

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FELL DYKE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wrekenton

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108379

Headteacher: Ms Susan Waugh

Lead inspector: Dr Brian Male

Dates of inspection: 23-25 February 2004

Inspection number: 261311

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	230
School address:	Springwell Road Wrekenton Gateshead
Postcode:	NE9 7AA
Telephone number:	(0191) 4875097
Fax number:	(0191) 4874406
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Malcolm Graham
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This community primary school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years old, and is maintained by the Gateshead Local Education Authority. At the time of the inspection there were 189 full time pupils in classes, with a further 31 pupils attending the nursery part-time. Many pupils start school with standards of attainment that are very low compared with those usually found. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also well above the national average. There is a very low proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities and only one at an early stage of learning English. A relatively high number of pupils join and leave the school between Nursery and Year 6. The school is very active in the community and provides a wide range of services. It has received a number of national awards such as the School Achievement award in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

The school has been designated as an 'Early Excellence Centre', and therefore makes provision for year-round day-care for children from six months old, and 'wrap-around' care for school-aged children before and after school. It also serves as a centre for medical and social provision such as baby clinics, and provides a range of adult and family education.

This report is required to focus on those aspects of provision that come directly under the headteacher's responsibility; these mainly comprise the nurture groups, the dissemination of good practice, and the close liaison with medical and social services for the early identification and support of special educational needs. The quality of aspects such as day-care, wrap-around care for pupils before and after school, adult education, community education and family learning are not within the remit of this inspection.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14806	Dr Brian Male	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology, history, geography, special educational needs
19419	Mrs Sue Boyle	Lay inspector	
24027	Mrs Malli Kutty	Team Inspector	Foundation stage, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education
23548	Mr Paul Carlyle	Team Inspector	Mathematics, science, religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good school** where pupils achieve very well. There is a good overall quality of educational provision and the school provides good value for money. The very good achievement is promoted by the very good start in the nursery and reception classes, the consistently good teaching through the rest of the school, and the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Another reason why achievement is so good is that many of the barriers to learning are removed very effectively by the school's very good support structures, and by the very high adult to pupil ratio. Much of this provision is enhanced by the school's status as an Early Excellence Centre (EEC).

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is good overall, assessment arrangements are very good, and pupils achieve very well.
- Children receive a very good start in the nursery and reception classes, where teaching is very good.
- Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to school.
- There is very good support for pupils that ensures that all pupils are included.
- There are very good links with parents and the community that help promote pupils' positive attitudes.
- The curriculum is broad and very well enhanced by extra-curricular activities.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school.
- There needs to be more structured opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills further in Years 1 to 6.
- The EEC enhances the school's provision, but its management structure needs clarifying.
- Pupils' behaviour is now good enough to enable them to benefit from more independence in their learning, particularly for older pupils.

The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment are significantly higher, especially in mathematics (maths). Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved. Teaching is much better. The curriculum has improved. The partnership with parents and the community is much stronger. All of the key issues have been addressed.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those where a similar proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good overall.** Standards in Year 6 this year are average in maths and science, and below average in English. Standards in Year 2 are slightly below the national average in reading, writing, maths and science. In both Years 2 and 6, standards are below average in information and communication technology (ICT), where equipment is still fairly new, and in line with those usually found in other subjects. Standards of speaking are generally low across the school. These standards represent very good overall achievement for the pupils across the school, taking account of the very low starting point and the barriers to learning faced by many children.

There is a continuing trend of rising standards that are well above those of other schools in similar circumstances.

Pupils make very good progress through nursery and reception classes. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, and they make good progress. The nurture groups effectively promote pupils' self-confidence and create a situation in which they are able to learn.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They have very positive attitudes to school and are keen to learn. Their personal qualities such as relationships and concern for others are very good. These have been enhanced by EEC provision such as the nurture groups. Attendance is satisfactory, and pupils arrive promptly for school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good overall. The quality of teaching is good overall** and very good in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers work very hard and have a particularly good commitment to their pupils. Relationships are very good, and pupils are managed well. In the best lessons, there are high expectations, and the pupils are involved in interesting practical activities that extend learning. There is good support for learning from teaching assistants, and good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school has identified the need to extend pupils' speaking skills and develop more independence in learning.

There is a broad and balanced curriculum enhanced by a very good programme of visits and extra-curricular activities. There are very good arrangements for pupils' support and guidance. These are enhanced by the provision of the EEC, and are very effective in promoting pupils' self-confidence. The school is very well staffed, accommodation is extremely spacious, and resources are good. The very good quality of the learning environment has a significant impact on achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good overall.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and has ensured a rising trend of standards and of improved provision. Senior staff lead their areas very effectively. There are effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's provision. The governing body is well led and has a good vision for the role of the school in the community. All statutory requirements are met. The aspects of EEC provision within the school's direct control are managed effectively. Recent changes in the structure of EECs across the borough have left the overall management structure unclear in some aspects, and this needs to be resolved between the school and the Local Education Authority.

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

Parents are very supportive of the school, and there is no area where a significant number would like to see improvement. Parents are appreciative of the wide range of community provision made by the school, some of which is through the EEC. Their very positive views of the school help promote their children's very good attitudes to learning. Pupils are also very positive about school and keen to participate in its many events.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In order to build on its good provision and very good achievement, the next steps for the school are to:

- Create more structured opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop their speaking skills.
- Seek help to clarify the management structure of the EEC.
- Give pupils more independence in their learning.

The school has already identified in its development plan the need to extend pupils' speaking skills and extend independence.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievement is very good overall. Achievement is particularly good in the nursery and reception classes, and in maths and science by Year 6. Standards are below average in ICT, and standards of speaking need improving across the school.

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

- There is a strong trend of rising standards by the end of Year 6, and standards are significantly higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Children make particularly good progress through the nursery and reception classes.
- The very good achievement is promoted by the school's good teaching, very good systems of support, and high staffing ratios.
- Standards of speaking need raising across the school.

