

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOM COTTAGES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ferryhill, Co Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114096

Headteacher: Mrs J C Best

Lead inspector: Miss K Manning

Dates of inspection: 31st January – 3rd February 2005

Inspection number: 266515

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 341

School address: Broom Road
Ferryhill
County Durham

Postcode: DL17 8AN

Telephone number: 01740 651363

Fax number: 01740 656828

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Reverend K Lumsdon

Date of previous inspection: March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Broom Cottages Primary is a large school, with 314 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6. A further 53 children attend the nursery part-time. The number of pupils on roll has fallen in the last three years as fewer children are born in the area. The proportion of pupils who start or leave the school after the reception class is lower than the national average.

When they start in nursery, children's attainments vary considerably but is mostly well below what is typical for children of this age. Few have the skills and knowledge expected for their age, particularly in language, mathematics and in their personal and social development. One pupil has a statement of their special educational need and a further 33 have been identified as needing extra help from teachers or specialists. Most of these pupils have speech and communication problems and this is a significant barrier to learning.

The area in general is more disadvantaged than most. This is reflected in the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Almost all pupils come from British families and none are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. A small number of pupils come from travelling families and are supported in school by the Travellers Education Service.

The school is involved in the Improving Success Programme and the Leadership Development Strategy, which are national initiatives. In recent years it has received a Healthy School Award and a School Achievement Award. The headteacher has been in post for less than a year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2026 7	K Manning	Lead inspector	English
			Geography
			History
			English as an additional language
1944 3	N Walker	Lay inspector	
2918 8	G Ulyatt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Religious education
2337 5	J Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Science
			Music
			Physical education
3213 3	J Elton	Team inspector	Special educational needs
			Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Design and technology

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited
 14 Enterprise House
 Kingsway
 Team Valley
 Gateshead
 Tyne & Wear
 NE11 0SR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	8
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	15
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. Teaching is good overall, though it is better in mathematics and science than in English and it is in these two subjects that pupils achieve best. Standards are above average in science and match those expected in mathematics. In English, pupils achieve steadily but not at a fast enough rate to prevent standards from falling well below those expected despite their positive attitudes to learning. Good leadership from the experienced headteacher sets the pace for continued improvement, particularly in areas of educational inclusion, which the school views as a priority. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Although the teaching and curriculum in English are satisfactory, they are not good enough to help pupils progress at a faster rate and consequently, standards are well below those expected.
- Though they achieve as well as other groups, pupils who are most able or gifted and talented are prevented from doing even better because their work is not always challenging enough.
- Standards in science are above those expected by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well and as a result, most are keen to learn and behave well.
- Staff take good care of pupils and the school's provision for children from travelling families is very good.
- Good leadership by the headteacher provides the school with a firm basis for continued improvement, but senior teachers are not yet monitoring standards or teaching rigorously enough.

The school continues to be effective. The key issues from the previous inspection in 1999 have been tackled systematically, though they have not all been completed to the school's satisfaction. Standards in science have risen and governance is more focused. The school has not kept up-to-date with its provision for the most able and talented pupils and standards in writing have fallen. However, the pace of improvement has picked up since the appointment of the current headteacher and is now improving at a good rate.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	E	E	E
mathematics	E	E	C	C
science	C	D	B	A

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

Pupils achieve well overall. They achieve very well in science, well in mathematics and steadily, but not fast enough in English. When they start in the Foundation Stage, many children lack the skills and experiences that are typical for their age. Despite achieving well, few achieve the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception. The results of national tests in 2004 showed that, in Years 1 and 2, pupils achieved well in reading and standards matched those expected for their age. In writing, standards were below those expected and in mathematics they were well below. However, the school's results in writing and mathematics do not accurately reflect the fact that in both subjects most pupils attained the level expected for their age. It is the lack of

higher attaining pupils that brought results down. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieved very well in science and attained standards that were above those expected. In mathematics, pupils' achievement was satisfactory and standards matched those expected. Standards in English fell well below those expected because pupils did not achieve well enough. Inspection findings show that in information and communication technology, standards are below those expected by the end of Year 2, but pupils achieve well over time. As a result, by the end of Year 6, most pupils attain standards that match those expected for their age. Standards in religious education meet those prescribed by the syllabus used in local schools.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to come to school. As a result, attendance matches the national average and pupils generally arrive on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning vary from unsatisfactory to excellent but are mostly good. The best teaching is in science, where pupils learn at a rapid rate and their knowledge is increased as a result of being taught by teachers from the secondary school. In English, teaching is satisfactory but not strong enough to help pupils make the progress they need to catch up from a low starting point. Unsatisfactory teaching happened when resources and tasks were not organised effectively and this slowed pupils' learning. In several subjects pupils benefit considerably from a wide range of educational visits and after-school activities. Though pupils who have special educational needs and those who come from travelling families get all the help they need to make good progress, other groups do not have the same opportunities. The most able pupils in Years 1 to 6 are not always challenged by their work and this prevents them from learning as well as they could. Similarly, children in reception classes do not learn as fast as those in the nursery because of limitations in the curriculum. Staff take good care of pupils and this has a marked effect on their personal development, helping them to become mature and sensible as they grow older.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. In the short time she has been at the school the headteacher has shown good leadership and paved the way for future improvement. Senior teachers lead their subjects satisfactorily but are not yet monitoring the quality of teaching and learning rigorously enough. Governors do a sound job on behalf of the school and fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities. The school is managed satisfactorily and staff are beginning to undertake more rigorous self-evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Teaching that is mostly good helps pupils who have special educational needs overcome these barriers to learning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents have positive views of the school and are happy with what it provides. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite lessons and activities and their enjoyment of school is reflected in their attitudes and behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in handwriting, throughout the school and writing in Years 3 to 6.
- Help the most able pupils to achieve a higher level by providing work that is challenging.
- Improve provision for pupils who are gifted and talented.

- Ensure that children in the Foundation Stage have equal access to an appropriate curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve very well in science and standards are above average. In mathematics, pupils achieve well and standards match those expected for their age. In English, pupils achieve steadily but this is not sufficient to prevent standards from being well below average. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well but those who are most able and talented pupils are not challenged to reach their full potential.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too few pupils achieve a higher level in English.
- The most able pupils are not always set work that would help them reach their full potential.
- Standards in science have risen considerably with more than half of last year's pupils in Year 6 achieving a higher level in national tests.

