing lacked enthusiasm. The pupils have weekly music lessons guided by a new scheme of work based on national guidance; this ensures that pupils have access to an appropriate range of experiences in performance, composition and the appraisal of music. A peripatetic teacher takes a whole-school singing session on a monthly basis and the co-ordinator leads a weekly hymn practice.
91. In the one lesson seen, good teaching and learning were observed in a Year 4 lesson taken by the co-ordinator. Very good use was made of the teacher's own saxophone playing. In a well-structured lesson, pupils explored melodic phrases as they learnt a new song, 'Calypso'. The pupils achieved well in singing and also in the pair work when, using a good range of instruments, including xylophones, chime bars, tuned bells and tuned percussion tubes, they practised playing three melodic accompaniments.
92. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator is bringing about improvements. Around twenty older pupils benefit from a weekly lunchtime recorder class. Pupils enjoy taking part in the new half-termly music celebration assemblies. The work in music is becoming well resourced with plans to further raise the profile of the subject.

Physical education

93. No lessons were seen during the inspection and so no judgements can be made on standards or the quality of teaching and learning. The work is based on a very new scheme of work, which provides detailed planning and ensures that pupils receive an

appropriate curriculum. The staff are very happy with the guidance provided. The work benefits from a good-sized hall, good play space and an extensive playing field.

94. Good opportunities are provided for swimming, with pupils in Years 2 to 4 having fortnightly lessons throughout the year at the local leisure centre. There are good community links through which there is coaching in football and cricket. There are a number of sporting activities provided outside the school day, including football and netball; boys and girls are enthusiastic about these activities. As part of the school's partnership programme, Year 4 pupils, like others in the area, are developing work in dance on a theme of 'Rivers', which will lead to a public performance.
95. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is beginning to raise the profile of physical education. There are firm plans to develop more sporting links with other schools, to develop the level of resources for gymnastics and to increase staff knowledge in the teaching of dance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education and citizenship are well promoted in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are given good information about how to keep healthy.

Commentary

96. A strong emphasis on encouraging responsibility and independence is helping to promote the pupils' positive attitudes and other personal qualities. Personal, social and health education and citizenship is given a high profile by being timetabled weekly, sometimes as 'circle time'. The school's policy is very new, with the work being guided by a scheme of work developed by the local education authority.
97. The programme is well organised and includes work on diet and healthy eating, bullying, citizenship, drugs awareness and personal safety. As part of the scheme of work, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about drugs awareness through a puppet called 'Dansi'. Just prior to the inspection, pupils were encouraged to consider personal safety on November 5th. A Year 4 lesson observed enabled pupils to consider 'dangers in the home'.
98. Circle time makes a positive contribution. Pupils are encouraged to take turns, share thoughts, think about issues and, as they move through the school, show respect for views that may be different from their own. Circle time in the nursery enabled the children to pass round and cuddle the creatures called 'The Querks'; this helped the children to understand that everyone is unique and special. Activities such as this help to foster the good relationships which exist within the school.
99. The school's programme makes a positive contribution to its caring, community ethos where every child is valued. Co-operative relationships are encouraged throughout the school. The School Council gives pupils insights into the democratic process, helping them to make their views known; the council members take their

responsibilities very seriously; for example, they plan to introduce a 'bullying box' through which children can seek support. Young as they are, most pupils of all ages show a good awareness of how to behave in a community and they usually work well together in a supportive and caring way. The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship underpins the school's ethos.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
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	4

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).