

INSPECTION REPORT

ACKLINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) FIRST SCHOOL

Acklington, Morpeth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122270

Headteacher: Mrs Ann McDougall

Lead inspector: Dr Richard Perkin

Dates of inspection: 14th - 15th June 2004

Inspection number: 255290

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	16
School address:	Acklington Village Morpeth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE65 9BW
Telephone number:	01670 760335
Fax number:	n/a
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J A Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a very small rural school situated in the small village of Acklington, which is between Morpeth and Amble in mid Northumberland. There are 16 pupils on roll, with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. They are generally taught in two mixed age classes but flexible arrangements are made to accommodate the needs of the pupils in some subjects. All pupils are from white British backgrounds and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. About a third of the pupils qualify for free school meals. The catchment area is diverse. Some pupils come from outlying farms and some from the nearby village of Broomhill and the town of Amble. Pupils represent a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds but the context is overall broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, at almost 3 per cent, is well above the national average. Because of the very small numbers, even one or two pupils leaving or arriving at times other than the usual has a significant impact. In 2003, 60 per cent of the pupils had joined the school after the reception year, making the mobility rate high. The rate of pupil mobility this year shows over a quarter of pupils admitted from other schools or leaving the school to go elsewhere. Several of the newcomers arrived with particular learning or emotional difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry varies greatly from year to year but overall, over time, children arrive with attainment that is broadly at the level expected for their age. The school has Church of England Voluntary Controlled status. It is working towards 'Investors in People' and the 'Healthy School' award. The school is at present under threat of closure under the local education authority's (LEA's) reorganisation proposals.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14591	R Perkin	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English Science Art Music Physical education Religious education English as an additional language
8988	J Cross	Lay inspector	
33228	C Groves	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

CfBT Primary Associates
Suite 13 West Lancs Technology Management Centre
Moss Lane View
Skelmersdale
Lancashire
WN8 9TN

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	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	5
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	12
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school where good teaching, leadership and management lead to good achievement and above average standards. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils and parents hold the school in high regard. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is strongly led and well managed;
- Teaching is consistently good or better;
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well because of the high quality of support they receive;
- A very positive ethos leads to high standards of behaviour and maturity;
- There are high standards of care, support and guidance;
- The partnerships with parents and the community are very strong.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Leadership, management and governance have developed well. Standards in almost every subject are higher than they were. Teaching has improved significantly and assessment is much better than it was and is used very effectively in planning future lessons. Provision for pupils' personal development is now of high quality and standards of care, support and guidance have substantially improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A*	B	B	A
writing	B	B	A*	A*
mathematics	A*	B	A	A*

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

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals. NB Caution is needed in interpreting data because the numbers are very small.

Achievement is good. Standards overall are above average. Pupils with SEN make very good progress. Children in reception achieve well and are on target to exceed the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception in all the areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is good and standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are above average. In national tests in 2003, pupils' performance in writing was in the top 5 per cent nationally; in comparison with similar schools, results in writing and mathematics were in the top 5 per cent. The differences in standards over time are very largely brought about by the very small numbers of pupils involved and the varying proportions of pupils with SEN. In Years 3 and 4, achievement is good. Standards of work in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education are above average for pupils of these ages. Pupils lack experience in using the library to find information.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well. The school is a very harmonious place. Attendance is broadly average and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good.

Reception children, who are taught in a class with Year 1 and sometimes Year 2 pupils, are taught well in all the areas of learning and often benefit from working alongside the older pupils. The teaching in both classes is consistently good and, at times, particularly with the older pupils, very good. Teachers are very good at assessing individual pupils' needs and basing the planning of their work on these assessments. Consequently, pupils are involved in activities that engage their interest very well and teachers ensure that they behave very well and learn at a good pace. Homework is used very effectively to extend and reinforce learning.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and appropriate and meets statutory requirements. It is effectively enriched by activities outside the school day, some of which are available for all age groups. The school is extremely caring and provides very good support and guidance as well as paying very good attention to the views of the pupils. Partnerships with parents and the local community are highly productive and play an important part in raising achievement. Parents do not receive enough information about the topics their children will be learning about.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management are good. The headteacher, well supported by the staff team, provides strong leadership. The school is capably managed. The effective governing body provides good support. The headteacher and governors have worked successfully to overcome the difficulties inherent in running such a small school, particularly at a time when it is threatened with closure. The school meets all its statutory responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and see it as a centre of the community. Pupils think highly of the school and appreciate in particular their relationships with other pupils and with the teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant areas for improvement but the following minor issues should be addressed:

- Provide pupils with more experience in using a library;
- Give parents more information about the topics their children will be learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good throughout the school. Pupils with SEN achieve very well. Pupils reach standards in most subjects that are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good progress made by pupils with SEN;
- Standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science are good.