Commentary

1 When they start in nursery, most children have limited skills in language, literacy and mathematics and few experiences of the world outside of their homes and families. A number of children in the nursery come from travelling families and the school has an above average proportion of children who have special educational needs. This represents attainment that is well below what is typical for their age. From this low starting point children go on to achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage but despite this few achieve the early goals expected by the end of reception.

2 The teaching in English has not been strong enough to prevent standards from falling since the previous inspection and standards are well below average by the end of Year 6. Last year, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached the expected level in reading and writing was about the same as most other schools. However, few pupils achieved a higher level in reading and none did so in writing. This brought the school's results down. One reason for this is that average and higher attaining pupils are often set the same work, and consequently the most able pupils are not challenged to do better. The school's performance data shows that pupils do not make sufficient progress during Years 3 to 6. Very few achieve a higher level in national tests, although the same group of pupils do very well in science. The main reasons for the difference in achievement is that there are weaknesses to the planning and teaching of English that do not exist in mathematics or science. For the past five years girls in Year 2 have outperformed boys in national tests. On average, they are working about a term and a half ahead of boys. The school has rightly focused on raising standards for all pupils and little has been done to narrow this gap.

3 In mathematics, pupils achieve well and go on to attain standards that match those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In this subject far fewer pupils in Year 2 achieve a higher level, again reflecting the lack of challenge in the work given to the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2.

4 The school's results in science are a real success story. By the end of Year 2, teachers' assessment showed that more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level. However, no pupils achieved a higher level, which reflects the fact that

teachers are not sufficiently challenging the most able children in these years. This does not detract from the fact that pupils had achieved well to reach the expected level from a lower than typical start. Standards rose considerably in Year 6 and were above average, largely because more than half of the pupils achieved a higher level in national tests. The school's performance data shows that the progress pupils made between Year 3 and Year 6 had been very good. Overall, very good teaching ensures that pupils achieve particularly well in this subject.

5 Pupils' success in science is also a contributory factor in why standards in Year 6 have been rising faster than the national trend. In Year 2 standards are rising at a similar rate to the national trend.

6 Standards in information and communication technology have been maintained at the end of Year 6 but have fallen by the end of Year 2 and are now below those expected for pupils' age. This is largely because younger pupils do not have the regular or frequent access to computers that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have. Consequently pupils in Years 1 and 2 progress at a slower pace than those in Years 3 to 6 who achieve well. Standards in religious education have also been maintained and continue to meet those prescribed by the syllabus used in local schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (14.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.1 (15.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.3 (17.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.3 (24.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.0 (25.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.7 (27.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They have good attitudes to learning and consequently attendance matches the national average and most pupils arrive at school on time. The vast majority of pupils behave well but, in the last year, a very small number behaved badly enough to warrant exclusions for a short time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's procedures for managing behaviour are effective, maximising the opportunities for teaching and learning.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong.
- The 'buddy system' helps pupils gain a sense of responsibility.
- Pupils try hard to gain one of the school awards because they value them highly.

Commentary

7 Behaviour is good, providing a climate that is both friendly and conducive to learning. Pupils are keen to learn and concentrate well during lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and pupils know their ideas are valued. During group activity pupils have a mature approach, discussing together and listening to the opinions of others. The youngest children also show increasing levels of concentration and great interest in all they do. School rules are well understood by pupils because all adults adopt a consistent approach and have high expectations. Older pupils set a good example to younger ones. Around the school pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They take pleasure in helping each other. In the

past year a very small number of pupils have been excluded for short periods, when their behaviour towards adults or other children has been unacceptable and in contravention of all school rules. In each case, staff and governors have followed the school's procedures and explained these to parents and the pupils involved.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Chinese

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
338	10	0
2	0	0

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

8 During religious education and personal, social and health education lessons, moral issues are often raised and discussed at length. Pupils therefore have ample opportunities to consider good codes of conduct and their impact on each individual. Adults are good role models treating each pupil fairly. They explain any misdemeanours clearly so all understand the school rules. Pupils say the rules of ‘no swearing, no kicking, no fighting and no talking when the teacher is talking’ are very fair and easy to adhere to. At lunch and break times they play well together. Pupils have no concerns regarding bullying or name-calling.

9 One of the strengths of the school’s spiritual development is that there is a climate in which all pupils can grow and flourish. Pupils have good opportunities to develop individual and collective responsibilities. A group of pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 are ‘buddies’ to others. These pupils look after the needs of others. Anyone needing care, companionship or support has someone who will offer immediate help. This creates a safe and caring play environment for everyone.

10 The school’s good provision for cultural development helps pupils respond to achievement and recognise the value of working hard in order to succeed in later life. Pupils say that they are proud of their school and the area in which they live. They try hard to do their best in school and value local traditions. Throughout the week, pupils work hard to acquire points from teachers, which lead to prestigious school awards. Pupils subsequently receive gifts such as pens and rulers. Pupils say that the awards are hard to achieve because they are usually given for effort, which means they have to always give of their best in order to obtain them. It is very clear during award assemblies how proud pupils are of their achievements.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.5%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.4
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good teaching and close links with other schools are the main strengths. The curriculum is satisfactory as are links with parents and the community. The ethos of the school is warm and welcoming and staff take good care of pupils.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall, though it varies from unsatisfactory to excellent. Pupils' rate of learning depends on the quality of teaching but is generally good. The school's procedures for assessment are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching of science but teaching of English is not strong enough to raise standards.
- In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning is good overall but better in the nursery than in the reception classes.
- Although pupils who have special educational needs and those from travelling families receive good support, teachers do not always make the best use of teaching assistants.
- Teachers plan activities that interest and motivate most pupils but higher attaining pupils are not always challenged by their work.
- The school's procedures for assessing and recording have not been in place long enough to raise standards.