#### **Commentary**

1. Many pupils enter the nursery with standards of attainment well below those usually found. In some aspects such as communication, language, literacy, knowledge and understanding, standards are very low. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards of attainment are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils have therefore made very good progress and have achieved very well. Overall standards at the end of Year 6 are well above those of similar schools. This very good achievement is promoted by the very good start pupils make in the nursery and reception classes where teaching is very good, the consistently good teaching through the rest of the school, and the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. The other reason why achievement is so good is that many of the barriers to learning are removed very effectively by the school's very good systems of support. These barriers include the quite significant emotional and behavioural problems that beset many pupils, and the very low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence of others. The school's very supportive ethos and its very good support structures, such as nurture groups, many of which are enhanced by the EEC, address these factors very effectively. The school's very high adult to pupil ratio that allows a great deal of individual and small group support, together with its very good learning environment, are other factors contributing to the very good achievement.
2. Very good teaching and a rich curriculum enable pupils to make very good progress through nursery and reception classes. Many children enter the nursery class with poorly developed communication skills, their personal, social and emotional skills are weak and many have very limited knowledge of the world around them. The well organised learning environment and the high quality support and guidance they receive help them to develop their confidence, and self-esteem and enjoyment in learning. They therefore make very good progress through the nursery and reception classes in all six of the expected areas of learning, and achievement is very good.
3. Good teaching through Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to make good progress, particularly in reading, writing and maths. Standards in Year 2 are higher than in 2003, when there was a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs. Standards are now slightly below the national average overall in reading, writing, maths and science. The school does very well to enable an average number of pupils to attain the nationally expected Level 2 in these subjects. The reason why standards are nevertheless slightly below average is that few pupils attain the higher expected level (Level 3) and many of those attaining Level 2 only just manage to do so.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	11.6 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.0 (14.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	12.7 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Good teaching through Years 3 to 6 enables pupils to continue their good progress, and standards in Year 6 this year are in line with the national average in maths and science, but still below average in English. Standards are stronger in maths than in science although both are within the 'national average' category. Standards are lower in English because standards of speaking and listening are low. Standards of reading are at the national average, and standards of writing are below average. A relatively high number of pupils attain the higher expected level (Level 5) in maths. In science, attainment in the investigative element is not as strong as the other, knowledge-based, elements.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (25.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.6 (26.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (27.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Standards in ICT are below those usually found across the school. This is because the computer suite is fairly recently established, and there has not yet been time for pupils to use it sufficiently to acquire the required skills. If pupils are given sufficient time to use the equipment, standards will rise. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6. As other subjects (history, geography, art, music, physical education and design and technology) were only sampled, there is no formal judgement about attainment in these, but standards overall are generally in line with maths and science: slightly below those usually found in Year 2 and in line in Year 6.
6. Standards of speaking are low across the school. There is a good focus on speaking skills in the nursery and reception classes, and pupils make very good progress. However, many start with very low standards, which are still well below average in speaking when they move into Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, the school has focused within English quite understandably on raising standards of reading and writing, and has been successful in doing so. As a result, there has been less emphasis on the development of speaking skills, although it is in the school's development plan for later this year. The school's new programme for teaching philosophy is beginning to increase opportunities for discussion between pupils, but at the moment, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in extended speaking either with adults or with each other.
7. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress. The nurture groups, some of which are supported by EEC funding, provide well for pupils with a range of needs and effectively remove social and emotional barriers to learning. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, and in fact, boys have tended to do relatively well by the end of Year 6 over the last few years. At the time of the inspection, there was only one, very recently arrived, pupil in the school for whom English was an additional language, so no overall judgement can be made about provision or attainment. The school has a good record of enabling higher attaining pupils to do well by the end of Year 6. There is an

effective programme for identifying pupils who are gifted and talented and extra support is given in sports and music, as well as academic subjects, that extends their learning well.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance is satisfactory, and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is orderly and calm, and the children friendly and polite.
- The pupils are developing very good work habits.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Some of the monitoring of exclusion and attendance is not sufficiently rigorous.

### **Commentary**

- Pupils like school, and they have very positive attitudes to learning. These very positive attitudes come from their parents' positive views of the school and from the very good support the pupils receive in school. The valuing and supportive approach of staff means that they find school a very positive experience. In addition, they feel well disposed towards the school because of the very good range of extra-curricular activities, which they appreciate and enjoy. Pupils work hard and are confident learners. This is because they like their teachers, and want to please them, and their confidence comes from being well supported. All the above factors combine to create the good work habits seen, whereby pupils listen well, are keen to answer questions, settle to work quickly, work well, and try hard. This very good commitment to work is quickly established in the nursery and maintained well throughout the school.
- Pupils behave very well and do as they are told. This is because teachers manage pupils very well and have very high expectations for behaviour. Pupils are supervised as they move around the school. As a result they are quiet and orderly, and this helps create the calm atmosphere that is a such a feature of the school. However, it does means that pupils are not given sufficient independence to show that they can be responsible and behave well, even when not supervised. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes make a significant contribution to their achievement. Both have improved since the previous inspection.
- The number of exclusions is higher than would normally be expected, but the circumstances of the exclusions are appropriate, and they involve only one or two pupils. The school is not monitoring exclusions sufficiently closely to enable it to form conclusions about the probable impact of all the various support initiatives.

#### ***Ethnic background of pupils – 2002-03***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Preferred not to say
Information not obtained

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
52	11	0
106	0	0
7	0	0

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

- Pupils are open and friendly, thoughtful and polite. Staff are good role models for how to relate to others, because they are valuing and respectful. Pupils use this good model for relating to others and as a result get on well with each other and with adults. This is evident in their

willingness to listen to others, to share and to co-operate. It means, too, that because pupils respect each other, incidents of bullying are rare. Respect for others is a strong feature of the provision for spiritual and social development. This is enhanced by opportunities to think about the beliefs and lives of others through, for example, a visit to a Hindu Temple. Responsibilities, particularly for the older pupils, such as playground buddies, are performed sensibly and give pupils insight into the responsibilities of living in a community. Pupils help to make school and classroom rules, and the notices in the classrooms suggest they have a good understanding of appropriate behaviour. For example, in the Year 1 classroom, a notice on the door in a child's handwriting reads 'Please do not swing on the door'. Pupils are given good opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures through the very good extra-curricular provision, and through visits to places of interest, such as a World War Two museum. The many visitors bring with them skills and expertise to share with pupils. Of particular note is the school's participation in the local 'Happy Hearts Lantern Festival'. Pupils work with an artist to make lanterns that they then parade through the streets with local people.

