

INSPECTION REPORT

EASTERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Middlesbrough

LEA area: Middlesbrough

Unique reference number: 111622

Headteacher: Mrs Ruth Parker

Lead inspector: Dr Brian Male

Dates of inspection: 12-14 January 2004

Inspection number: 256026

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: | 220 |
| School address: | Erith Grove Easterside Middlesbrough |
| Postcode: | TS4 3RG |
| Telephone number: | (01642) 273006 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Paul Gainford |
| 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 Middlesbrough Local Education Authority. At the time of the inspection there were 194 full time pupils in eight classes, with a further 52 pupils attending the nursery part-time. Many pupils start school with standards of attainment well below 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 above the national average. The school has an Infant Assessment Class which provides 10 places for pupils with moderate learning and behaviour difficulties across Middlesbrough. There is a very low proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities and none at an early stage of learning English. The school benefits from a wide range of community schemes such as Excellence in Cities, Education Action Zone (EAZ) and Neighbourhood Renewal. It received the School Achievement award in 2002, the Basic Skills Charter Mark in 2003 and has been recognised as an Investor in People since 1994.

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 |
| 19419 | Mrs Sue Boyle | Lay inspector | |
| 24027 | Mrs Malli Kutty | Team inspector | Foundation stage, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education |
| 23548 | Mrs Anita Dee | Team Inspector | Mathematics, science, religious education |
| 200024 | Mr Paul Wright | Team inspector | Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** with some **very good** features. There is a very supportive ethos in the school and new approaches to teaching and learning are raising attainment. There is a good overall quality of educational provision and pupils achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils feel very well supported at school and have a very good sense of belonging to a community.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and their personal development is very good.
- The school is led and managed very well and the governing body has a very good oversight of its work.
- Teaching is good overall and there is a very good range of methods being used.
- The curriculum is valuably enriched by a very wide range of contacts with the community, visits and extra-curricular activities.
- Assessment is used very effectively to set targets and evaluate progress.
- Parents are very pleased with the school and the provision that it makes.
- The benefit of the wider range of learning methods is reduced in some lessons where the learning objectives are too narrow.
- Pupils in the mixed age classes do not always follow the programme of study prescribed for their age and prior learning.

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and very good progress in aspects such as teaching, learning and information and communication technology (ICT). Standards of attainment are now higher by the end of Year 6, the quality of teaching, assessment and support for pupils have improved and all the key issues raised have been successfully addressed. The quality of other features has been maintained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards in Year 6 this year are not as high as the unusually high scores in 2003, but they are higher than 2002 and continue an overall rising trend. Inspection evidence shows that present standards are below the national average in English, mathematics and science, but this represents good achievement for the pupils taking account of their low starting point. Standards in Year 2 are also lower than in 2003, but also represent good achievement. Standards are well below average in writing, and below average in reading, mathematics and science. In both Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with the national average in ICT and religious education (RE), which is very good achievement. Standards are below average in all other subjects. Achievement in other subjects is generally good across the school.

Pupils make good progress through the nursery and reception classes. Standards are particularly high in the present classes, and children are likely to reach the nationally expected goals by the end of the reception year. The attainment of previous reception year groups was not so high at this stage.

There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the infant assessment class, and they make good progress.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Most pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to school, but there are a small number who can be disruptive at times. Overall attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils show a very good commitment to school and are very keen to participate in events. Pupils' personal qualities such as relationships and concern for others are generally very good. The attendance of the great majority of pupils is good, and the school has done much more than most to ensure pupils attend regularly. However, the overall rate of attendance is well below the national average because of poor attendance by a small number of families.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good overall. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers work very hard and have a very good commitment to their pupils. They have been keen to extend the range of teaching and learning methods in use, and this is improving learning and beginning to raise standards. In the best lessons, there are high expectations, and the pupils are involved in interesting practical activities to which they respond very positively. The next step is to ensure that learning objectives and learning methods are appropriately matched. Teaching assistants provide good support for learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.