Commentary

1. Because of the very small numbers involved, the interpretation of results and trends in national tests is problematic. Performance in the tests for 7-year-olds over the past three years has been consistently good in reading, writing and mathematics and, in some years, it has been excellent. Flexible arrangements are made by the teachers to allow less able pupils in Year 2 to work with younger pupils while the more able pupils work in the other class with pupils from Years 3 and 4. This has had a positive effect in supporting those of lower ability and in challenging the higher attainers.
2. The small number of children in reception achieve well because the teacher ensures that they receive a curriculum appropriate for their age, both in terms of their academic progress and in their personal development. In spite of limited space, the children experience a good range of activities that support their learning in all the areas of learning. Consequently, all are on target to exceed the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development.
3. Pupils in Year 1 are for the most part taught with the reception children but they also work in literacy lessons with some Year 2 pupils. All groups benefit from this arrangement, with the younger pupils gaining from the challenge of working with older ones and the older ones working at a level that suits the needs identified through very good assessment arrangements. Consequently, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Pupils identified as having SEN are well supported by the teacher and classroom assistant and so make good progress. More able pupils in Year 2, often working alongside older pupils, reach the above average standards they are capable of in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
4. Because the teachers plan work that is carefully matched to the needs of individual pupils and mark their work in ways that ensure the pupils know what they have to do to improve, achievement in Years 3 and 4 is good. More able pupils are provided with work that challenges them, and average and lower ability children are also challenged at their own appropriate level. Pupils with statements of SEN make very good progress because of the high quality of the support they receive and because of the successful efforts of staff and pupils to ensure that they play as full a part in lessons and other activities as possible. Most pupils are on target to reach above average standards by the end of the year in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning and they behave very well in lessons and around the school. Overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Attendance is satisfactory and almost all pupils arrive at school punctually.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff create a very positive climate for learning within which pupils achieve well;
- Pupils of all ages and abilities flourish within the 'family' of the school;
- Relationships are excellent;
- Pupils are rarely absent or late so they are able to learn step by step.

Commentary

5. Pupils are very happy at school and they say that they enjoy their learning because teachers make lessons interesting and fun. They rightly feel that they work hard. Teachers are nice and fair to them and they are hard pressed to think of anything that they would like to change about their school.
6. Pupils of all ages and abilities get on extremely well together and with the staff. Mutual respect and the creation of whole school oneness are at the heart of this success. Consistently high expectations of good manners, politeness and positive behaviour foster pupils' very strong sense of care and consideration for others. The very small size of the school enables everyone to gather intimately as a body for much more of the curriculum than is usually possible. Pupils, for example, draw together as a whole for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) lessons and for an extra-curricular gymnastics club. The entire school, including cook and 'dinner nanny', form the school council, a forum for sharing ideas about future development. This equality underpins the strength of relationships.
7. Parents greatly appreciate the very strong teaching of traditional values, many having chosen the school over others with high academic achievement for this very reason. Lunchtimes, for example, are enjoyable, highly sociable occasions, when the whole school family dines together, patiently waiting for all to be assembled before food is served and for all to finish before leaving the tables.
8. During their free time, pupils play together very amicably, older ones looking after younger ones very well. Pupils with SEN are fully embraced into impromptu games and activities. Parents and pupils are rightly very pleased with standards of behaviour and absence of bullying. Any minor disagreements are dealt with quickly and effectively, according to parents. Racism is similarly not tolerated. There are no exclusions from the school.
9. Pupils are highly independent in lessons when organised into groups of mixed ages and abilities that are expected to be self-sufficient through utilising their combined skills and sharing ideas. A few, however, feel that they could be trusted to do even more on their own, not without justification. Pupils, for example, have to line up to file into classrooms from the playground, and lunch is mostly 'waitress served' by the staff. These are unnecessary when pupils act so sensibly and responsibly.
10. Staff promote pupils' spiritual development better now across the curriculum. Pupils, for example, are actively encouraged to marvel at the beauty and perfume of their aromatic garden. They learn effectively about their heritage through church and village links, and about the faiths and cultural traditions of others through religious education and artefacts from around the world.

Attendance

11. Attendance levels fluctuate widely from year to year because of the impact of even very occasional illness or holidays taken in term time in this very small school. Attendance was average during 2002/03, and has been considerably higher over recent months. Pupils hardly ever miss lessons so teachers can build progressively upon prior learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good and assessment very good. There is an appropriate curriculum that is well supported by out of school activities and visits. Standards of care, guidance and support are high. Partnerships with parents and the community are very constructive and there are good links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and it is sometimes very good. Consequently, learning in all classes is good. The quality of assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective planning benefits from the use of very thorough assessment procedures;
- Teachers are very good at engaging pupils' interest and encouraging them to do the best they can;
- Teachers and other adults insist on high standards of behaviour so that pupils are attentive and work hard;
- Teachers make very good use of homework to reinforce and extend learning;
- The highly skilled support staff is used very effectively, particularly for the benefit of pupils with SEN.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

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

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

12. Teaching and learning are good in both classes. The very small numbers mean that teachers and other adults know the pupils well and, because assessment is of a high quality, they are able to plan work that is matched closely to the needs of the pupils, whatever their age or ability. Teachers are able to move pupils into different groupings for particular activities so that, for example, some older pupils work with the younger ones in literacy, pupils with SEN work with a group where their learning needs can be directly addressed and

the whole school can come together for story or for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Because the quality of teachers' marking is high, pupils know clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to make further progress.