Commentary

11 There are variations in the quality of teaching, which have a marked impact on pupils' learning and their attitudes to work. The teaching of science is of a very good quality throughout the school. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment and pupils find this type of activity exciting and enjoyable. Teachers generally expect pupils to perform at a high level and pupils respond well to the challenge. The same is not true for the teaching of English and in particular writing. Teachers accept written work of a low standard; for example, few pupils in Year 6 write in a cursive or elegant style and they rarely use ink to write up their best work. There are also weaknesses to the planning of English. In their efforts to raise standards, some teachers spend long amounts of time teaching English and consequently pupils lose interest. It is gaps like this that prevent standards in English from being higher.

12 In the Foundation Stage, teaching is better in the nursery than in reception classes because the activities are based on the areas of learning and an appropriate curriculum for children of this age. In the reception classes, where much of the work is based on subjects, children do not make the same rapid progress. When activities are linked to areas of learning children are more engrossed in their work and play and make better progress. For example, in a well-taught activity aimed at promoting their personal, social and emotional development a small group of children talked openly about feelings and listened closely to what the teacher and others had to say.

13 The deployment of teaching assistants has recently been reviewed and staff are not yet using their time or talents efficiently. At the start and end of lessons, when teachers are talking with the whole class, teaching assistants often have very little to do. In contrast, when pupils are working individually or in small groups teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They provide a substantial amount of help for pupils who have special educational needs and those who come from travelling families, often ensuring that any difficulties they have with reading and writing do not prevent them from getting the most out of the lesson.

14 A key strength of the very good teaching is that teachers plan activities that are interesting to pupils. In an outstanding science lesson, pupils in Year 6 carried out an investigation into forces, which required them to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. They worked really hard to predict results and present them to the rest of the class. In a number of subjects teachers capture pupils interest by giving them first-hand experiences or high quality resources to stimulate their imagination. This happened in a Year 5 and 6 class when pupils produced detailed drawings of ancient Greek warriors after looking at pictures of vases on the Internet. Pupils

say that they prefer this style of learning. In the only lesson that was taught unsatisfactorily, the teacher had planned a lively experiment but pupils became too excited and careless in their work because of the lack of organisation and discipline. As a result, their progress was slow and they learned little.

15 Although lessons are often interesting, teachers do not always plan work to challenge the most able or talented pupils. It is most noticeable in Years 1 and 2 where average and higher attaining pupils often do the same work in some subjects. As a result, no pupils achieved a higher level in writing or science. Senior staff have rightly identified this as a key priority for raising standards.

16 With clear guidance from the newly appointed co-ordinator of assessment, staff have agreed and begun to use systems for assessing and recording pupils attainment and progress. These records provide teachers with detailed information about individual pupils and how well they are doing. Teachers are now using them to identify pupils who have special educational needs and to set targets in literacy for all pupils. However, they have not been in place long enough to have had a significant effect on teaching and learning. The real strength of the assessment is the high quality marking of pupils' work. Teachers give praise for effort and accuracy and pupils say that their teachers' comments help them to know how to get better. Older pupils also said that they are pleased that teachers expect them to comment on other pupils' work and that they try to do this sensibly.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	7 (14%)	21 (41%)	21 (41%)	1 (2%)	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 curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a good range of educational outings and after-school activities. It caters well for pupils who have special educational needs and those from travelling families but children in reception classes and the most able and talented pupils do not get the same opportunities to make progress. The accommodation is very good though there are some weaknesses in the outdoor provision for children in the reception classes. There are adequate resources to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils from different groups do not have the same access to the curriculum and learning resources.
- Educational visits, visitors and after-school clubs are popular with pupils and add considerably to their learning experiences.
- The school makes good use of its spacious accommodation to provide well for swimming and dance, drama and music.

Commentary

17 Although satisfactory overall, a key issue for improvement is ensuring that pupils of all abilities and ages have access to a relevant curriculum. For example, in the reception classes, the curriculum does not always reflect the areas of learning that are deemed to be appropriate for children of their age. Though many lessons and activities are based on topics, there are still too many times during the week when work is specific to the subjects

of the National Curriculum. This inappropriate curriculum slows children's learning to a steady rather than good pace. The school does not have clear policies or procedures for identifying pupils who are gifted and talented and ensuring that they are helped to gain their full potential. In contrast, the school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Children's difficulties are often identified during their time in nursery and teachers are quick to plan programmes of work aimed at helping them to overcome their problems. Similarly, the expertise and resources provided by the Travellers Support Service are put to good use to ensure that this group of pupils get a very good deal from the school.

18 Pupils of all ages benefit from the numerous educational outings and visitors to the school that are planned by teachers. Children in the Foundation Stage beamed with pleasure when given the chance to play percussion instruments by a school based classroom auxiliary. Educational visits, such as to a farm or a Hindu temple help to bring the curriculum to life for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Pupils talk enthusiastically about what they have learned on these visits and they remember a considerable amount of detail. For example, pupils from reception year got very excited when talking about a hedgehog and acorns that they had found on a science field trip.

19 Being in a converted secondary school has some definite advantages. There is a well-equipped gymnasium, a hall with specialist lighting and a swimming pool. Pupils benefit from all three; they have plenty of space and equipment to extend their physical skills and play sports. Pupils start swimming lessons from a specialist instructor in Year 2 and virtually all achieve the 25m standard by Year 4. The school stage with its full lighting and sound system is used frequently and pupils take part in high quality, well-supported productions, such as the recent nativity play. Pupils in the reception class, however, are not so well catered for because their outdoor play area is not exciting or versatile enough to extend their skills in physical development or other areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school does a good job of ensuring the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. They are provided with good, support, advice and guidance and the school involves them well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils from travelling families benefit considerably from the high level of care and guidance that is provided by the school.
- The school council is a good forum for taking pupils views into account.
- Staff and pupils have gained a Healthy School Award and are rightly proud of this.
- Pupils have good and trusting relationships with one or more adults in school.

Commentary

20 Teachers work closely with the Travellers Support Agency to ensure that pupils from travelling families settle quickly into the school and get the best from their time in lessons. The Support Agency keeps staff and governors up-to-date with issues affecting travelling families and the law so that the school is always able to provide appropriate advice and help. When these children start school they are allocated a support worker to help them settle in and these workers stay as long as pupils need them. Teachers ensure that pupils from travelling families have extra help in lessons, especially where they have difficulties with reading or writing. As a result of the high quality guidance and support, these pupils achieve well and are happy in school. They make friends with other children and are keen to learn. The school does all it can to assist families too, and parents said

that they value this help, particularly the packs of work that teachers provide when children are away for any length of time.