12. Pupils are helped towards these very good attitudes and behaviour through EEC initiatives, which help inform their parents' positive attitudes, and provide support for pupils' behaviour and personal development.
13. The school promotes attendance well, and, as a result, attendance figures have risen consistently over the past three years. However, they are still below the national average, when compared to other primary schools, but this represents sound attendance for these pupils. The school monitors absences carefully, and this suggests that most are, appropriately, for health reasons. The school is not formally monitoring the impact of poor attendance on attainment. Most pupils arrive at school on time, and only one or two pupils are late.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.8
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, and has improved in almost all aspects since the previous inspection.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good overall, and very good in the nursery and reception classes. The school has very good procedures for assessment.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good teaching in the nursery and reception classes gives children a very good start to their education.
- Teachers set very clear learning objectives and share them with the pupils.
- The school's very good assessment arrangements enables teaching to be targeted effectively to the differing needs of pupils.
- There are very good relationships across the school.
- Pupils need more opportunities to develop their speaking skills, and to have some independence in their learning, particularly in Years 1 to 6.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11 (26%)	22 (51%)	10 (23%)	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.

14. Teachers work very hard and have a particularly good commitment to their pupils. There are very good relationships across the school that raise pupils' self-esteem and encourage their very good attitudes to learning. Pupils' positive approach is a significant factor in their very good achievement. There is good support for learning from the high number of teaching assistants across the school. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
15. Teaching is very good through the nursery and reception classes in all of the six expected areas of learning. The well organised learning environment and the high quality support and guidance help children to develop their confidence and self-esteem, and so enjoy learning. Teachers plan the sessions well, have high expectations, and make very good use of assessment information to cater for individual needs. The very rich range of learning experiences and the independence that pupils are given to explore their environment greatly enhance their learning and underpin their very good achievement.
16. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 and there are no significant differences in the quality of teaching between the two key stages in any subject. Teaching is good in English, maths, science, and religious education. A smaller amount of teaching of ICT was seen, but evidence from pupils' work confirms that they are generally well taught. Other subjects were only sampled, so no specific judgement is made about teaching, but pupils' progress indicates that teaching is generally good in these other subjects as well.
17. Where teaching is best, expectations are high and pupils are involved in a good range of learning experiences that promote their understanding. These lessons often excite and enthuse the pupils. Most lessons in the nursery and reception classes are of this type. For example, reception class pupils were extremely excited when a giant appeared to have taken 'Star Bear' away and had left giant footprints across their classroom. Some parents reported that their children had talked of little else when they went home. A very good Year 5 maths lesson had very high challenge when pupils used computers to measure angles, and a very good Year 2 maths lesson involved a good range of practical activities that developed good understanding of number patterns.
18. Teachers are particularly effective in setting very clear learning objectives and sharing them with the pupils. This helps pupils to understand what they need to do to succeed. Lessons often return to these objectives in the final, plenary, session and reinforce the learning. This is a very good aspect of practice. The school's very good assessment arrangements are also used very effectively in this process. Because teachers have made accurate assessments of what pupils have learned, they are able to plan the next steps in learning and set targets so effectively. This makes a significant impact on achievement.
19. The teaching of speaking skills has not been as successful as other aspects and subjects because there are not enough structured opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in lessons. The development of the philosophy programme is already helping here, and a focus on speaking skills is already in the school's development plan. The inspection agrees that this is the next step for the school.
20. Many lessons are very tightly directed by the teacher and give pupils little scope to pursue their own lines of investigation or develop their own methods. The tightly directed approach is very

valuable for conveying information and extending knowledge, but less effective at building concepts and developing understanding. At many points, the National Curriculum requires pupils to 'generate their own ideas and plan what to do next', 'select suitable equipment' and 'develop their own strategies for solving problems'. The tightly directed lessons do not always give pupils the independence to develop these strategies or plan elements of their own learning. The school already sees the extension of such approaches as its next step. They would also create more opportunities for discussion that would extend speaking skills.

21. There is good teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and good support for them from teaching assistants. The employment of a specialist special needs teacher enables pupils to be taught in very small groups and to receive far more support than usual. Individual education plans are drawn up well and have clear targets that help focus support. As a result of all this, pupils make good progress. The nurture groups, partly funded by the EEC, are successful in enabling pupils to overcome many barriers to learning. The small groups and supportive nature of the activities enable the pupils to grow in confidence and to reach the stage where they can cope in the normal classroom environment.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good overall. It provides a broad range of accessible learning opportunities for all pupils, and meets statutory requirements. There is a very good range of extra-curricular enrichment activities. The school's staffing, accommodation and resources are very good, and the learning environment makes a very positive contribution to learning.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad and provides a good range of worthwhile learning opportunities.
- The very good range of extra-curricular enrichment activities enhances learning.
- The high quality of the learning environment and resources make a significant contribution to achievement.
- The school makes very good provision for inclusion.

## **Commentary**

22. The school's broad curriculum provides pupils with a good range of relevant learning experiences, promoting learning alongside the development of positive values and attitudes. Curriculum provision underpins, very successfully, the school's core aim of ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential within an inclusive learning community. It has been improved significantly since the previous inspection.
23. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been successfully introduced and modified effectively. Teachers' planning is good across the curriculum, ensuring full coverage of the programmes of study, a good match of activity to need and continuity in learning. The school's very good assessment strategies allow it to adapt the curriculum where necessary, and ensure appropriate levels of support for identified pupils. Weaknesses in maths, design and technology, ICT and music, identified in the previous inspection, have been addressed. However, the use of ICT to support the wider curriculum requires further development. This has already been recognised in the school's development plan.
24. The school continues to develop and refine the curriculum in order to respond to the changing needs of its pupils and the wider community. The school enhances provision through a number of local initiatives, and holds a number of sport and healthy school awards. Regular visitors and planned visits successfully enrich the quality of the curriculum, adding more relevance to the learning process. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities including clubs for football, science, art, reading and homework. Teachers also provide a range of clubs during the lunch period, and are to be commended for the commitment they give to this.