13. Teaching for the reception children takes good account of their social and developmental needs as well as their more formal learning. The teacher makes good use of the limited space available in the classroom to provide opportunities for learning in all the necessary areas. Practical activities involving structured play in, for example, the sand tray are often followed by opportunities for the children to choose their own activities for independent play. Classroom displays encourage language and mathematical development and often promote interest in and shed light on the world about us. Both language and mathematics teaching provides a good balance between developing basic skills in a systematic way and providing stimulating opportunities for the children to work and play on their own. Children take their turn at the computers, developing their basic skills of mouse control, for example, through using a paint program. The teacher uses the stimulating outdoor area effectively, encouraging the children to appreciate the scents in the sensory garden or helping them with the large play apparatus. In physical education lessons with the Year 1 pupils on the field outside, the children benefit from the example of the older pupils in, for example, developing their skills in throwing and catching a ball.
14. Teachers choose approaches and methods that catch the pupils' interest. When the whole school meets for its PSHE lesson, for example, pupils are reminded of the thinking skills that they have learned, participate in performing a story and collaboratively devise questions to explore that arise out of the story's meaning. It is *their* question that is explored, not the teacher's, and the process of deciding on which question it is to be is as interesting as the discussion of the question itself. In a very good lesson on Hinduism with the older pupils, the teacher related everything to their own experience and previous learning. She used artefacts very well and then involved them in role playing a series of greetings, before exploring the meaning of the Hindu greeting 'I am greeting everything that is in you that is in God.' The pupils were intrigued as they were made to realise that this was something they could well meet in their own country and not just in the exotic surroundings of India. Stimulating work on a more local area stemmed from the task of writing a leaflet about the local town of Amble to put into the class information centre. Pupils used this resource well to gather information for their leaflets. However, they are much less efficient at finding information in a library. The school library's small collection of non-fiction books is organised on fairly basic lines and so pupils do not have the opportunity to become as good at searching the library for the information they require as they are at using the contents page and the index of a book. Teachers make very good use of the school grounds and buildings and the local village and church, for science, history and art lessons, for example. In designing the schools own web site, the school used a pupil's drawing of the school building as the key to finding the home page.
15. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In an ICT lesson, for instance, the teacher insisted on correct procedures, good working habits and careful recording of each phase of the program they were writing for the floor robot. Teachers have a consistent approach to the management of behaviour so that pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what happens if they fail to meet those expectations. Consequently, behaviour is very good throughout the school and is based on the very positive relationships that exist.
16. The use the school makes of homework is appreciated by the parents. Homework is set regularly, even for the youngest children, who are expected to take their reading books home with them as well as taking home number games to play with their parents. Older pupils have more varied tasks, which are invariably related to the work they are doing or going to do in class. Teachers mark the homework and make use of it in lessons.

17. Pupils with SEN, particularly those with statements, benefit from the high quality of the support they receive. This is much appreciated by parents. Individual education plans are very carefully based on thorough assessments of the pupils' needs and both teachers and support staff apply them effectively. The support assistant is very good at staying in the background to allow the pupils some space to develop and then being unobtrusively available when they are needed. She also uses similar approaches to help other pupils in the class who need some support.

The curriculum

The school provides a sound curriculum which is effectively enriched by after school activities, visits and visitors. The school uses its satisfactory resources and limited accommodation to best effect.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with SEN is very good;
- The school prepares pupils very well for later stages of education;
- There is high quality provision for pupils' development in PSHCE.

Commentary

18. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained a broad and varied curriculum. It covers all the necessary elements and subjects are taught in such a way that helps pupils to make links in their learning. The school has recently been involved in a thinking skills project and is part of the LEA 'Healthy Schools' network.
19. The strength of the school's curriculum is that it is designed to ensure that pupils in all year groups encounter an appropriate curriculum that challenges the pupils. This is possible because of the teachers detailed planning on a two or three year cycle that avoids repetition and ensures progression. The transition from class one to class two is seamless. Pupils are very well prepared for their move to middle school through visits and other preparatory activities.
20. The provision for pupils with SEN is very good. The SEN co-ordinator (the headteacher) works very closely with the local education authority, parents, the experienced and very effective SEN assistant and all staff to ensure that pupils are very effectively supported. Individual education plans have clear targets, which precisely address the needs of the pupils. The activities planned for the pupils help them to achieve well and experience success. Pupils are included in lessons and all other aspects of the curriculum.
21. Accommodation and resources for use in lessons are satisfactory. The school makes best use of the site which is tidy and has many small areas which are utilised for the pupils' benefit. The aromatic garden and the patch that younger pupils use for planting are just two examples. The school playground offers pupils a varied range of activities, with markings for games as well as pleasant quiet areas. This has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and social development.
22. Provision for PSHCE is very good. Pupils' personal development underpins everything that the school does and it is also effectively covered with the whole school in weekly lessons. The recently formed school council is also a positive move which involves all the pupils even more in the school's life.
23. The school provides two good extra-curricular activities. There is a gym club, which all the school's pupils can attend, and a computer club, to which former pupils are also invited to attend for the first term after they leave the school.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well cared for, supported and guided. Staff ensure that pupils are very highly involved in the school's work and development and that their suggestions are taken very seriously.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work very hard to meet the academic and personal needs of all pupils;
- Very good arrangements are made to ensure that new pupils settle smoothly into routines and expectations;
- Staff very actively encourage pupils to keep safe and well;
- Pupils know that their views matter and will be given serious consideration by the staff.