21 The school council is a powerful way of seeking pupils' views and sharing them with teachers. Representatives from most classes meet regularly to discuss issues that are of importance to them and their school. Pupils say that they are very proud to be elected as a member of the school council as it means taking on a lot of responsibilities. The council members approach their role in a mature way and the contributions they make are sensible and carefully thought out. Teachers, who guide the meetings respect their points of view and listen to all opinions, which are then shared with other staff and governors. In the past the school council has been responsible for changes to the toilets and grounds and has had a say in planning social events and fund raising. All of this has a significant impact on pupils' personal development and helps develop their citizenship skills.

22 Staff and pupils have worked hard to gain a Healthy School award. Adults ensure that pupils have regular access to drinking water throughout the day and recognise that this is vital to their concentration and mental well-being. There is always fruit and salad available at lunchtimes and pupils snack on fruit or vegetables during the day. Teachers and lunchtime supervisors go to great lengths to ensure that pupils know which foods they should be eating, though pupils and parents do not always choose these. A healthy lifestyle is also promoted well through the comprehensive personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils learn about the dangers of misusing drugs and alcohol and those in Year 6 talked graphically about how smoking damages the lungs.

23 The relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils feel that all staff in school give them good support and advice with their work. In the Foundation Stage, there are satisfactory arrangements for helping children settle into nursery and children from travelling families get a lot of help from support staff. Older pupils have access to a trained counsellor who can talk them through any emotional problems that affect their work or behaviour. She knows all the pupils by name and is available at lunchtimes, which is when most pupils approach her for advice over squabbles or events that take place in the yard. Throughout the school, pupils said that they would go to their teacher or another named adult if they had any problems. In English and mathematics pupils are given individual learning targets, which they feel help them to make progress. Pupils from Year 6 said that they are happy with the way their work is marked and know what they have to do to improve.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with the community and good links with other local schools. The partnership with parents is satisfactory and has a direct influence on achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information in written reports is not always helpful to parents.
- There are strong ties with the local community but only limited links with the wider or global community.
- Pupils benefit from close contacts with other local schools.

Commentary

24 Although the information that is provided for parents is satisfactory overall, the written reports that parents get at the end of the year are not as helpful as they could be. This is largely because teachers focus too much on telling parents what aspects of the

curriculum their children have been taught and not what skills and knowledge they have gained. In the Foundation Stage, teachers do not always report on how children are working towards the early goals in each area of learning. In Years 1 to 6, some teachers make the same comments about children of different abilities; making it very difficult for parents to get a clear view of how well their children are really doing against national benchmarks. Often the reports make general statements about attitude rather than achievement and this was one of the concerns that parents spoke of in questionnaires that were returned to the school and the meeting held before the inspection. The headteacher recognises that this is an area for improvement and sees it as a priority for the coming year.

25 The school continues to be a hub for community life, and a fair number of pupils attend Brownies and Guides meetings and the football club that is led by an experienced coach. The Better Reading Partnership, where adults from the community are trained to spend time reading with pupils has been particularly successful in helping to raise standards and encourage a love of books and reading. There are links with local churches and pupils take part in neighbourhood events and festivals. As a result, pupils are proud of their village and feel a sense of belonging to the area. Efforts to widen pupils' horizons and help them to see their place in a global and multicultural society are satisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 talked excitedly about the sights, smells and sounds that they experienced on a visit to a Hindu temple and it was clear that they had learned a lot. However, teachers are not yet making sufficient use of information and communication technology to help give pupils other experiences when first-hand visits are not possible. For example, pupils do not communicate electronically or otherwise with schools in other countries.

26 Pupils benefit considerably from close links with other local schools. The local secondary school holds Easter and summer schools, which many pupils attend. Pupils say that they enjoy taking part in well-organised activities and that the schools help them make the move to secondary school confidently because they know some of the teachers and students. Parents like the schools because they give their children something to do during the holidays. Pupils also benefit from being taught science, information and communication technology, French and a programme of personal development by specialist teachers from the secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership. Governance is satisfactory and so is the leadership of senior teachers. The school is managed soundly. The school is dealing well with the barriers to learning caused by pupils' lack of skills and knowledge when they start in the nursery and of the higher than average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are now closely involved in the work of the school.
- The headteacher has a clear vision of how the school should develop.
- Subject co-ordinators know what they want to do to raise standards but are not yet monitoring the quality of provision effectively.
- The school's involvement in the Improving Success Programme and Leadership Development Strategy has helped improve the leadership of key staff.

Commentary

27 The quality of governance has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. They are far more involved in strategic planning and in determining priorities

for school development. The headteacher keeps them informed about what is going on in the school and they check this for themselves during the frequent visits made by several governors. Governors have an overall picture of standards that is gained from reviewing performance data. By these means they have a good idea of what the school does well and where improvements are needed. The governing body ensures that the school meets its statutory responsibilities and has clear aims and policies, such as a race equality policy. They are currently working hard to meet the requirements of workforce reforms and the guidance in the document Excellence and Enjoyment.

28 The headteacher has a clear vision for how the school should develop. In the short time since her appointment the headteacher has succeeded in creating a team of staff who are enthusiastic and committed to the success of the school. She has done this by reflecting on the school's provision and characteristics before making any changes. This has paid dividends because it has enabled her to evaluate the key areas of teaching and learning accurately. As a result, the priorities identified in the school's plan for improvement are relevant and are highly likely to have the desired affect on the quality of provision. The headteacher has forged cordial and professional relationships with governors and a good working partnership with the deputy headteacher. Parents feel that she is doing a good job and are happy with the way the school is run.