25. Very good curricular links with the local secondary school, which begin when pupils are in Year 5, ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of education.
26. The school is very generously staffed with a high number of qualified teachers and teaching assistants. The school benefits from extremely spacious and well maintained accommodation. Staff have created a high quality environment that both supports and values learning. All of these factors are significant in promoting pupils' very good achievement.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good overall. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring are very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Induction arrangements into the nursery are very good.
- Support for pupils is very good.
- There is too little for pupils to do in the playground.

### **Commentary**

27. The school's very good guidance and support for pupils have a significant effect on the promotion of their very good achievement. This is an area of improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils thrive in the positive, calm environment, and respond very well to the valuing approach of staff. There are a number of initiatives which contribute to the quality of support and guidance, some as a result of the EEC, some through the Children's Fund, and others funded directly by the school. They are particularly effective at removing some of the obstacles to learning that these pupils face, and in so doing, contribute significantly to pupils' achievement. The present lack of clarity in the management of EEC funded initiatives means that there is not always clear co-ordination of these initiatives, such as lunchtime groups, and it is difficult to evaluate individual impact.
28. A feature of the EEC provision is close liaison with medical and social services, and the provision of on-site facilities such as a baby clinic, health visitor and speech therapy. These have a positive impact on the school. The close liaison enables early identification of need and in many cases immediate provision of support. The support of the speech therapist is very valuable to a number of pupils whose speaking is in need of development. The early support for pre-school children often means that potential problems are dealt with before they start school and so learning is enhanced.
29. The school's very good assessment arrangements enable targets to be set to guide pupils' learning. Pupils know their targets for learning, and feel that teachers help them towards their targets. This has a very positive impact on achievement.
30. The nurture groups the school runs for pupils in Years 1,2, 5 and 6 have a positive impact on those pupils' learning by increasing their self-esteem and enabling them to operate confidently in a classroom situation. The EEC-funded nurture groups for nursery and reception class children run for a much shorter time each week and consequently have less impact. The informal and very supportive approach of the nursery and reception classes enables all pupils to adjust and cope well anyway.
31. Induction arrangements for children entering the nursery are very well thought-out, flexible, and particularly sensitive to the need of both parents and children. As a result children settle in well, and are quickly receptive to learning.

32. The school consults pupils effectively through questionnaires and through the school council. The school has improved provision as a result of this consultation; an example is the refurbishment of the toilets. However, it is important that the school continues to listen to pupils' concerns about these matters, and to ensure that policy is consistent with other health and safety messages. Some of the school's arrangements and actions are not consistent with its valuing approach; for example, previous toilet arrangements, and the priority given to school council meetings.
33. The school takes a particularly thoughtful and concerned approach to child protection, and there are effective procedures in place. Classroom staff have all had recent training, and are clear about policy. Pupils say that they are comfortable to go to an adult in school if they have a concern. The mid-day supervisory staff know first aid procedures, and are quite clear about their role in the event of a potential child protection issue. Risk assessment, and monitoring for health and safety, is carried out routinely.
34. The inside provision for lunchtimes is good. There is a classroom set aside with games and equipment and all pupils can use this, numbers permitting. The main playground has very recently been enhanced by an enclosed space for football and this is well used and very much appreciated by pupils. However, there is little else to do and there are no seating areas. The playground for nursery and reception children is a poor shape and again there is very little for children to play with. As a result, children charge about, which leads to some falling over and upset. Some of the chasing games can seem quite rough and, although not aggressive, have the potential to result in misunderstandings.

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

The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and the community. Links with extended services or educational support programmes are good. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with the community are impacting significantly on pupils' personal development.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive.
- Links with the secondary school have been developed very well.

### **Commentary**

35. The school listens to parents, and makes every effort to encourage them to be involved in their children's learning. This informs parents' very positive views of the school, and makes them feel valued as partners in learning. The school does this by being very approachable, by keeping parents well informed about their children's progress and by seeking their support for learning. A good example of the latter is that parents of children in the nursery are actively encouraged to work alongside their child, at the start of every nursery session. The school's partnership with parents and the community has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
36. EEC provision is valued by parents, and its greatest benefit is that it very effectively promotes parents' positive attitudes about the school, which in turn informs children's positive attitudes. The drop-in health facility is much appreciated by parents and school and health service personnel, because of the improved health links and greater support that it has been able to offer. However, its future on the school site is uncertain. The 'Stay and Play' group, due to dwindling numbers, has recently been re-launched, and appears to be attracting large numbers of parents, although as yet it is too soon to assess its impact. The school draws well on other providers such as the Gateshead College to provide parenting courses. These focus on healthy life styles, are fairly well attended and parents enjoy them.

37. Parents are very pleased with the well-established adult education courses, run by the local college. The numbers of parents that this attracts at any one time are small, and so the direct impact on the school is not great. However, the provision of these courses is an important factor in the significant improvement in the way the school is viewed by the community. This, in turn, contributes to the positive attitudes. Other links with the local community, such as the lantern festival mentioned previously, have been developed well, to involve other schools, local artists and local people.
38. The school works well with other schools and has particularly good links with the local secondary school. The schools work closely together and have developed very good transfer arrangements to ensure that pupils make the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 as smoothly as possible.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. Management is good, as is the governance of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school and has ensured significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- There are very good systems for tracking pupils' progress and evaluating the school's performance.
- There is very good leadership of English, maths and the Foundation Stage.
- Effective teams have been formed and staff work very well together.
- The school has been very successful in obtaining extra funding to finance its provision.
- The lines of management of the EEC are unclear and make the headteacher's job difficult.