Commentary

24. Staff care deeply about the pupils and, through their dedication, provide a strongly nurturing environment within which pupils mature as learners and as individuals. Parents, not surprisingly, are very pleased with the level of care that their children receive. The very high ratio of adults to children in the school ensures that pupils are very well looked after and that their needs and sensitivities are known and suitably tackled. A parent aptly described the teachers as being like 'aunties' to the children when dealing with their personal needs.
25. Parents particularly appreciate the lengths to which staff go to prepare their children for starting at school. This is especially important for those from isolated outlying areas that have no regular contact with children other than siblings before admission. Children are encouraged to join their future classmates in lessons and on other occasions during the term before they join. They stay just a short while at first and build up to longer sessions that include lunch. They are also invited to the teddy bear's picnic and family fun day. These arrangements, along with the support of everyone in the school, significantly help pupils in the reception year to gain the confidence that enables them to learn effectively.
26. Pupils of all ages and abilities really appreciate having staff that they can confide in if they have any worries. Their suggestions for wider discussions are actively encouraged. Promotion of pupils' emotional well being, health and safety forms a very important part of the curriculum and has just gained national acclaim for the school in its quest for 'Healthy School' status.
27. Water safety, however, could be better promoted and is particularly necessary in view of the proximity of the coast. Some parents expressed concerns about this. It is currently not practicable for the school to provide swimming lessons but staff are alert to the implications and have good plans to teach water safety during a one off visit to a pool in the near future.
28. Pupils are suitably prepared for transition to the middle school by attending a 'taster' day and by undertaking work that is continued after transfer. Former pupils are encouraged to return to the extra-curricular computer club during their first term in Year 5 and often do so. This enables staff and Year 4 to keep in touch with how they are getting on.
29. Staff help pupils to improve their work by providing very useful guidance when they mark it. The whole school is very highly involved in decision making processes through the school council. Their suggestions have led to improved facilities in the playground and greater comfort in the classroom.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys a very good partnership with parents. Very good links with the wider community and good links with other schools help to raise standards and contribute to pupils' personal development effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents and the wider community support the school extremely well;
- Family learning is very successfully encouraged;
- Information for parents is generally very good but is rather sparse in relation to what is being taught in school;
- Very strong links with the church, community association and village are mutually beneficial;
- Productive links with other local schools bring benefits for pupils, staff and governors.

Commentary

30. The school has a deservedly good reputation in the locality for high academic and personal standards and is a very important part of village life. Its links with parents and the wider community have improved since the last inspection and now contribute very effectively to the raising of standards.
31. Three years ago, staff introduced a beneficial family learning programme which has stood the test of time and remained popular with parents. This 'share project' continues to attract many parents who wish to increase their own basic skills, currently representing no less than half of the school. These parents get a lot out of the sessions and feel much more confident about involving themselves in their children's learning at home. Links with another school enable trained nursery staff to run a crèche so that parents can attend.
32. Staff are very approachable and make themselves accessible to parents who want to chat informally at the school gate. Parents are most welcome to make arrangements to see the staff at other times if they have any concerns. The annual open day, when parents view their children's work and discuss their progress, is well liked. Annual written reports on progress are reasonably detailed and generally include suitable points for development. Parents can check at a glance how well their child is achieving academically and personally through a very good graded tick list that provides all sorts of useful information.
33. Parents find that their child's reading diary provides a very useful channel for communicating about much more than just homework. Some, however, rightly indicate that staff do not provide sufficient information about the topics that are being taught.
34. A fantastic start has been made to the school's web site which gives a lovely feel for the place and its surroundings. Its long history and current community come across strongly through children's drawings. Parents and the wider community are very supportive of social and fundraising events organised by the 'Friends' association. The local community team, some of whom have children in school, also works tirelessly to keep village spirit alive and has a symbiotic relationship with the school.
35. Very effective use is made of the locality through, for example, visits and visitors. The school enjoys particularly close links with the church to which it is affiliated. The vicar regularly leads its worship and, as a governor, has pastoral responsibility for the welfare of the staff which they much appreciate. Pupils are actively encouraged to care for the local environment and they undertake meaningful work in history, geography and art in the village and its surrounds.
36. Close links with other schools enable resources, good practice and training to be shared effectively. Schools join together for theatrical and orchestral performances, for example, to make them viable and they share the time of a clerical officer. Staff have benefited greatly from liaison with a school that has established good practice, but the cluster of schools, once very active, has largely disbanded. Staff and governors usefully join colleagues in other schools for training sessions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and efficiency of management are good. There is strong leadership from the headteacher. The effective governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good management of staffing and accommodation by the headteacher;
- Parents and the local community have a high regard for the leadership of the headteacher;
- The headteacher, governors and all staff work as an effective team;
- The headteacher, governors and all staff are managing the threat of closure well.

Commentary

37. The headteacher has been at the school for a long time and has a very strong commitment to it, its pupils and their families. She has worked hard to promote the ethos of the school and the 'family environment' she has created has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. There is a consistency in belief and practice from staff, governors and parents based on a strong sense of commitment and effective teamwork. The headteacher's good leadership has resulted in pupils' good achievement, high standards and excellent personal development. All of this is very well appreciated by parents and by the local community, with whom there are very constructive links.
38. The headteacher and staff work well as a team and continually monitor children's achievement to ensure that high standards are maintained. Arrangements for an oversight of the curriculum are sound and there are strengths in the way the school uses expertise flexibly to exploit both the teachers' strengths and pupils' needs. For example, one teacher takes both classes for science and time is freed up for the headteacher's management duties by the other teacher taking the whole school for PSHCE.
39. The effective school development plan strongly supports and reflects the school's commitment to curriculum development. It shows a school that constantly reviews its practice and makes improvements. The school's strong commitment to inclusion and to equal opportunities for all pupils is reflected in its aims and development planning as well as in its practice. Consequently, there are high levels of harmony and excellent relationships. The school works hard and effectively to promote equality of all kinds, including racial understanding and tolerance.
40. The limitations of the school buildings are alleviated by the school's effective use of them and the headteacher gets the best out of the small number of staff through her effective management.
41. The threat of closure has had no apparent impact on the standards, achievement or quality of education at the school, mainly because of the dedication and hard work of the headteacher, supported effectively by the governing body and the staff.
42. The governors know the school well. Many visit the school and have an interest in particular areas of the curriculum. These governors then feed back to all governors with written reports at their termly meetings. Feedback from the headteacher, staff and LEA data information unit keeps the governors informed about standards.
43. The proposed reorganisation and threat of closure has taken a great deal of governors' time recently. Governors have kept parents fully informed. The governing body is also very conscious of the potential effect on pupil recruitment and staff morale. Governors are also very aware of the need to protect the interests of the pupils at the school now and of the financial implications for the school in the future.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	85931
Total expenditure	97862
Expenditure per pupil	5436

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22016
Balance carried forward to the next	10085

44. Inevitably, the cost of educating the pupils at the school is high. Given the good achievement and standards, the successful handling of the potential barriers to achievement caused by its accommodation and size, and the quality of education it provides, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in all the areas of learning because the teaching is consistently good;
- Children have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well;
- Staff assess children and plan activities very well for the mixed age class;
- Very good use is made of facilities outside the classroom.