29 The leadership and management of co-ordinators are satisfactory. A strength of the leadership lies in the fact that subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and committed to raising standards and running an inclusive school in which each individual matters. They provide training and advice for other teachers and are willing to try new initiatives in order to make the curriculum more flexible and appropriate for all groups of pupils. This will help them as they continue to make changes to the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and the way that English is taught in Years 1 to 6 to ensure equal opportunities for all groups of pupils. Co-ordinators have put a lot of effort into reviewing systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and introducing new procedures where these have not previously existed or been out of date. There is a lot of potential in the leadership but co-ordinators are not yet monitoring the provision closely enough. For example, they are not familiar enough with performance data, which meant that gaps in teaching and learning had not been identified. The lack of a rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching also prevents leadership and management from being more effective.

30 For some time the school has been involved in national training programmes aimed at improving the quality of leadership and management. These have proved to be effective in helping co-ordinators develop the leadership skills needed to put into place effective systems for managing the poor behaviour of a very small number of pupils. Through the programmes the co-ordinators have also had the opportunity to work with literacy and numeracy consultants, which the headteacher feels has been beneficial for all staff.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	998,419	Balance from previous year	10,013
Total expenditure	996,157	Balance carried forward to the next	12,275
Expenditure per pupil	2930		

31 The school's finances are managed soundly. Money is spent wisely and in the main efficiently. One exception to this is that teachers do not always make best use of the time of teaching assistants and they often have no part to play in lessons when teachers are talking to the class. This inefficient use of their time has not been picked up because the monitoring is not rigorous enough.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32 Teaching and learning are good overall. Children achieve well because the majority benefit from up to five terms in the inspirational nursery setting. Progress slows in the reception classes, because the curriculum is not suited to their needs. Leadership and management are satisfactory and put the school in a sound position to make the changes to the curriculum and planning that are necessary to ensure that children in the reception classes have the same access to an appropriate curriculum, and equal opportunities to make progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage children to do things for themselves and as a result they gain independence.
- Children behave well because teachers treat them with respect.

Commentary

33 Despite the good teaching many children do not reach the early goals by the end of the reception class because their attainment on entry to the nursery is well below what is typical for their age. In the nursery, staff plan many opportunities for children to learn from each other and from adults through play and exploration. Children respond well to this method of teaching and achieve well, gaining confidence and independence. For example, children in the nursery get the equipment they need to carry out tasks and initiate play, games and activities with other children. In the reception classes there are not so many opportunities for children to learn through play because the curriculum is more formal. Consequently, though steady their progress is not as marked as in nursery. For children from travelling families this is sometimes their first experience of a school environment. They are given all the help they need to settle into school and quickly make friends.

34 Staff are good role models for behaviour. They treat other adults, including parents with respect and courtesy. Parents say that teachers are approachable and they value the daily opportunities that they have to talk about their children's welfare and progress. Children see how adults behave towards one another and copy this behaviour. For example, they say please and thank you, share equipment and wait their turn in games. Teachers listen attentively to children and are interested in what they have to say. As a result, children are keen to give their opinions, though they sometimes lack the patience to wait until it is their turn to speak.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan many opportunities for children to talk about themselves and their work and children respond well to this.
- Stories are used well to promote learning.
- Planning for teaching early reading and writing in reception classes does not always match children's ability.

Commentary

35 Many children start nursery with communication, language and literacy skills that are well below what are expected for their age. Despite good teaching few children achieve the early goals expected by the end of reception. One of the main reasons why children make good progress is that adults constantly encourage them join in conversations and talk about themselves and their work. When working with small groups of children, adults ask questions that encourage children to think about what they are doing and communicate this to others. In the nursery, children talk to others about the things they need and in reception classes children are confident enough to initiate conversations, and take on the roles of the people they pretend to be in imaginative play. For example, children playing in the *baby clinic* talked about 'weighing the baby' and 'listening to the heart with a stethoscope'.

36 In nursery and reception classes, teachers make frequent and effective use of stories to promote children's love of books and extend their vocabulary. This works well and means that children make good progress with reading and writing. By the time they are in reception classes, children build on the knowledge they have gained in nursery about the sounds of letters and use this to help them read unfamiliar words. Most are beginning to write independently and form their letters correctly. In the reception classes, lessons are often more formal than in nursery and many children lose interest in activities that go on for too long. Planning in reception classes does not always take account of children's ability, as all are given the same work to do. The books they read are also at the same level, so some find them too hard and others too easy. This slows children's learning to a steady rather than good rate.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good emphasis is given to early number.
- The hands-on approach consolidates children's understanding well.
- Mathematics is not included enough in daily routines.

Commentary

37 Teaching is good and children achieve well. However, their low starting point in nursery means that few achieve the early goals expected by the end of reception. Standards are likely to be below the expected level by the end of reception. Nursery children have good opportunities to develop their understanding of early number. Resources are plentiful and used well. This is not the case in reception classes where resources for mathematics are barely adequate. Adults in reception classes encourage children to sequence numbers and understand mathematical vocabulary. A strength of the teaching is that many activities each day involve counting. Children count backwards and forwards, but there are no clear cards used to help children identify numbers. Adults adopt a good hands-on approach and make best use of the area outside. Children throw beanbags into numbered buckets and enjoy the activity. In books, reception children are learning to count objects and record numbers. Children in the nursery learn to match shapes and make patterns. When baking they count the number of chocolate chips they put into cakes. In reception classes there are missed opportunities to include mathematics more often in routine situations such as counting children when they line up or counting objects they play with.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy the many opportunities to explore and investigate that are planned by teachers.
- The inadequate outdoor facility limits progress for reception children.
- Good emphasis is given to features of living things.

Commentary

38 Teaching is good but few children have the knowledge and understanding of the world that is typical for their age at the start of nursery. Though they achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage, few achieve the early goals by the end of reception. In the nursery children are encouraged to make their own cakes following instructions from adults. They see how the mixture changes when different ingredients are added. They learn where eggs come from and how best to use the wooden spoon to stir ingredients. Adults are skilful at questioning children to make them think carefully. In reception classes, children watch roots and shoots emerging from beans. Although all children grow plants outside, the area designated for reception children is small and not well designed so that they have little scope for exploring the world of nature. Children have regular access to computers and reception classes have taught sessions in the computer suite. Here they are well supported. The current topic interests reception children when they compare their eating habits with those of babies. They see similarities and differences and the impact growth has on their lives. Children enjoy playing with the rail track and using construction equipment, however planning does not show a learning focus for some play activities so learning opportunities are often missed.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The nursery makes the most of the accommodation outside.
- The outdoor play area for children in reception classes limits their physical development.