### **Commentary**

39. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. She has a clear view of the school's direction and she has ensured that there have been significant improvements in a wide range of aspects of the school's provision: standards of attainment, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the quality of teaching, the use of assessment, and the planning of the curriculum. The school has been very successful in obtaining funding from a range of sources, and has used this very effectively to enhance the provision it can make. Not least, the high staffing levels enable a very good quality of support and guidance to be given to the pupils that underpins the very good achievement. The school is very successful in ensuring that it is inclusive in its approach to pupils, and that account is taken of a wide range of needs.
40. Effective teams have been created that enable senior staff to play a full part in the running of the school. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection. English, maths and the Foundation Stage are led particularly effectively. There is good leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs that ensures that support is targeted effectively.
41. The school has very good systems for tracking pupils' progress that enable it to evaluate its provision. The analysis feeds into the school's development plan that sets targets effectively for the future. The plan is linked well to the school's budget so that resources can be effectively marshalled to support the school's objectives. For example, the extra national funding obtained for nurture groups for pupils over five years old enables an extra teacher to be employed for the groups along with those funded through the EEC. There was a fairly high budget surplus at the end of the last financial year. Part of this surplus was planned to pay for building works now being carried out, and part because of grants arriving at the end of the financial year for expenditure in the next. Much of this surplus has now been spent and it is now within the usual limits.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	484929
Total expenditure	454813
Expenditure per pupil	1927

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	92039
Balance carried forward to the next	122155

42. The governing body is well led and its Chair has a particularly strong vision for the role of the school within the community. Some of the provision usually associated with an EEC was made by the school before the status was granted and the extra funding obtained. There were nurture groups for older pupils and dissemination of good practice to other schools. There was a community room and some provision for adult education and family learning. This desire to reach out to the community and this vision of the school as the centre of a wide range of provision have been very successful, not only in providing for community needs, but also in encouraging parents' very positive views of the school. These, in turn, have helped create the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning that underpin their very good achievement.
43. The terms of this Section 10 Inspection require it to look only at those aspects of the EEC that come directly under the headteacher's control. The school manages these elements effectively and ensures that they impact positively on pupils' achievement. These comprise mainly the nurture groups for nursery and reception children, the dissemination of good practice to other schools, and the early identification of special needs in liaison with medical and social services. The nurture groups that fall specifically within the remit of the EEC (those for the youngest children) run for only short parts of the week, but impact positively on the few pupils who are targeted. The school plays a very active part, along with the LEA, in disseminating its practice to other schools and practitioners. Practitioners frequently visit the school to see its practice in these aspects, and school staff visit other settings and contribute to courses. The LEA finds this contribution valuable. The early identification of needs and the ability to provide support are particularly valuable for those families concerned. The impact of the other elements of EEC provision (those outside the headteacher's responsibility) on the school is also positive, and has been reviewed in paragraph 28 above.
44. The school was originally part of an 'EEC Network', and when this was dissolved in September 2003 some lines of management of elements of provision taking place within the school (such as community provision and day care) became unclear. There was some clarification just before the inspection took place, but there are still issues of both day-to-day management and overall supervision to be resolved.
45. As the school is involved in a number of local and nationally funded initiatives beyond the EEC, it is particularly important that a clear overview is formed of the impact of each of these initiatives. Although there are very good systems for evaluating the progress of pupils and the overall impact of the various initiatives, the school is not always able to distinguish between the various influences.

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

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

46. The provision for the children in foundation stage is very good and provides a very good start for children's education. Many children enter the nursery with standards that are well below those expected of their age in most areas of learning. They have poorly developed communication skills, their personal, social and emotional skills are weak, and they have very limited knowledge of the world around them. The well organised learning environment and the high quality support and guidance children receive help them to develop their confidence, and self-esteem and enjoyment in learning. Teachers plan the sessions well, making very good use of the assessment and observation information to cater for individual needs. The induction arrangements are very good and these help the transition from home to nursery and from nursery to reception easy for young children. Parents are well informed about the work their children do, and how to support them in their learning at home. The homework diaries with guidance and prompts for parents and programmes such as 'Early Start' are having a very positive impact on children's learning. Visits and visitors are used well to offer children first hand experiences of the world around them. Lack of space for children to use wheeled toys and other equipment out side restricts their movements and as such limits the opportunities they have to develop their play and extend their physical skills. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection. The teaching and learning are now very good throughout the nursery and reception classes, and teaching assistants provide effective support. The leadership and management of the foundation stage are very good and staff work well together as a team to provide children with a very good start to their education.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- The calm and well planned learning environment and routines promote children's learning.
- The very good relationships between adults and children enable children to grow in confidence.
- The high expectations of behaviour and the additional support some receive through nurture groups promote very good progress.

#### **Commentary**

47. Many children enter the nursery with personal, social and emotional skills that are very low. The calm and well organised environment helps children to settle in quickly to the general routines of the day. Children in both nursery and reception classes are confident in choosing what they want to do. The 'plan and review' sessions further enhance this by giving children the opportunity to talk about and share what they have done. This creates a sense of pride and an opportunity to learn about the need to take turns. Through the exciting activities such as showing the visiting teddy bear the different areas in the nursery, and looking after the 'Star Bear' at home, children are gaining a very good understanding of caring for others. Reception children were very concerned about the sudden disappearance of their bear and pursued different strategies to rescue him from the giant. Activities such as these bring about enjoyment learning. The staff set high expectations of behaviour, and children respond very well. The specifically focused extra support offered through the nurture group helps those who have specific social and emotional needs. Very good teaching enables all children to achieve very well from a very low base entry, and the majority are set to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave reception.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills through all areas of learning, although standards of speaking are still well below average.
- Exciting activities help develop children's early reading and writing skills.