Commentary

45. The very small number of children in reception are taught alongside pupils in Year 1 for most lessons. In literacy, they are joined by some Year 2 pupils and, in some lessons, they work with the whole school. This happens, for example in the weekly PSHCE lesson. For most of the time, they work with the class teacher but on weekly occasions, they are taught by the head teacher so that they get to know her well too. These arrangements work well and the children benefit both socially and academically from working with the older pupils. In a PSHCE lesson, for example, the reception children worked in groups under the leadership of pupils from Year 3 or 4 and had the confidence to express their own opinions and share in the joint decision making.
46. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed by the class teacher. Assessment procedures are thorough and the information is then used very effectively to plan for the individual needs of the children. The planning ensures that their learning follows the appropriate curriculum for young children but adapts tasks when necessary to provide further challenge for the more able children.
47. The classroom is set out effectively to accommodate education in all the areas of learning. The giant's castle and the garden shop provide opportunities for role play and there are good resources for sand and water play and construction activities. Displays throughout the classroom and in the entrance porch celebrate the children's work and provide stimulating material about, for example, the travels of a fictitious bear called Barnaby. There is good support for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Outside the classroom, there is an enclosed play area that is partly paved and partly garden, with ample storage for large equipment. The children also use the school field for activities.
48. Children are on track to exceed the Early Learning Goals for their **personal, social and emotional development** by the end of the reception year. Teachers are good at promoting children's independence and they respond very well to the opportunities offered. For example, after finding all the words buried in the sand and organising them into sets which rhymed, the children worked amicably together in the sand to invent 'healthy pop'. They quickly settle into the routines of the class, helped by the example of the older pupils. Because of the excellent relationships and the teacher's high expectations of behaviour and hard work, children listen carefully, behave very well and concentrate on their activities.
49. Children's achievement in **communication, language and literacy** is good because they are given many opportunities to talk together and with older pupils. The role play areas promote a variety of kinds of language relating to the creation of stories or the solving of problems about the amount of change that is due from buying a bunch of flowers. Children work with speaking partners to discuss possible answers to questions and teachers press

them to elaborate their opinions on, for example, whether their rubbings of wood and brick show different patterns or not. They joined in a performance of a story, *The Gruffalo*, with expression, using appropriate voices for the various parts. One child had the confidence to tell the rest of the school in assembly, 'We use the playground markings to make up a game.' Children's speaking and listening skills are very well developed and they are on target to surpass the Early Learning Goals in communication by the end of reception. They achieve similarly well in their reading and writing skills, where the teaching is as consistently effective and standards equally good. Teaching develops children's skills in recognising words and sounds systematically and, once they are able to form their letters clearly, they are expected to practise their handwriting regularly. There is a good balance between the development of reading and writing skills and opportunities for children to practise them independently in set tasks and in play situations.

50. Children achieve well in their **mathematical development** and are on target to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. The teaching is consistently good. They soon begin to recognise, sequence and write numbers up to 20 and sometimes beyond and, while some are better than others in writing numbers accurately, all are working at a level above that expected for their age. They can manage single digit addition and can do simple money problems independently. They are aware of a variety of two-dimensional shapes and can use simple measurements in their practical activities. The learning from a good variety of practical games and activities is reinforced by written work in their books. Marking is constructive and helpful and, when necessary, leads to extra practise to consolidate a skill.
51. Achievement in **knowledge and understanding of the world** is good and children are set to surpass the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Teaching is good and is reinforced by school initiatives such as the healthy school project. The children are very clear that it is good for them to eat apples or other fruit at playtimes because the vitamins are good for their health. They can put pictures of how a tadpole transforms into a frog in the correct sequence and can record their findings in a simple chart after a listening walk. They know something of other countries and cultures through their lessons in religious education and their imaginary travels with Barnaby Bear. They know that life was different in the past. Children are given regular opportunities to use the computer for a variety of purposes. They control the mouse confidently and can click and drag objects around the screen, rotating them when they want to. They can use the print command to provide them with hard copy of the pictures they have created using a program such as Dazzle.
52. Children's **physical development** is enhanced by opportunities to use the enclosed paved area, the playing field and the well marked out playground. The school's facilities for indoor physical education are basic but teachers are good at finding alternative opportunities and children's physical development is good. They are on target to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception and achieve well. They often benefit from working with older, more physically developed pupils, looking to them as a model for skills such as catching correctly. Children have many opportunities to refine their skills of cutting, drawing and manipulating material and their skills in these areas are developing well.
53. The very dramatic paintings of giants displayed in the giant's castle show that children's **creative development** is good. They are on track to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. The good teaching provides regular opportunities for them to draw and paint in a variety of styles, using a range of tools and techniques. They experience collage work and sometimes work in three dimensions, as when they stuck their rubbings together to form paper sculptures. They join in singing with the rest of the school in assemblies and listen to the music played there. They also learn a variety of number and action songs that help their learning in other areas as well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are good at the end of Year 2 and Year 4;
- Results in the national tests for seven-year-olds have been at least good for the past four years;
- The teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve well;
- Teachers' assessment and planning are of high quality;
- Pupils with SEN achieve very well.