Commentary

39 On entry to the nursery, most children do not have the skills expected for their age. Due to good teaching they achieve the early goals by the end of reception. An important feature of the teaching is the broad range of activities that are offered to the children. These are well planned and give children daily opportunities to use a range of small tools. Consequently, most children learn to use scissors, pencils and paint brushes with proper control.

40 Children in the nursery have frequent, daily access to a stimulating outdoors area but the area available for reception children is smaller and does not allow them to run about or play with wheeled toys in the same way. Consequently, in the nursery children develop skills of co-ordination and know how to avoid bumping into other children when riding on tricycles or other toys with wheels. Children in the reception classes do not get to play in the same way and consequently do not get to consolidate their skills in the same way. In

part, this is overcome by the good use that teachers make of the hall and gymnasium facilities. Children particularly enjoy climbing on and jumping off the apparatus, which they do in a controlled and safe manner.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from inspirational music sessions.

Commentary

41 Teaching is good but children's low attainment on entry to the nursery prevents them from reaching the early goals by the end of the reception. Standards are below the expected level and children achieve well. Children have captivating music sessions from staff who have expertise and great enthusiasm. All children enjoy music and learn to be expressive in their response, for example, when pretending to be sunflowers. Children have daily opportunities to experiment with paint and colour. Reception children paint pictures showing good detail. They use clay to make models of animals. Books, such as *Owl Babies* are used to inspire artwork. Nursery children make musical instruments using a range of materials. Role-play opportunities are particularly good in inspiring children's imagination. This is because able support staff and teachers role model for them. Reception children happily dress up and pretend to be the doctor at the baby clinic, nursery children put on special hats to go to a christening. Staff prepare mixtures with soap flakes or corn flour so children can have sensory experiences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Though satisfactory, the teaching is not good enough to raise standards.
- Standards in handwriting are not high enough and in some classes teachers accept work that is untidy.
- There are weaknesses to teachers' planning that have an adverse effect on pupils' attitudes.
- Monitoring has not been rigorous enough to identify gaps in provision.
- The hard work that has gone into raising standards in reading is beginning to pay dividends.
- Pupils gain confidence in speaking by taking part in discussions and drama.

Commentary

42 The methods used to teach reading and writing are satisfactory and sufficient to enable most pupils to make steady progress from one year to the next. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy format to plan lessons that include time for work on a text and attention to grammar and punctuation. However, pupils have a lot of catching up to do because of their low starting point in the Foundation Stage and, in most classes, the teaching is not vibrant enough to do this. In some lessons, the whole-class session lasts for

too long, leaving very little time for pupils to work in groups or by themselves and sometimes they lose interest along the way.

43 There are weaknesses to the teaching of handwriting that account for standards falling since the previous inspection. In Years 1 and 2, time is set aside for handwriting lessons and teachers expect pupils to form letters correctly and position them carefully on the lines. However, pupils are not taught to write cursively and this prevents a number who might otherwise gain a higher level in national tests from doing so. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. By Year 6, pupils rarely write in pen and very few write in a fluent or joined style. It is often difficult to see any progress in handwriting from one year to the next; pupils seem to be stuck at the same level and a number regress as it becomes less important to them. The co-ordinator recognises that this is a key issue for improvement and has rightly made it a priority for the coming year.

44 Teachers work hard to raise standards but some of the strategies they employ are not working. For example, a number of teachers have timetabled additional English lessons alongside the hour spent teaching literacy each day. For a significant number of pupils this results in long periods of time working on the same subject and many, especially those who struggle, lose interest. It is testament to their positive attitudes that pupils continue to behave well in these situations.

45 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the co-ordinator has the knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment to make the changes necessary to raise standards. Until recently, the monitoring has not been strong enough to identify gaps in teaching and learning and this is one of the reasons why standards have fallen. For example, the co-ordinator has only an overall view of standards rather than a deeper understanding based on the school's performance data. In addition, because any observations of lessons have not been focussed enough, issues of handwriting and the presentation of work have not been identified.

46 The teaching of reading is often good and the strategies used are more effective. Throughout the school teachers use effective strategies to raise the profile of reading and promote a love of books. For example, the Better Reading Partnership, aimed at getting adults and pupils reading together and enjoying books. It was very popular with adults and children and had a significant impact on the standards achieved by pupils who took part in the programme. Teachers also work hard to ensure that parents of pupils from travelling families understand the value of books and reading. These parents say that they value what the school does on their behalf. Another successful initiative has been the display around school of the adults who have been 'caught reading'. Older pupils were keen to explain the display of photographs and talk about how important it is to be able to read. Pupils in Year 6 have favourite authors and genres and know how to scan text and infer meaning. Their enjoyment of reading is evident in conversation.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47 Pupils make frequent use of language and literacy across the curriculum. Activities such as 'hot seating', where pupils have to respond from the point of view of another person, are lively occasions for question and debate and pupils are keen to take part in these. In many lessons, teachers encourage pupils to discuss options or opinions in small groups. Pupils' responses vary in these situations, though they listen politely to what teachers have to say they do not listen to other pupils as attentively. A significant number of pupils speak using incorrect verbs and tenses and, when talking together, a small number use dialects that they have learned from television or computerised games. Teachers also pursue literacy targets in other lessons, however, this can be to the detriment

of the subject being taught. This happened in a geography lesson when pupils who were raring to go with their writing suddenly found that the emphasis was on sentence construction rather than geographical facts.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs but not for gifted and talented pupils including those with higher ability in mathematics.
- Teachers encourage pupils to have a positive attitude to mathematics.
- Teachers concentrate well on developing an appropriate mathematical vocabulary for their pupils.