### Commentary

48. Most children enter the nursery with poor communication, language and literacy skills. The careful questioning and use of resources encourage children to talk although many of them need support and guidance from the adults. The older children in the nursery are beginning to talk about what they have seen and experienced, but many still need support. Staff use these support situations well by repeating and rephrasing children's answers. This helps children to learn new vocabulary and the correct way to say things. These skills are further extended in the reception class. Children gain increasing confidence in talking about what they have observed and experienced. They listen well to others' contributions in whole class and group situations. However, standards of speaking are still well below average when pupils move into Year 1.
49. Both the nursery and reception classes provide very good opportunities to develop children's early reading skills. Children in the nursery learn about the different letter sounds through carefully planned games and activities. The 'book time' is used well in the nursery to develop children's enjoyment and skills in reading. The reception class are developing a good understanding of initial letter sounds. The more able children are beginning to use their knowledge about letter sounds to work out the final sounds. The interactive whiteboard is used effectively to develop children's early phonic skills. Most children in the reception class can retell simple stories in the right order using pictures, but they need support to talk about what they have heard. Reception children are learning to write for different purposes. The teacher creates very good starting points for writing; for example, writing a letter to the giant requesting him to return their 'Star Bear'. This makes learning enjoyable and purposeful for young children. Their handwriting and pencil control are less well developed. Teaching in this area of learning is very good and children achieve very well. However, their attainment remains below the expectations of the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The carefully planned activities and learning environment promote mathematical development and add excitement to learning.
- Staff take every opportunity to develop children's subject specific vocabulary and their knowledge about numbers.

### Commentary

50. The teaching and learning in this area are very good in both classes, and children achieve very well. Children in the nursery can count up to 5 confidently. A few of the older and more able children in the nursery can count up to 10. Staff in the nursery use every opportunity to develop children's counting skills, whether it is counting how many buttons are there on their 'playdough' model or how many teddies they could find hiding in the soil. Activities such as the hunting game to find the hidden objects help children in the nursery to learn about positional vocabulary.

The more able and some of the older children in the nursery can use words such as 'under' and 'over' to describe the position, but most children need support and prompt from the adults. These skills are further extended in the reception class where children are learning to program the roamer to move in different directions. They are beginning to learn to use words such as forward, backward, behind, over and under to describe the positions. Children in both classes are given opportunities to learn about shapes and measure. However, many children find it hard to use the appropriate vocabulary when comparing objects. Most children in the reception class can count to 10 and beyond but many children had difficulties in finding out the exact position of numbers on the number rod. Teachers use their questioning strategies very effectively to challenge and help children to find out different ways of working out answers. Some children are confident to respond to these challenges; for example, one boy told the teacher that he had counted backwards, and another said that he didn't have to count because he knew that number 5 will be in the middle of number rod. Although a number of children are set to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, a significant number will still be working towards them and attainment is below average overall.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are well planned activities both indoor and outdoor to develop children's curiosity and interests.
- Children's limited speaking skills have a negative impact on the standards in this curriculum area.

### **Commentary**

51. On entry to the nursery, many children have very limited knowledge of the world around them. Throughout the nursery and reception classes, children achieve very well because the teaching they receive is very good. Children in the nursery explore the area around them and they are excited when they find creatures like woodlice in the soil. On occasions such as these, the teachers and support staff use their questioning strategies well to extend children's thinking and to develop their subject specific vocabulary, but often, children's limited vocabulary restricts their learning. Children are involved in a good range of experiences of every-day technology: they are confident in using the computer and can construct models using a variety of construction materials using simple tools confidently. Children in the reception class can select the appropriate materials and tools to develop models for a specific purpose. The 'plan and review' sessions are particularly helpful in developing children's evaluation skills. Children are set to achieve the early learning goals in this aspect. Children in both the nursery and reception classes are developing an appropriate understanding of their own cultures and those of others through role-play areas and through celebration of festivals. They make very good progress in most aspects of this area of learning. However, their overall attainment by the end of reception is still below the national expectations of early learning goals.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The provision in physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers use the hall and the limited outdoor area well to develop children's physical skills.
- The teaching and learning in this area are very good and children make very good progress.
- The limited space for children to use wheeled toys restricts the opportunities they have to develop their imagination and physical skills.

## Commentary

52. Children in the nursery demonstrate good co-ordination as they use the climbing frame and the slide. They are confident to use the wheeled toys and they show a growing awareness of space as they ride around in the limited space. However, the limited space restricts their movements and limits their progress in this aspect of physical development. The school has already recognised this need and has plans to extend the area. The reception class children can move around the hall in different ways, showing an awareness of space. They can respond well to the music and the instructions given to them, whether it is the strong long strides of the giant or the short fast movements of the helpers. Children in the nursery show very good control as they run down the slope to catch the tyre without bumping into others. Reception class children are able to use tools confidently to cut and join different materials as they build their models and pictures. However, their pencil control is less well developed and this is evident in their handwriting and mark making. Most children are set to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities to develop children's imagination through role-play areas are very good.
- Children develop a very good sense of colour and colour mixing.

## Commentary

53. Very good teaching enables children to achieve very well, and most are set to attain the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. The well organised environment and the wide range of resources enable children to develop choices and to explore different techniques and textures. Children in the nursery are experimenting with different ways of stacking and organising construction blocks in their play. They are beginning to use lines and shapes to represent objects they have observed. In the reception class, children are learning to create the picture in the style of artists such as Paul Klee. This is high challenge to which they respond with confidence. Children in the nursery use the role-play areas well to act out different roles. For example, a group of children playing in the climbing frame pretended they were trying to escape from the crocodile under their bridge. This is extended well in the reception class where children can develop a theme to their play and sustain this for a long period.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good across the school and underpins the very good achievement in reading and writing.
- Pupils need more opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
- The subject is very well led and assessment is used effectively to track and support progress.
- Standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection.

#### Commentary

54. By the end of Year 6, standards are at the national average in reading, below average in writing, and low in speaking. These standards represent very good achievement for the pupils, particularly in reading and writing. The school has focused on raising standards in reading and writing, and it has been very successful in doing so. Teaching is consistently good across Years 1 to 6, and there is a very clear focus on learning objectives within lessons. The National Literacy Strategy has been used very effectively to ensure that pupils progress through a structured set of experiences that develops their reading and writing very well. Standards are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

#### *Speaking and listening*

55. When children start in the nursery, standards of speaking are particularly low. Although most pupils are open and willing to talk in social situations, their ability to express more complex ideas or make clear explanations is very limited. When communicating with each other in pairs or small groups, they often use gestures or single words to convey their meaning, and so do not extend their speaking skills in these situations. The speaking required of them in most lessons is the giving of simple answers to direct questions. This, for the most part, they can do. The school now intends to focus on this area of development, and the introduction of the philosophy programme is beginning to create more opportunities for discussion. These techniques can be applied to learning within other subjects. The present structure of lessons, many of which are directed quite tightly by the teacher, will need to be relaxed in order to create these opportunities, and the school needs to ensure that pupils are involved in a wider range of structured speaking activities within lessons that will involve them in more complex language.