Commentary

54. The results in national tests for pupils in Year 2 in reading and writing have been strong over the past few years. In 2003, albeit with very small numbers, the results in reading were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. In writing, the results were in the top five per cent both nationally and for similar schools. Higher attainers have performed consistently well both in the national tests and in optional tests for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 at present are on target to reach above average standards by the end of the year. This marks an improvement since the last inspection.
55. Pupils' good achievement is largely due to good leadership and management, the consistently good teaching and the fact that work is so effectively matched to individual needs. The leadership of the subject has successfully targeted the development of assessment and the tracking of individual pupils' progress since the last inspection. Very thorough assessments are successfully used to plan carefully graded tasks for each year and ability group, and also used to good effect to move pupils between the two classes so that they can learn with groups of more closely matched ability and experience. The work set for pupils with SEN relates to that undertaken by the rest of the class but is at a level that the pupils can cope with, given the very good support that they receive. As a result, these pupils make very good progress.
56. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour so that pupils respond very positively and work together constructively. Tasks are interesting and often relate to other curriculum areas to add to their appeal. For example, in a lesson with the younger pupils, both reading and writing tasks related to the growing of a bean, following on from a science lesson where each pupil had planted a bean and started a Bean Diary. Older pupils worked on the task of devising a leaflet to promote tourism along the local coastline. Teachers are good at using the final session of a lesson to check pupils' learning and to clarify and extend it, encouraging them to evaluate their own learning against the lesson objectives. Homework is used very effectively to take pupils' learning further and to practise their skills in reading, spelling and writing.
57. Many opportunities are offered to develop pupils' communication skills. Teachers question rigorously and are not satisfied with partial answers, often prompting for more. They frequently seek pupils' views and opinions so that pupils of all ages are confident in expressing themselves in front of the class or even the school. Almost all pupils are confident to speak out and not to be phased by difficult questions. One boy, for example, produced a lovely explanation of the description of a local island as a 'seabird paradise'. Standards in speaking and listening are above those expected for their age.

58. Pupils' reading skills are developed systematically. They learn to match sounds and letters and to develop a range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. They are encouraged to read at home and their reading diaries provide an opportunity for their parents to comment. As well as individual reading opportunities, guided reading in groups of similar attainment promotes pupils' understanding of what they read and the development of more advanced reading skills. They learn how to use the index and contents page of a book to seek information efficiently and have regular practice in using a dictionary. However, because the school library is small and is organised in a very simple way, they have no opportunities to learn to search for a particular book or topic or understand the library classification that they will probably meet in their next school. Consequently, their research skills are under developed, although they are good at finding information on a CD-ROM or the Internet. Overall, however, standards in reading are good and pupils achieve well.
59. Pupils' writing skills are systematically developed through a good balance between work on the skills of writing and opportunities to write independently for a variety of purposes and audiences. Pupils learn, for example, to organise information on a poster so as to catch the attention of the reader. They work on writing 'cliff hangers' to maintain the interest of readers in their stories. They produce poems with quite sophisticated word play. Pupils' writing skills are developed very effectively by the quality of teachers' marking, which leaves the pupils in no doubt about how well they have done and what they need to do to perform even better.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. All the skills of English are practised effectively in other subjects. Pupils have many opportunities to use their communication skills in PSHCE lessons, in assemblies and in the school council. Teachers' good practice in encouraging pupils to speak and listen is consistently seen in most lessons, whatever the subject. Opportunities to find out information and to record it in writing are offered in, for example, science and history. History lessons also offer chances to write from the point of view of others as, for example, in writing an eyewitness account of the Great Fire of London. There are satisfactory opportunities to use ICT to develop literacy skills but more use could be made of the computers in drafting and editing the pupils' writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2 is consistently well above average;
- Pupils enjoy lessons and have excellent attitudes to the subject;
- Pupils with SEN make very good progress because of the effective teaching and the support provided by the SEN assistant.

Commentary

61. Although the school has small numbers of pupils taking the national tests each year, the school's performance at the age of seven over time shows standards to be consistently well above average with more pupils than usual achieving the grade above that expected. Pupils in the present Year 2 continue to follow that pattern and standards are well above average in all aspects of mathematics. Pupils of all abilities, including higher attainers, achieve well, with pupils with SEN making very good progress. Older pupils also achieve well. Performance is good in all aspects of mathematics and pupils show well developed skills in mental mathematics.

62. Scrutiny of books shows that the curriculum is broad and covers all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth to enable all pupils to achieve well in relation to their capabilities across all areas of mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
63. Pupils produce a very good volume of work and are given many opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and learning to solve problems rather than simply do pure calculations. This enables them to see the relevance of what they do. For example, during the inspection, the mathematical problems set in one class involved a different pupil each day of the week. Because of strategies like this, pupils enjoy the lessons and have positive attitudes to the subject.
64. The very good marking of the work gives clear guidance to the pupils as to how to make progress. This can be seen in comments such as: 'If you can work out the answer in your head, don't bother partitioning' and 'Use the facts you already know'.
65. Lessons are well planned, carefully structured and purposeful. They are based on careful assessments of pupils' previous learning. Teachers explain the objectives for the lesson, ensuring that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. The mixed age classes ensure that the higher attaining pupils benefit without affecting the remainder of the class. For example, a pupil of above average ability in Year 2 regularly works with the Year 3 pupils for mathematics. Sufficient individual attention is given to the oldest pupils in each class to ensure that they too achieve well.
66. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers have high expectations and drive the pupils on at a really fast pace, moving, for example, from counting in 5's and 10's to money problems before moving on to mental strategies for finding the total of three numbers. Younger pupils were challenged to count and identify numbers on a number grid before combining the two objectives by labelling painted hands (10) with the number cards made the previous day.
67. The good match of work to the needs of individuals, coupled with additional support for statemented pupils, ensures that all pupils achieve well. The very effective, experienced SEN assistant works well within the class, supporting a pupil and withdrawing the pupil at an opportune moment for practical work appropriate to need outside the classroom.
68. Subject leadership is good. The headteacher has a clear overview of standards and how well pupils are doing. She sets a strong example through her own teaching, which enhances pupils' learning well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. This is a positive aspect of the school's work. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects. For example, they measure accurately in science and design and technology and gather information to produce bar graphs to display results.