There is a good curriculum enhanced by a very good programme of visits and extra-curricular activities. Care needs to be taken in the mixed age classes to ensure that pupils access the programme of study appropriate to their age and prior learning, particularly in mathematics. There are very good arrangements for pupils' care and welfare. Pupils' achievement benefits from a generous level of staffing, spacious accommodation, and good resources.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The headteacher provides very clear leadership and has created a very positive ethos. She provides a very good role-model for the very positive approach to pupils that has created their good attitudes to school, and which is raising standards. There is very good support from the assistant headteachers and other senior staff within a framework of shared leadership. The management of the school is very good, and the senior staff monitor and evaluate provision very effectively. The governing body provides very good governance for the school and maintains a very effective overview of its work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school, and there is no area where a significant number wish to see improvement. Pupils are also very positive in their views of the school and have a particularly good sense of ownership because they are well involved in its activities. The school's good partnership with parents contributes to pupils' positive attitudes and enhances learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to build on its already good provision, and maintain the rising trend of standards, the next step for the school is to consider the ways in which:

- learning objectives and the wider range of learning strategies are matched, and that the pace of lessons is always sufficiently brisk.
- pupils in the mixed aged classes can follow the appropriate programmes of study for their year group and prior learning, particularly in mathematics.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good overall and very good in ICT and RE. Standards across the school have risen since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an overall trend of rising standards.
- Pupils achieve very well in ICT and RE.
- Pupils' achievement is good in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Standards of writing are lower than other subjects across the school.

Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 27.2 (24.1) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 27.3 (24.7) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 28.7 (26.2) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Year 6 standards were particularly high in 2003, and the table above shows that scores in national tests were slightly higher than the national average. This represented very good achievement for the pupils. In previous years, standards have been generally well below the national average. Inspection evidence shows that Year 6 standards are not quite so high this year as in 2003, but that they are generally higher than in previous years. The 2003 year group had started at a higher than usual level, and there were fewer pupils than usual in the class with special educational needs. The recent widening of the range of teaching and learning methods is having a positive effect on standards.
2. Year 6 standards are below the national average in English, mathematics and science. This is higher than in the year up to 2002 when standards were generally well below average. Taking account of the low starting point of many pupils and the number with special educational needs, this is good achievement. Standards in ICT have risen significantly recently through the school because of improved equipment and training, and standards are now in line with the national average and so represent very good achievement for the pupils. Standards are also in line with the national average in RE, where there has been a particular focus on widening teaching and learning styles. Achievement here is now very good. Standards in other subjects are generally below the national average but represent good achievement.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 14.1 (13.5) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 13.9 (12.2) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 15.8 (13.9) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Inspection evidence indicates that Year 2 standards are also lower than national test results in 2003 when they were unusually high. Progress through Years 1 and 2 has been generally satisfactory, reflecting the mainly satisfactory teaching in English and mathematics, but standards are well below average in writing and below average in reading, mathematics and science. Achievement is satisfactory in writing and good in reading, mathematics and science. As with Year 6, standards in ICT and RE are in line with the national average and so represent very good achievement, and standards in other subjects are generally below average and represent good achievement.
4. Children make good progress through the nursery and reception classes and many are in line to achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Many children at present in both classes started in the nursery with standards generally below those usually found, so the standards represent good achievement. In previous years, many children started in the nursery with standards well below average and so judgements about progress and achievement in Years 2 and 6 are referenced to these lower starting points.
5. The good provision in the infant assessment unit and for pupils with special educational needs elsewhere in the school enables them to make good progress. The morning class for children with special educational needs in Years 3-6 works well and provides very effectively for a wide variety of needs. It provides a very supportive setting where pupils who find it difficult to succeed in a larger class are able to find success and confidence. The infant assessment class also provides good support for a wide range of special needs and enables pupils to interact well with the rest of the school.
6. Standards are promoted by the good overall teaching across the school and also by the wide range of support that the school is able to offer. Teaching assistants are very influential here, especially with pupils who have special educational needs. The learning mentor and family support officer contribute significantly by ensuring that pupils are in a good position to learn.
7. The recent improvements in the quality of provision, particularly teaching, are raising standards. Standards have not risen as quickly as the improvements in provision as there is an inevitable time-lag. In some subjects such as ICT, standards have risen quickly as new equipment and programmes have become available. In other areas such as writing, progress is inevitably slower as the skills involved take longer to develop. A period of consolidation of the improved provision is now needed to allow standards to catch up, rather than involvement in even more initiatives.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is well below the national average and most pupils arrive at school on time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like school and behave well.
- Pupils have a good sense of ownership and of belonging to the school.
- Pupils' commitment and willingness to take responsibilities is a strength.
- Attendance is low compared to other schools, even though the school has taken more than the usual steps to deal with this.