#### *Reading*

56. Standards of reading are higher than standards of writing and speaking across the school. By the end of Year 2, standards are slightly below the national average, and by the end of Year 6, standards are in line with the national average, and well above those of similar schools. This is very good achievement for the pupils. The school devotes a great deal of time to the teaching of reading: there are extra reading sessions outside of the Literacy Hour, a focus on reading skills within it, and pupils take books home to read to their parents. All of this has been very successful in raising standards. Within the reading sessions, teachers and other adults have a good focus on the required skills, and pupils are enabled to understand literary features and appreciate the way in which authors create their effects. This enables a good number of older pupils to attain the higher expected level (Level 5) where they begin to understand meanings beyond the literal.

## Writing

57. Standards of writing are not so high as those in reading, but still represent very good achievement because many pupils have come from a very low starting point indeed. Because of the low starting point, there are still a number of pupils at end of Year 2 who do not attain the nationally expected level (Level 2). This makes the overall standards below average. By Year 6, most pupils attain the nationally expected level (Level 4) but relatively few attain the higher expected level. The school does not give the same time directly to the teaching of writing as it does to reading, but some good use is made of other subjects such as history and geography to give practice. There is a good focus on specific objectives within lessons that help pupils improve particular aspects of their writing. For example, objective reporting in a Year 5 lesson. There are relatively few occasions in which pupils redraft their work in terms of its clarity, or discuss its quality with fellow pupils. Such discussions would also serve to extend speaking skills.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. There is some good use of subjects such as history, geography and religious education for pupils to practise reading and writing skills. Some teachers make good use of science to practise writing skills; for example, in Year 6, pupils were writing a non-chronological report about the benefits of healthy eating, whilst in Year 4, pupils were using adjectives to describe properties of materials. There is not extensive use of ICT for pupils to develop their skills in writing or for reading, through use of word-processing or Internet research. As pupils' ICT skills develop, more use could be made of this, especially in terms of pupils redrafting and extending their work.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall with some very good teaching and enables pupils to achieve very well.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave well.
- The subject is very well led and assessment information is analysed and used very well to support learning.
- Pupils need more planned opportunities to investigate problems collaboratively, leading to the sharing and comparing of solutions, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

### Commentary

59. The school's provision for maths has improved since the previous inspection, and planning for maths across the school now ensures that the full programmes of study are followed. Standards of attainment are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Standards of attainment are rising throughout the school and are in line with national expectations by Year 6, representing very good achievement. This is a result of good quality teaching, pupils' positive attitudes and the sharp focus on raising standards for all pupils.
60. A strong feature of teaching is the very clear learning objectives that are set and shared with the pupils. Lessons include some good practical tasks to cater for different pupils' learning needs; this ensures that pupils can have the practical experiences necessary to progress. For instance, a group of Year 4 children, supported effectively by a teaching assistant, made good progress in identifying sequences using a 100 square. Day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress are carried out rigorously by teachers, allowing the planned programmes of learning to be modified. This ensures that, in the overwhelming majority of lessons, pupils of all abilities are able to progress well in their learning. Pupils' progress is very carefully tracked. The results

of end-of-year tests are analysed by the subject leader, who uses the information very effectively to help class teachers develop individual learning targets.

61. Clear learning objectives and some high expectations promote the very good achievement; for example, in a very good Year 5 lesson using computer software to measure angles, pupils were expected to measure to within 5 degrees whilst some were successfully measuring to within 1 degree. This was very good achievement. Teachers pay good attention to mental calculations at the beginning of lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2. For example, in a good Year 1 lesson, children were encouraged and supported to find alternative ways to count on in 2s, 5s and 10s. This approach led to increased confidence in handling numbers. There are occasions when pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not given sufficient opportunity to extend their understanding, particularly when dealing with one- and two-stage mental number problems. Pupils need to be given the opportunity, and time, to work collaboratively without too much direct teacher intervention, in order to improve attainment in the investigative aspect of the subject.
62. A strength of the school's provision is the relationships that exist between staff and pupils. Staff consistently do all they can to help pupils. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the adults' very good support for pupils gave many the confidence to successfully add 2-digit numbers and go on to explain how they had arrived at the answer. As a result, pupils learned well. Throughout the school, pupils are very clear about what is expected from them, behave well and are eager to learn.
63. The subject leader's contribution to the development of maths is very good. Monitoring of standards enables her to provide effective support and guidance for teachers including the development of individual pupil learning targets. Other support includes staff training and providing evaluation updates to teachers and governors. Resources are audited regularly and are good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. There are some good uses of maths to support science together with links to geography. The use of ICT to give opportunities for pupils to put into practice the maths they have learned needs further development.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **good**.

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

- There is a strong trend of rising standards.
- There is an increasing emphasis on scientific investigation, although pupils still need more independence in this.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to science.
- There is not enough opportunity for older pupils to plan their own experiments or work collaboratively.

#### **Commentary**

65. Standards of attainment are rising in all areas of the curriculum, and are in line with those expected nationally for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Teaching is good, and teachers are placing greater emphasis on investigations, and this represents good improvement since the previous inspection, although there is scope for further development in this area. Pupils have very positive attitudes to science, listening well and taking turns sharing equipment. Staff ensure all pupils are valued and encouraged in their self-confidence; this underpins very good

achievement. The combination of good teaching, very positive attitudes, and very good support structures enables pupils to attain nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. This represents very good achievement considering the low starting point of many pupils.