SCIENCE

70. No lessons were seen in science so it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. However, it is clear from scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and from discussions with teachers and pupils, that standards in the subject are good at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 and that pupils make good progress throughout the school.
71. Science is taught to both classes by one teacher, who has developed a suitable curriculum for both age groups. Work often relates to pupils' first hand experiences, as, for example, when younger pupils go on a listening walk or discuss why they eat fruit at playtimes as part of the school's healthy eating campaign. The school grounds are used to good effect to extend pupils' learning. Investigations form an appropriate part of the curriculum for all pupils

and older pupils are beginning to have opportunities to be independent in their choice of exactly what they will be investigating and how they are going to set about it fairly. Pupils respond well to sometimes imaginative tasks, such as writing the story of Roger Rock or designing an environmentally friendly house. The quality of marking is good so that pupils understand how well they have done and where they have made mistakes. Homework effectively extends and reinforces learning. The subject supports pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy well and there is satisfactory use of ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are confident in using ICT;
- Pupils enjoy their work in ICT;
- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.

Commentary

72. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above those expected, showing an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was broadly in line with national expectations. The school has no computer suite, but there is a sufficient number of computers to meet the necessary ICT requirements.
73. Pupils cover all the necessary elements of the subject. The teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to add interest and variety to the lessons. In one lesson seen when younger pupils were using a programmable toy, the teacher made the learning fun by drawing a huge beanstalk for the toy to move along and related the movements to getting closer to the giant at the top of the beanstalk. Lessons are planned carefully to match the needs of all the individuals in the group. For example, different tasks are set and levels of support varied in the class for Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils as well as a separate task for SEN pupils.
74. Lessons are well resourced and resources used effectively. The teachers have high expectations. For example, in a very good lesson with older pupils on writing a program to control movements of a floor or screen turtle, the teacher insisted on the correct procedures and ensured that pupils carefully recorded each phase of the program. One group of pupils then used the floor turtle to check the accuracy of the program. The pupils were confident enough to do this independently.
75. All pupils make good progress in developing their ICT skills. Pupils talk confidently about their experiences of ICT both at school and at home. A SEN pupil was seen to make good progress with a graphics program, drawing pictures and adding text, very well supported by the SEN assistant.
76. Teachers have high levels of confident knowledge which enable their interventions to be pertinent and at the appropriate level, thereby promoting effective learning. Staff and pupils have worked with an expert to design the school web site and spend a day each year in updating it. This gives the pupils a good quality experience in applying their ICT skills to a real life situation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Good teaching ensures that all pupils apply their ICT skills to their work in many subjects, as seen in work scrutiny in English, (using text and pictures), science and design and technology.

HUMANITIES

78. Only one lesson was seen in **geography** and none in **history**. Therefore, no judgement can be made about provision in either subject. However there is evidence from pupils' work and displays that standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 in both subjects.
79. In geography, evidence in pupils' books shows that they use correct terminology when, for example, giving directions, writing about land use or labelling maps. Other sources such as aerial photographs of the local area are also used. Pupils' map drawing skills are appropriate for their age and most pupils can answer geographical enquiries such as, 'What is the most important reason for people to want to live in Acklington Village?' Pupils have written about available jobs locally and looked at reasons why their parents worked in other places. Older pupils show a good awareness of places beyond their own locality and work on various destinations around the world was cleverly focused on foods their parents buy at the local supermarket.
80. Teachers organise and manage the mixed age classes well to ensure that all pupils make the expected progress. In a lesson on worldwide weather, the learning was made fun because it was made into a game that required teamwork. The teams were organised effectively by the teacher and this contributed to the success of the lesson. The mixed age teams each had a reader who could cope with some quite difficult weather terms, such as monsoon and arid, rather than being put into year groups. All the pupils managed well in their teams because of their very good relationships with their peers.
81. The school has successfully addressed all the areas of weakness highlighted in the previous inspection report concerning history. Pupils' achievement is as expected and their skills of independent historical enquiry have been developed. The school now uses a nationally recommended scheme of work to plan for pupils' progress.
82. Teachers ensure that the work in history is interesting and pupils are developing an understanding of how life differed from current times. The older pupils show an understanding of chronology by dividing the past times into specific periods and people. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of 'then and now' by describing a mail bag robbery in Acklington using photographs to describe life 'then' and their own knowledge to describe life 'now'. Local residents visit the school to talk about their memories of times past.
83. Displays of work, such as, for example, 'How did the Vikings navigate?', demonstrate a broad curriculum with good cross curricular links to design and technology and art and design. There are also many opportunities for children to use and apply their literacy skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well;
- Standards are good;
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development;
- Pupils learn about a good variety of religions and beliefs.