Commentary

8. Pupils like school. Their parents are very positive about the school, and pupils reflect the positive views of their parents. Pupils enjoy and participate well in the many extra-curricular activities, and this supports their positive attitudes. Behaviour has improved and is now particularly good in lessons, although there is a small number of pupils who can become

restless if not actively engaged in their lessons. Behaviour in the playground is mostly satisfactory. The introduction of the play leaders, the good involvement of mid-day supervisory staff, and the work of the learning mentor have helped support behaviour in the playground which has, in turn, had a positive impact on behaviour in lessons. The use of exclusion is rare over the years. Incidents of bullying are rare and of a minor nature such as name calling. The school deals with these well.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 191 | 3 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

9. Pupils feel very much a part of and are proud of their school. They are very well informed about what is happening in school, and feel that they are listened to and respected.

10. Pupils are valued as individuals and it is this aspect of provision for spiritual development that is particularly effective. Collective worship makes a satisfactory contribution to personal development although there is scope to provide more of a focus for reflection. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop socially. Older pupils in particular have a good sense of their role in the community, and volunteer for a variety of responsibilities such as peer mentoring or playground buddies. They carry out their roles thoughtfully, showing care for and consideration towards their younger charges. The school makes its expectations very clear, and as a result pupils have a very clear sense of appropriate behaviour. They are helped to reflect on and improve their relationship with others through a good number of supportive structures such as the learning mentor programme. There is good provision for pupils to learn about local culture and the arts, and this is significantly enhanced by links to outside organisations such as ‘Creative Partnerships’ which provide a range of stimulating experiences for pupils. There is generally appropriate provision for the multicultural aspect of pupils’ development.

11. There is a very strong focus on attendance and punctuality. Pupils and parents are constantly reminded of its importance and there are thorough systems for monitoring, very good support for families, and a myriad of incentives to encourage pupils. This has had a significant impact on parents’ attitudes with many more parents recognising the importance of regular attendance. Despite this, the figures for attendance remain well below the national average because of the frequent absence of a small number of children together with an outbreak of chickenpox during the year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.2 | School data | 0.1 |
| 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, and has improved since the previous inspection.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall and have improved since the previous inspection. The school makes good use of assessment to support learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are using a wide range of teaching and learning methods.
- There is very good use of assessment to monitor learning and set targets.
- There is good teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the assessment class and across the school.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for learning.
- Teachers work very hard and have a very good commitment to the school and their pupils.
- The benefit of the wider range of learning methods is reduced in some lessons where the learning objectives are too narrow.
- Pupils within the mixed-age classes are not always able to follow the programme of study appropriate for their age and prior learning, and this is an issue particularly within mathematics.
- In some lessons, the pace of learning could be quicker, particularly of introductions.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 4 (8%) | 30 (55%) | 18 (33%) | 2 (4%) | 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.

12. Teaching is good overall across the school and the much wider range of strategies now being used are beginning to raise standards and extend pupils' understanding, as well as make lessons more interesting and enjoyable. This extension of methods has been promoted by the EAZ as it is one of its targets, and teachers have worked very hard to change their approaches and have shown a great commitment in doing so. The leadership of the school has been very successful in supporting and overseeing the changes.
13. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and this promotes good progress. A very supportive environment has been created where pupils quickly settle and feel secure. Activities are planned very carefully and pupils are given a good range of first hand activities to help develop their understanding. Teaching is good in all the expected areas of learning, but full use is not made of the outdoor area and the facilities it provides.
14. Teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2, but is mainly satisfactory in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In other subjects it was possible to see only one lesson in either one or the other of the two classes. Therefore no judgement is made about teaching in individual subjects, but the teaching was good overall across these other subjects. In English and mathematics, pupils are involved in an appropriate range of learning activities but in mathematics they are not always involved in sufficient practical activities with actual objects to make their learning secure. Where lessons are satisfactory rather than good the pace of learning is slower and the expectations lower.

15. Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and particularly strong for the older pupils. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, ICT and RE. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons to make judgements in other subjects, but teaching was good overall in the sample across these subjects. Teaching was good overall in mathematics because the mental-oral work was very well done, there was some good investigative work, and there were very good links to ICT, but work in other aspects was not always matched well to pupils' previous learning in the mixed-aged groups.
16. The overall teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. In the infant assessment class, teaching is consistently good and well organised; for example, full use is made of the information collected about children's individual needs and how well they have learned. Pupils in the assessment class are motivated to learn by the enthusiastic and determined approach of the teacher and the special needs classroom assistants. They receive a high level of appropriate individual support and encouragement from the teacher and special needs assistant when carrying out tasks. As a result, the children achieve well in all aspects of the curriculum.
17. Teaching has improved for pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that they cover a range of skills. This is effective in enabling these pupils to make good progress in their learning. Special needs assistants are very supportive of pupils and relationships are very good. They are involved in the planning of lessons and know what is to be covered and what they are expected to do. For example, in a numeracy lesson, careful planning and the effective use of special needs assistants resulted in pupils making good progress in the identification of a variety of assorted shapes. However, the final evaluative sessions of lessons are not always used effectively as often insufficient time is left at the end of lessons to review the learning objectives. There are also some occasions when the teacher does not always provide sufficiently challenging activities for higher attaining pupils in the group.
18. In the best lessons across the school, there is an exciting range of teaching and learning styles that challenges pupils' concepts and extends their knowledge and understanding. For example, a very good mathematics lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils looking at graphs in the four quadrants took place in the hall so that pupils could move about to 'feel' the location of points on the graph. This is called 'kinaesthetic learning' and is one of the increased range of methods that the school has recently successfully introduced. As a result of this approach, pupils were able to construct a graph in all four quadrants which is the higher level of expectation (Level 5) and so particularly good achievement for the pupils. In other lessons, pupils are involved in paired and group discussions, role-play and simulations, and use a variety of learning materials such as individual whiteboards and ICT. They work outdoors as well as in the classroom and are not always confined to their desks. All of this creates a more interesting and exciting approach that captures the interest of the pupils, improves their attitudes and extends their learning.
19. Across the school, teachers use ICT very effectively to promote learning. The newly installed 'interactive whiteboards' are already being used well to allow class demonstrations and to involve pupils actively. For example, in a very good Year 5 and 6 lesson, the interactive board was used effectively for pupils to move shapes about to design their own Olympic stadium. Seeing this on the large board (where shapes can be moved by hand) enabled pupils to develop the same technique on their own personal computers. The interactive board proved very effective for some pupils who find reading difficult in an exercise where different words moved all over the board and the pupils had to recognise a given word then jump about to touch it before it disappeared. This could have been done on a personal computer, but the large screen required the pupils to move their whole bodies, and this 'kinaesthetic' approach reinforced the learning.
20. The benefit of the wider range of learning methods is reduced in some lessons where the learning objectives are too narrow. Most of the new methods introduced are ways of extending understanding in fairly open-ended ways and are most effective where the intended learning is also fairly broad and open ended. For example, paired and group discussion is a very effective

method for extending pupils' ideas and understanding of concepts such as whether an author has been successful in creating a particular effect. However, it is not an effective method for a more restricted learning goal such as finding the capital city of France. Now that the range of learning methods has been extended, the range of learning now needs to be extended in line. To do this, many lessons will need to give pupils more independence to choose their own methods, materials and lines of investigation and to make use of facilities around the school such as the library. Such independence is a requirement of many aspects of the National Curriculum. Now that behaviour is good, pupils are in a good position to use this independence sensibly.

21. In some lessons where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the pace of learning was slower. This was often the case when introductions to lessons were too long and pupils were expected to listen to teachers talking for extended periods. In the two unsuccessful lessons, the activity went on too long, and some pupils lost interest and became disruptive. The hour-long slots given to subjects are too long for some lessons.
22. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning across the school, especially for pupils with special educational needs. Other support staff such as play leaders, the learning mentor and the family support officer also play a valuable role even though they are not involved directly in teaching.
23. Assessment arrangements have been improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now having a good impact on learning. Assessment is used very effectively to set targets and to monitor learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and has improved since the previous inspection. There is a very good programme for enhancing the curriculum. Staffing, accommodation and resources are very good.