Commentary

48 Mathematics is taught well throughout the school and pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well from a very low starting point. Pupils with special educational needs often receive additional support in lessons and benefit from the increased individual attention. Good teaching enables most pupils to reach the levels expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 although too few attain the higher standards by the end of Year 2. This is because teachers do not plan or teach the subject to fully match the needs of pupils with higher ability or who are specially gifted in mathematics. There is no formal procedure to identify and record the names of pupils who are gifted or talented to help ensure their needs are considered properly in lessons. Though the co-ordinator has started to analyse data this is at an early stage of development. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

49 Teachers take great care to make mathematics lessons as interesting as possible and most pupils say they enjoy the subject. Important areas of learning such as developing a full, technical vocabulary for mathematics are particularly well covered. This is important because it enables lessons to be taught with more accuracy and allows pupils to discuss their work with greater clarity of meaning. The National Numeracy Strategy forms a firm basis for lessons but teachers are confident enough to add their own stimulating touches to make the subject fun. For example, pupils in Year 3 enjoy working with amusing characters called 'Mummy Mummy' and 'Baby Mummy' and happily rise to the challenge of answering some difficult questions on weight. Teachers are beginning to use information and communication technology to good effect especially with older pupils. By using interactive boards and presentations teachers demonstrate how technology and mathematics can be linked to make both areas of learning more interesting.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50 Mathematics is well integrated into a number of other subjects so pupils understand that what they learn is very useful in a wide range of practical situations. For example, pupils in Year 5 use their mathematical skills and understanding well in science when they make tables of their individual pulse rates and use calculators to find the average.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- There is a good emphasis in lessons on investigating and testing.
- No pupils reach the higher levels in national tests at the end of Year 2 but a good proportion do so at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers successfully encourage pupils to enjoy the subject.
- The use of correct scientific vocabulary and procedures is carefully fostered.

Commentary

51 Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and very good progress in Years 3 to 6. From a low starting point this means that they achieve very well throughout the school. However, the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not attain the higher standards in national tests because there is an emphasis in teaching on getting most pupils to the expected standard by age seven. Between Years 3 and 6 pupils of average attainment are successfully encouraged to raise their standards to match the more able. As a result, a good proportion achieve standards that are above those expected for their age. Pupils from travelling families are given help to understand the language and consequently achieve as well as others.

52 The subject co-ordinator has an interest and enthusiasm for science that communicates to the whole staff. This is a key factor in why the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection. One of the significant outcomes of this can be seen in classrooms where teachers are united in their attempts to maintain good standards and raise them even further. Good practice is shared to improve teaching generally. For example, classrooms have large displays dedicated to learning about science and teachers use them skilfully to reinforce the important elements of investigations. Displays also contain the essential vocabulary needed by pupils when describing their investigations. Teachers are particularly good at encouraging pupils, even the youngest, to understand and use correct scientific words and terms and this ensures that pupils develop and refine their ability to discuss and report on their science work with precision.

53 The main reason why teaching is very good is that practical work, including first-hand investigations, is at the centre of the science curriculum. This emphasis is proving to be very successful because pupils really enjoy their science lessons and the activities mean that their scientific knowledge and understanding are broad and secure. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about different materials like wood, metal and plastic and investigate how they are changed when squashed, bent, twisted and stretched. Year 2 pupils extend their understanding when they watch and learn how materials like water and bread change when they are heated. Year 3 pupils are confident with managing an investigation to find which tights stretch the most and analyse their data in groups to help them draw shared

conclusions. Sometimes investigations do not work as well as they should because foreseeable problems are not thought through at the planning stage. When this happens, pupils lose focus and become frustrated so that they learn very little. Pupils enjoy learning about their own bodies and how they work. This happens in Year 5 where pupils measure their own pulse rate after studying the basic functions of the heart and circulatory system. Teaching and learning in Year 6 are particularly strong and this is shown in pupils' investigative work relating to forces like gravity. The class teacher, classroom assistant and a visiting science teacher from the local secondary school combine very effectively to work alongside pupils as they conduct carefully planned experiments. Pupils are well aware of health and safety issues and work with due care. They formulate sensible questions to answer, make realistic predictions, structure their investigations appropriately and work well together, when necessary, to ensure accuracy and fairness.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations by the end of Year 2 but pupils catch up in Years 3 to 6.
- Good teaching extends and consolidates pupils' skills and knowledge.
- Sound leadership has helped the co-ordinator identify priorities for development.

Commentary

54 Although pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2, standards at the end of Year 2 are below those expected for their age. This is largely due to the fact that they do not have sufficient opportunities to use computers in classrooms or other information and communication technology devices. By Year 6 pupils are achieving well and reach expected standards, as reported in the last inspection. There are two main reasons for the better standards attained by older pupils, they have more frequent access to computers on a daily basis compared with the younger pupils and Year 6 pupils are taught by a specialist teacher from the local secondary school. The introduction of interactive boards and individual laptops has benefited these older pupils. They use information and communication technology across the curriculum with confidence. The more able pupils in Year 6 are very secure with a large range of uses such as presentations, data analysis and word-processing.

55 Teaching and learning are consistently good. There are some very good features in many lessons. Progress has been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers plan their work well and give clear demonstrations, sometimes using interactive boards. Teaching assistants are well-briefed and make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, particularly with regard to helping pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers reward pupils for their achievements with praise and encouragement. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their work, as they did in the last inspection, and they continue to work well together. In some lessons, where pupils work on the same program, further provision is required to ensure pupils of different abilities make maximum progress. The less able require prompts to conduct a search and further practice of skills. The more able pupils need different and more challenging tasks. Pupils have good access to all aspects of the curriculum. Teaching one half of the class at a time in the computer suite increases teacher-pupil interaction and the consolidation of pupils' skills and knowledge.

56 The subject leader is new to the post. She provides satisfactory leadership and management. She has not monitored lessons but has audited stock, liaised with secondary school staff and given staff training. As a result of her first review of assessment and record keeping, these procedures have been revised and a new system that is more closely linked to the skills pupils are gaining has been introduced. This has not been in place long enough to raise standards or have an impact on pupils' attitudes to work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57 The computer suite is used well by all classes, including the reception class, to develop skills and apply them in different areas of the curriculum. For example, in Year 1 pupils make use of a mathematics program to support their revision of the terms 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'. In a Year 5 lesson pupils use a graphics package to reproduce an observed section of art from Miro and Kandinsky. Pupils regularly use the Internet for research across a range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

58 In **geography**, the school's provision was sampled by looking at pupils' work in books and on display and observing one lesson. The curriculum meets requirements and is enriched by educational visits to some of the places that pupils study. Older pupils wrote in detail about how South Shields and Whitby differ from Ferryhill and used appropriate geographical terms, such as 'recreation' and 'human features'. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have studied the physical features of an imaginary island and they follow the travels of a roving teddy bear. Parents have been involved in this work, some providing photographs and travelogues. In Years 3 to 6, pupils extend their knowledge of maps to include keys and show temperatures in the mountains as graphs. Their geographical studies have focused on the recent earthquakes and tsunami, which has given them a better idea of how the disasters happened.