Commentary

84. Teaching in religious education is good and sometimes very good. Consequently, pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above those expected by the end of Year 4. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Younger pupils learn to appreciate and enjoy God's creation when they sample the scents of the aromatic garden outside their classroom. When the teacher suggested that they rub basil and mint leaves, the pupils were very appreciative of the texture and the smells. They finished the lesson by watering the plants - because God hadn't sent the rain lately. Older pupils explored the nature of God in comparing God's qualities with those of their fathers, carefully listing their characteristics. In a very good lesson on Hinduism, they learned about the Aum symbol and began to appreciate the fact that Hinduism is not only a religion in India but is also a religion in this country as well. They listened with interest to the teacher's knowledgeable explanation of the meaning of a Hindu greeting and practised it with serious respect. Earlier in the year, pupils learned about Judaism and explored the significance of the different foods on the Seder plate. Pupils visit the local church and talk with the vicar, who is a governor of the school, about the significance of the vestments and the different parts of the church building. Positive moral and social messages are presented in lessons and in assemblies, which also enhance pupils' knowledge of Christianity effectively.
85. The subject is effectively led and managed and has a high profile in the life of the school. The strong links with the church reinforce the learning in religious education lessons well and teachers present the work imaginatively and with a good understanding of how pupils learn. Very good support ensures that pupils with SEN play a full part in lessons and achieve well. Literacy and communication skills are promoted well in religious education in discussions and in written tasks such as writing about pupils' own uniqueness – 'I am different to other people'.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. Too few lessons were seen in **art and design, design and technology, music or physical education** to make a judgement about provision in any of these subjects.
87. Samples of pupils work, display and pictures on the school website reflect satisfactory achievement in design and technology. Evidence in pupils' books show that design skills are average for pupils, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils cover the full breadth of the curriculum and complete a good range of tasks, such as making healthy sandwiches and designing and making vehicles with plastic bottles. The display in the hall of Viking ships shows how pupils have measured, marked out and cut a variety of shapes. The boats have flags and levers incorporated into the designs. Teachers place a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to think for themselves by asking questions such as 'What did you need to do to ensure the eye lit up?' The work shows that pupils used the correct terminology to describe their models and suggested ways to improve them. They used labelled sketches to

communicate their design details and health and safety rules showed that they were also using the correct tools.

88. Work in displays and pupils' folders show that standards in art and design are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, an improvement since the last inspection. In the one short observation made, the teacher had planned interesting activities outside the classroom. Pupils produced a series of rubbings that were later to be incorporated into paper sculptures. Work on display shows a rich curriculum through which pupils experience a broad range of techniques and styles, some of them from other cultures. For example, the artwork based on an African story about the Thunder and Lightning Monster used a painted background with a black paper and tissue paper collage to convey a strong mood that was later further explored through music and dance. A science display on the human skeleton included some good drawings and paintings of bodies in movement. Good links with other subjects included some very effective charcoal drawings of architecture in the village and paintings of Viking warships.
89. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about music. The singing in assembly was tuneful and at expected levels. Planning shows that there is a satisfactory music curriculum and parents are pleased with the performances that their children are involved in.
90. Only one lesson was seen in physical education. This was a good games lesson with the younger pupils where individual progress benefited greatly from the small numbers in the group. Not enough evidence was seen to make an overall judgement about standards in the subject. It is clear from interviews with teachers that the school uses its facilities well to compensate for the limitations of space indoors by making extensive use of the grounds and the resources of other schools and that there is a satisfactory curriculum. Arrangements for swimming existed until the refurbishment of the host school's pool and, through no fault of the school, the times available for the use of the new pool are unsuitable. However, the middle school ensures that all pupils have swimming tuition when they move into Year 5.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The way in which PSHCE permeates the whole life of the school so that pupils achieve very well;
- Innovative teaching and learning leads to high levels of pupils' interest and involvement.

Commentary

91. Pupils' personal education underpins learning in all lessons and is further developed in a weekly lesson with the whole school. The school's move towards gaining the Healthy Schools award has meant that a high level of attention is given to issues of exercise and healthy eating in science and physical education lessons. Pupils' learning from this is reinforced during the regular 'fruit breaks' each day when pupils eat an apple or a tomato and discuss the benefits they bring. Sex education is presented in family context and drugs education is sensitively covered, largely in science lessons. Citizenship education is promoted very effectively through the deliberations of the school council but also in the discussions and debates in other lessons where pupils are encouraged to present their own opinions and to negotiate decisions after listening to everybody's point of view.

92. The present form of the weekly PSHCE lesson has arisen from the teacher's training in thinking skills and philosophy. Careful grouping of pupils ensured that even the youngest children were able to participate fully in the lesson observed, helped where necessary by older pupils. Pupils with SEN received high quality support so that they too could participate fully. The teacher and support assistant worked very effectively together to enable those with SEN to contribute their views in ways that did not disrupt the rest of the class. After a stirring performance of a story, *The Gruffalo*, that involved all pupils, the teacher set them the task of discussing the meaning of the story in small groups. While this proved to be a challenging task, pupils worked very hard at coming up with an answer that the group could all agree with. The group leaders ensured that even the youngest children contributed their ideas. After they had shared their views with the whole class, with telling comments and questions from the teacher adding to pupils' own perceptions, each group was asked to devise an open question that would lead to the exploration of an important issue. Because so much emphasis was placed on the pupils making their own decisions, there was always a chance that they would not take the most productive option and this is what happened in this lesson. The question the class decided to explore after considerable debate and a vote was more limited than some of the other questions they devised. However, the teacher's skill enabled worthwhile thinking to occur and pupils of all ages and abilities were very well involved throughout the lesson, teasing out why the mouse had made up the story about the Gruffalo. Pupils not only learned about the morality of telling lies even for what looks like a good reason but they also gained very good insights into the democratic process.

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

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