Main strengths and weakness

- The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and community links.
- The carefully planned cross-curricular links offer opportunities to consolidate and extend the skills and knowledge in all subjects.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- In the nursery and reception classes, more could be done to offer children continuous access to the outdoor area to follow their interest and extend their skills.
- Planning in the mixed age classes does not always follow the appropriate programmes of study for pupils' age and prior attainment, especially in subjects like mathematics.

Commentary

24. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The cross-curricular links are used well to improve skills and knowledge in foundation subjects alongside literacy and numeracy skills. The involvement in curriculum initiatives such as the Creative Art Partnership and the Active Sport programme is helping to raise staff's confidence and pupils' enjoyment in learning. The support of well-briefed support assistants is particularly effective in enabling pupils to receive skilled support in small groups. This results in all pupils achieving well. The curriculum offered to the nursery and reception classes is good overall. It is well matched to the six areas of learning and there is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. However, the use of the outdoor area is not fully exploited to offer children continuous access to this provision to follow their interests and develop their skills at their own pace. The curriculum is generally well planned but does not always follow the appropriate age-related programmes of study in mixed age classes, particularly in mathematics. This means that learning is not always well matched to prior attainment, and that some pupils miss out in developing certain portions of the mathematics

curriculum. The timetable ensures appropriate coverage of the curriculum, but some time slots are too long and this slows the pace of some lessons.

25. The very wide range of extra-curricular activities includes a variety of curriculum and sports clubs and opportunities to take part in competitions and productions. Pupils are encouraged to take part in local challenges and inter-school competitions. The skilled support pupils receive on physical activities outside school hours is enabling them to improve their specific physical skills. The after-school clubs such as the design and technology club extend pupils' skills and raise their enthusiasm for the subject. The school offers a wide range of visits that supports the curriculum. Good use is made of visitors to the school including community members, artists and musicians.
26. The provision and support within the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs are good and the school complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice, particularly in terms of individual educational plans. Careful thought has been given to ensuring that the programme for pupils with special educational needs meets their academic, personal, and social needs. The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with an appropriate emphasis on developing numeracy and literacy skills. Pupils with special educational needs have the same opportunities as all pupils in the school.
27. The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education. The promotion of pupils' personal development is a strong feature of the curriculum and begins from the time pupils start school. The very caring and constructive relationships help young children to gain confidence and they are happy and settled, and the school has effective induction programmes. As pupils become older, they have more formal opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through discussions of social and health issues. The school has developed good links with the local schools. The links established through the Pathfinders programme such as the 'wrap-around' care offered by the nearby special school and the curriculum support offered by a local secondary school through other projects are helping pupils to achieve well and gain confidence.
28. The school benefits from a generous level of teaching and support staff. It is generally well resourced, and makes very good use of its extensive grounds and accommodation to offer pupils a wealth of experiences that enhance learning.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and arrangements for health and safety are very good. There is very good support, advice and guidance for pupils. The school is very valuing towards pupils and has very effective ways of seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and well cared for.
- There is good quality and range of support for pupils.
- The school listens very well to pupils.

Commentary

29. Pupils are confident in the adults in school and trust them, knowing that the school is working in their best interest. This helps to develop the pupils' positive attitudes to school. Children starting in the nursery and reception classes quickly settle into routines and feel secure. The leadership of the school has been very successful in promoting this positive ethos and a very inclusive approach.
30. External agencies and school personnel work well together to provide support and guidance for pupils and their families. There is a good exchange of information that enables staff to monitor

concerns effectively. The learning mentor is well liked by pupils, and they know that she is available for them at any time. She provides very effective support for behaviour and attendance. The work of the learning mentor is most effective when it is focused on the ways in which children are achieving their learning targets.

31. The school is using a wide range of assessment information very effectively to set targets for pupils and to focus support, particularly in English and mathematics. This is having a positive impact on learning.
32. Pupils are listened to and their views taken into account both formally and informally. Adults are approachable and the headteacher is a very good role-model, and sets a good tone for valuing pupils. The School Council and the Year 6 interviews with the headteacher provide very good forums for pupils' views. The school is extending these more formal mechanisms to enable more children to have a voice in the running of the school, by introducing further pupil councils for different aspects of the school.
33. Arrangements for child protection are very well established. A good number of staff have had child protection training, and all staff are reminded about policy at an annual meeting. Mid-day supervisory staff meet very regularly with the headteacher and are clear about procedures. The school carries out appropriate risk assessment and arrangements for first aid are known to all.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is good, and its partnership with the local community is very good. There are some very good links with other schools. The school provides a very effective range of extended services to parents and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very effectively using community links to enhance the curriculum and support pupils.
- There is a very effective contribution to the community.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive.
- Written information about pupils' standards and progress is not always clear.