59 The school's provision in **history** was sampled by observing one lesson and looking at the work in pupils' books. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study toys from the past and use photographs, letters and a diary to research World War II and the war in Iraq. Older pupils have studied the Victorians and ancient Greek civilisations. They are particularly interested in Greek myths and legends, which they talk about in some detail, giving names of Gods and other characters and explaining what they did. They have also studied the lives of famous historical characters such as Captain Cook, Dr Barnardo and Lord Shaftsbury. Their written work shows that pupils understand how each has shaped history.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits enrich learning opportunities.
- Teachers make good use of religious education lessons to promote pupils' personal development.

Commentary

60 Standards match those prescribed in the syllabus used by local schools and have been maintained since the previous inspection. In pupils' books much of the work centres around major world faiths. Pupils progress at a steady rate throughout the school and their

achievement is satisfactory. In Year 6 pupils know about important events from the Old and New Testaments and learn to distinguish the difference. In Year 2 pupils learn about some of the parables Jesus told. They learn about special Jewish celebrations such as the Shabbat meal.

61 The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. In good lessons there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to exchange their ideas and increase their knowledge. Teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn. They provide as much first hand experience as possible. Recent visits to places of worship including the Hindu Temple and St Luke's Christian Church inspire pupils and offer them worthwhile experiences. For example, pupils in Year 4 have a good respect and clear understanding about several aspects of the Hindu faith. This is because during their visit to the temple they learned about several aspects of Hindu life and the effect the Hindu religion has on the lives of believers.

62 Teachers are skilled at making good links between religious teaching and personal development. Pupils are given time in lessons to reflect and consider how, for example, Siddhartha felt when he was thinking of leaving home. They also consider how his parents reacted to his decision. The youngest pupils are encouraged to act out scenes in his life and this increases their understanding. Older pupils consider how the Tabernacle was special to Moses and link this to items that are special to them. They find out how the beliefs of Christians and Jews help with moral dilemmas. They seriously consider the impact of the commandment 'thou shalt not steal' on society today.

63 The subject is soundly lead and managed. The co-ordinator is aware that teachers are improving in confidence as their subject knowledge increases. Teachers mark pupils' work and this supports progress. Assessment procedures are not yet in place and systems for monitoring teaching and learning are not rigorous enough. Therefore subject provision remains satisfactory as it was at the time of the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64 The single lesson in **art and design** showed that pupils knew the work of artist Andy Goldsworthy and could discuss its features. They were given interesting natural materials to work with and enjoyed drawing their sculptures. Pupils are taught a variety of techniques and use a variety of resources. In Year 2 they design and decorate clowns with paper and pens. By Year 4, they draw, paint and use other materials including charcoal to illustrate a poem. By Year 6 pupils use montage to depict themes such as 'Sea Resorts' and 'Sports' and make detailed sketches of architecture. There is little evidence, however, of regular teaching of graphic skills to help pupils improve their drawing and painting skills as they progress through the school. Pupils use inappropriate pencils for drawing.

65 **Design and technology** was sampled by looking at books and displays and talking with pupils about their work. The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to work at food technology and to incorporate their skills in science and information and communication technology. Throughout the school pupils work involves designing, making and evaluating products, though it is the making that pupils insist they most enjoy. In Year 1, pupils learn how to use a hinge to connect a door and how to construct decorative weave to enhance an artefact's appearance. In Year 3, pupils evaluate different types of bread and make their ideal sandwich. Year 4 pupils construct models containing a switch and an electrical bulb. Pupils in Year 5 are able to analyse the mechanisms in moving toys and construct their own designs using these.

66 The school's provision in **music** was sampled by talking with pupils and observing a small number of activities. Good use is made of the musical talents of a teaching assistant to teach pupils throughout the school. Pupils are taught in small groups, while the class teacher works with the rest of the class. Pupils say that they enjoy singing and playing instruments. The choir is a popular after-school activity and performs for the whole school in assemblies and at special events. When it comes to musical and dramatic performances, pupils benefit from having access to high quality stages and lighting. Pupils in Year 2 talked excitedly about the recent nativity play and their part in it. Parents also say that they really enjoy attending musical events in the school. A number of parents choose to pay for their children to learn to play musical instruments. These pupils are proud of their progress and are keen to play for any audience.

67 **Physical education** was sampled by observing a small number of lessons, sports activities and by talking with pupils. Pupils are very fortunate to have a swimming pool and expert coaching on site. This is evident in the fact that almost all pupils can swim 25 metres or more by the time they leave Year 4. In the lessons observed pupils were taught hockey skills, such as passing and moving into space to receive the puck. Pupils say they enjoy physical education most when they are active and show a desire to improve their techniques and reach high standards. However, in a games situation, pupils forgot what they had just been taught and chased after the puck in large groups. The school provides a wide range of sporting activities including opportunities for boys and girls to take part in games and athletic competitions against neighbouring schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

68 The school's provision for promoting pupils' **personal, social and health education and citizenship** was sampled by talking with pupils and observing some of the planned programme of lessons. Teachers' planning shows that the programme includes opportunities for pupils to learn about the effects of smoking and drug abuse on their bodies and to find out how to stay healthy; for example, by choosing fruit at lunchtime. The school council is a good forum for pupils to learn about democracy and citizenship and gain some

of the skills that they will need when they leave school. Pupils also learn about the life of travelling families from classmates who come from this background. Informally, pupils' personal development is further promoted through the close relationships between adults and pupils. Teachers respect pupils and have their best interests at heart and pupils' respond by being willing to try their best and work hard. A measure of the success of the provision is that pupils and parents are in agreement that children help and care for one another.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
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	4

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