66. There is generally a good standard of teaching across the school. The best lessons are particularly notable for their emphasis on practical first hand investigations; for example, Year 2 pupils used a range of everyday object to discover the effect of pushes and pulls. Good opportunities were provided for pupils to predict, experiment and record their findings. The classroom was alive was a buzz of excitement as pupils worked. However in some lessons, particularly for older pupils, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a line of enquiry independently, or to collaborate, discuss and share their findings. An important strength of the teaching is the way in which lessons and resources are prepared effectively for the differing needs of pupils. For example, a group of Year 3 pupils were effectively supported when working on a differentiated activity, designed to help them sort and classify materials according to their properties. The structure of the activity, together with the good adult support, ensured pupils went on to achieve well.
67. The subject leader leads the subject well. A recent audit has identified the need for further staff development in scientific investigation and enquiry together with the use of ICT to support the curriculum. Resources are good and used effectively. The curriculum for Year 3 to 6 pupils is enriched further through a weekly science investigation club run by the subject leader.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school now has a good programme for the teaching of ICT.
- The subject is well led and there are clear targets for development.
- Standards of attainment are below average across the school.

### **Commentary**

68. The school's computer suite has only fairly recently been established and is already raising standards. However, standards are still below those usually found at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Nevertheless, taking account of the low starting point of many pupils and their restricted access to machines, this represents good overall achievement.
69. The subject is well led and a good programme of study has been drawn up that builds on the national units of work and relates them to the school's curriculum. There is not an extensive amount of ICT work in pupils' books, but it is evident that they cover the required areas of study as they move through the school, and that they are well taught. Pupils of all ages are able to talk about their work and show confidence and competence when using computers. Teaching was good overall in the lessons seen. In the ICT lesson, Year 5 pupils were able to enter information into a database and consider the plausibility of their results. The maths lesson seen has already been mentioned; pupils used the computer very effectively to measure and compare angles to the nearest degree. In the science lesson, pupils were able to use a computer to find out about the nutritional content of different foods in order to plan a balanced diet.
70. It was possible to see only two ICT lessons during the inspection, together with one maths and one science lesson taking place in the computer suite. Other classes made little use of the ICT suite during the three days of the inspection. If this is the normal pattern of use, it will not be sufficient to allow pupils enough practice to develop their skills fully. There is only one computer in each classroom in addition to the suite, and this does not give sufficient scope for practice in the classroom if the suite is not used frequently.

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

71. Younger pupils make some good use of computer programs to learn basic English and maths skills. The use of ICT is not so evident in other subject higher up the school. The good use seen in maths and science in Year 5 during the inspection is not evident in the work of other classes.

## **HUMANITIES**

Within humanities, the subject of religious education is reported in full, but history and geography were only sampled with only one history and no geography lesson being seen, and so a briefer report is made.

72. Standards of attainment in both history and geography are broadly in line with other subjects: slightly below average by the end of Year 2 and broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are able to talk about the topics they have studied and have a good memory for things they have learned. Very few older pupils have developed the overview of the subjects that is the requirement of the higher expected levels; for example being able to talk about reasons for changes within and between historical periods, or being able to generalise about patterns in geography, but basic knowledge is generally sound. The wider approach to learning with more opportunities for discussion recommended elsewhere would also help these subjects.
73. The curriculum for both subjects is enhanced by a good programme of visits and visitors. Pupils talk excitedly about these aspects of their learning, and the visits of Vikings to the school, and the dressing up as evacuees in the World War 2 visit, have made a significant impact on them. These first hand experiences are the really valuable aspects of learning in these subjects.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall which leads to good achievement.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good programme of visits and visitors.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good.

### **Commentary**

74. Standards of attainment are in line with those prescribed by the locally agreed syllabus. Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to talk confidently about a recent project on Hinduism, which involved a visit to a local Hindu temple. They demonstrated good understanding about the symbols used to describe Hindu gods, and many of the traditions associated with Hinduism. Children in Year 2 discussed Old Testament stories, having recently helped to retell the story of Daniel. One teacher had made good links to other subjects by employing strategies from the National Literacy framework to assist in the planning and writing a job description for a Catholic priest. Links to art were seen in a Year 3 class, where pupils had designed prayer mats. These activities support good achievement by making learning meaningful, purposeful and relevant.
75. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and provides good levels of support and guidance to colleagues. She maintains a stock of artefacts but recognises more artefacts are needed to support faiths other than Christianity.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in each of: art and design, music and PE. No lesson was observed in design and technology. Therefore it is not possible to make firm judgement about the provision.

76. The art work around the school is varied and interesting. Pupils are given opportunities to work with a good range of different media and techniques. Year 1 pupils' portraits in the style of Picasso show how they used lines, shape and colour to produce the abstract effect. Discussion with pupils from Year 6 indicates that they are familiar with work of different artists. A noticeable feature of the lesson observed in Year 4 was the way pupils used their starting point of three different patterns to create the willow pattern. The art club enables pupils to develop their interests in art and the work produced by the pupils who attend the art club is of high quality. There is little evidence of links between art and design and ICT.
77. There were few examples of pupils' work in design and technology available to be evaluated. Discussion with pupils indicated that they have gained the experiences of using different materials like papier-mâché, textile and clay in designing and making different products. They have used ICT to develop their design ideas of the mask and the slippers. Younger pupils talked about how they made the puppets and the moving pictures. It was evident through these discussions that pupils do not always evaluate their designs.
78. In music, pupils were observed only in one lesson, which was in Year 4. In the lesson observed the teacher used her subject knowledge very well to develop pupils' understanding of rhythm and rhythmic patterns. Most pupils could recognise the notes and how many beats they represent. Lessons are enhanced by a choir group and guitar lessons from the specialist teacher. This is an improvement from the last inspection. The school choir sings well and gives pupils very good opportunity to perform in public in venues such as the Baltic Arts Centre.
79. In physical education, pupils were observed only in one lesson, which was in Year 3. Pupils learned how to create simple dance phrases. The school provides very good opportunities to develop pupils' skills in different sports through out-of-school clubs, and has been recently awarded the Active Sport Mark. They also participate successfully in inter-school competitions. The facilities to develop pupils' skills in physical education are very good.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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