Commentary

34. Parents have every confidence in the school. Staff are approachable and supportive. Parents are listened to and their views are valued. The entrance foyer has been recently adapted to make it more comfortable and administration staff have consulted parents and adapted procedures to ensure that they offer a parent friendly service. Parents with personal difficulties are well supported and directed to appropriate support agencies. This all contributes to parents' views of the school which in turn impacts on pupils attitudes, making pupils feel positive about school and willing to learn.
35. The school encourages parents to help with homework by giving their children rewards for completed homework. It also offers a homework club for those parents who are unable to support children at home. The numbers of parents attending workshops and sessions designed to help them support learning are extremely small. There is better attendance for the special parent courses, and some of these involve pupils and give parents the skills to enable them to learn alongside their child.
36. Pupil annual reports are very detailed about what pupils can do. However, they are not always clear about the progress pupils have made, most do not make reference to the standards pupils have achieved and on many there is an over-reliance on educational language which makes them difficult to understand. The numbers of parents attending parent teacher consultation evenings are fairly low. Parents enjoy and give good support for performances and

class assemblies. The school recognises that it needs to involve parents more and the very recently appointed family support officer has been given the task.

37. The school's links with outside agencies such as the EAZ and the Children's Fund have been developed very well to fit with identified curricular needs, to provide the very good range of extra-curricular activities mentioned earlier in the report, and to provide additional pastoral support. There has been a very good emphasis on the curriculum, and links with initiatives such as 'Creative Partnerships' have involved all pupils in a very good range of experiences of the arts. Of particular note was the 'Centre North East' project, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 went to the Centre North East building in the town centre, and with support from an artist produced paintings from an aerial perspective. Initiatives of a more pastoral nature include the learning mentor and the playleaders, all of whom provide good support for behaviour and personal development. There is a very good range of visits to local industries, organisations, museums and the theatre that are linked well to learning needs.
38. The school makes a very valuable contribution to the community by liaising with outside bodies to provide a variety of workshops and courses for parents and other adults. It makes available its teachers' expertise to other schools in a variety of ways. For example, one teacher supports and assesses other schools in their work towards the national Healthy School award. The school draws on expertise from other schools and works effectively with other schools in joint initiatives. Students from local colleges and schools use the school for work experience. Transfer arrangements with most local secondary schools are satisfactory. However, the school has not yet been able to develop satisfactory links with the new King's Academy. This is a cause for concern for the school and for parents, many of whom are worried about obtaining places for their children in the new academy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good overall. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very clear leadership and has created a very positive ethos.
- The governing body is very effective in its oversight of the school.
- The subjects of English and ICT are very well led.
- There is very good support from assistant headteachers and senior staff.
- The school is very well managed and systems for monitoring and evaluation are thorough.
- The school has been very successful in obtaining funding and support from a variety of sources.

Commentary

39. The headteacher has created a very positive ethos in the school for both pupils and staff. There has been a clear vision for improvement and the school has worked very well with a variety of agencies such as the EAZ to improve provision, particularly in the area of teaching and learning styles. The very positive ethos has been important in encouraging staff to work in new ways and be willing to take on new approaches. This, in turn, is improving provision and raising standards of attainment. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is a very good role-model for the positive approach to pupils that has built their self-esteem and positive attitudes, and ensures that the school is very inclusive in its approach.
40. Senior staff have been very effective in supporting these initiatives and providing the required leadership within their areas. The subjects of English and ICT are particularly well led and there have been significant improvements in both. This has impacted significantly upon standards, although they have risen more sharply in ICT than English because of the skills involved. The school has pursued a policy of 'shared leadership' which has been successful in building

teams with specific responsibilities within the school, and has encouraged the positive approach to change and improvement.

41. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. There is great attention to detail and the special educational needs co-ordinator has developed sound procedures for monitoring and assessing the school's practice. As a result of this, the individual needs of all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the school.
42. The management of the school is very good, and systems for monitoring and evaluation are thorough. The improved systems for tracking pupils' progress are enabling the school to set targets and apply resources much more effectively. The present system of allocating teaching assistants to classes is not always sufficiently flexible to focus their input on particular needs and at particular times, such as group reading. However, their overall impact is already very positive. There are effective systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, and a great deal of effective work has been put in to widen the range of teaching and learning styles. This is underpinning the rising standards.
43. There is good support for new members of staff, and there are good programmes for professional development. The school is very effective in providing a setting for initial teacher training. At the time of the inspection, one temporary member of the teaching staff was unqualified. She had been given good support and this was enabling the class to be run well. However, even though success is being encountered, it is important that the high level of support be maintained.
44. The school has been very successful in making use of its contact with a variety of outside agencies such as the EAZ, Neighbourhood Renewal and Creative Partnerships. These have allowed the school to support a number of very valuable developments in the field of arts education, ICT, teaching and learning and in raising standards. The learning mentor and play leaders have impacted very positively on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. These contacts have also brought in some very valuable funding that has helped the school through what might have been a difficult period when pupil numbers were falling and revenue declining.
45. The school's success in tapping into alternative sources of funding has had a significant effect on its quality of educational provision. The success is partly responsible for the apparently large budget surplus last year. Grant funding was obtained for several projects for which money had been set aside at a point in the financial year when it was too late to develop new projects. The school drew up a good plan to deal with the surplus and this is already almost at completion.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 673519 |
| Total expenditure | 701025 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2983 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 127744 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 100238 |

46. The governing body provides very good governance for the school. Governors have a clear vision for the school's future that takes account of its changing circumstances, particularly in terms of the falling pupil numbers in the area, and their ambitions for the future. This clear vision enables them to play a very effective role in setting the strategic direction for the school. The Chair of Governors provides very effective leadership, ensuring that all members are able to play a full part.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. The provision for children in the foundation stage is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection, especially in the nursery. Children start the nursery in the term in which they are three and are transferred to reception class either in September or in January depending on their age. There is a good induction programme. Staff in the nursery and reception classes work well together as team to provide a safe and exciting environment and children are happy and settled.
48. Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year from well below to below that expected of their age. Currently, the majority of children start the nursery with basic skills below those found generally for their age. They have very limited knowledge of the world around them. All children achieve well because the teaching is good and the curriculum is planned well to provide a wide range of interesting activities to meet the needs of all children. Observation and assessment information are used well to plan for the next step in children's learning, and this helps children to make good progress in both nursery and reception classes. This is an improvement from the last inspection where the progress made by children in the nursery was judged to be unsatisfactory.
49. There are good links with parents and the community. The staff make good use of the indoor provision and there are well planned outdoor areas. However, lack of continuous access to the outdoor provision limits children's opportunities to use these areas freely to develop their interests. The leadership and management of the foundation stage are good. The co-ordinator, with the support of the staff, has worked hard to improve the provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in both classes develop good levels of personal independence.
- The very good relationships help children to develop their confidence.
- Children achieve well because of the good teaching and high expectations set by the staff.

Commentary

50. Most children enter nursery with skills in this area below those usually expected. The well organised learning environment and the supportive relationships offered by the staff in the nursery help children to settle in quickly to the general routines of the day and they are confident to try new things. This is further extended in the reception class where children confidently take part in group and whole-class activities. Children in both nursery and reception classes are taught how to share things and take turns. When some find this difficult, staff take time to explain to children the need to share things so that they learn to appreciate the needs of others. The majority of children show interests in what they are doing and sit quietly and listen carefully when asked. Children in both classes achieve well and the majority of them are set to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. This is good achievement.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- The range of activities provided for developing writing skills encourages children to develop an interest in writing.
- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Some whole-class sessions are too long for the younger children.

Commentary

51. Many children start the nursery with speaking and listening skills below those expected of their age. The younger children in the nursery are still reluctant to talk to visitors, whereas the older children are keen to share their ideas with some support from the adults. By the time they reach the reception class, children are gaining confidence to talk about what they have done and things they have observed. Older children in the reception class are eager to talk to the teacher; for example to say what Noah might have taken with him on his journey. The well-organised role-play areas enhance the opportunity further. Children in both classes are developing their early reading skills, but although the whole-class sessions are helping the older and more able children in the reception class to develop their talk, the younger children find some of these sessions too long and they lose interest. Children in both classes are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop their understanding of writing for different purposes, whether taking notes in the animal hospital in the reception class, signing their name on the milk register, or making shopping lists in the nursery. Observation and assessment information are used very well to target children for focused work. As a result, children make good progress. A significant number of children in the current reception class are set to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop a good understanding of numbers and counting.
- Staff in both classes makes good use of games, songs and rhymes to reinforce and extend children's understanding of counting and numbers.
- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Some whole-class sessions are too long for the younger children in the reception class.

Commentary

52. The teaching and learning are good. Children develop a good understanding of counting and numbers as they move through the nursery. This is further extended in the reception class where most children can count above 10 confidently. The older children in reception can work out the number above a given number. Teachers in both classes use their questioning strategies and resources well to challenge and extend children's understanding of different aspects of mathematics. For example, in one of the sessions observed, the reception class teacher challenged the more able children to show different ways of making six using their fingers other than the one demonstrated by her as they tried to work out the number of ants left on the board. Although such whole-class sessions are helping the older and more able children well, the younger children find it too hard to concentrate. Activities such as sand, water and 'Small-world' play are used well to develop children's mathematical vocabulary related to shape, space and measure. However, their knowledge and understanding of this aspect of mathematical development is less secure compared to other aspects. The majority of children are well on their way attaining the early learning goals by the time they leave reception in most

aspects of mathematical development with a number of more able children exceeding this, especially in number and calculating.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good understanding of how to use the computer to draw pictures and play games.
- The wide range of planned activities helps children to make sense of the world around them.
- Lack of free access to outdoor area limits the opportunities children have to explore their interests and curiosity more freely.

Commentary

53. Most children enter nursery with very limited knowledge of the world around them. The good teaching and learning in this area help children to achieve well, and many are well on their way to attaining the early learning goals by the time they leave reception. However, a significant number will be working below this because of the limited knowledge they have when they start the nursery. Staff in the nursery use games and songs skilfully to enable children to learn about the characteristics of different animals, whereas children in the reception class can talk about what animals need to live and grow, and are beginning to look closely at the similarities and difference of different animals. Children in both classes can use the computer and listening centres confidently. In one of the sessions observed, the older and more able children in the nursery used the icons and the mouse confidently and with increasing control to draw pictures and patterns. Through their topic on toys, reception children were given opportunities to compare old and new toys.
54. Although there are some well organised outdoor areas, the lack of continuous access to these areas limits children's opportunities to explore their interests and curiosity at their own pace. Children in both classes enjoy using the construction materials to make models of things they have seen and experienced. The models of the robot made by reception children show that they can use the appropriate materials and tools to design for a specific purpose. Teachers in both classes use stories and celebration of festivals to develop children's understanding of their own beliefs and those of others.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are well co-ordinated and move about confidently.
- Children have a good sense of space.
- Lack of continuous access to the outdoor area limits the opportunities to develop their skills in using equipment.

Commentary

55. Teaching observed in this area is satisfactory overall. Teachers use the hall sessions well to develop children's skills in movement and their understanding of space. The outdoor area is used less well to develop children's skills in using equipment. Children do not have easy access to the outdoor area and this restricts their opportunities to practise their skills. In one of the good lessons observed in the reception class, the teacher used effective methods to extend

children's understanding of moving around in different ways using music and games. The majority of the children could move around confidently showing a greater awareness of space and are beginning to respond to music as they demonstrate different animal movements. Children in the nursery can move around different ways as instructed by the teacher. However, there were occasions when the teacher could have used the outdoor session more effectively to extend these skills. Children in the reception class can talk about the changes they have noticed to their body as they finished the warm-up session. Older children in the nursery are beginning to use mark-making tools with some control. Reception children show increasing control over clothes and fastening as they get dressed and undressed for physical education session. Their work on making animals pictures by cutting and joining different parts demonstrates that their fine skills are less well developed. Achievement is satisfactory, and most children are well on their way attaining the early learning goals in these aspects.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in both classes and children achieve well.
- Role play is used well to develop children's imagination.
- Children enjoy music and singing.

Commentary

56. Teachers provide a wide range of activities to develop children's creative skills. Children in the nursery can use the construction materials to make three-dimensional models. They enjoy painting and making marks with different tools. Reception children's pictures of the toys show that they are given opportunities to use a variety of media such as charcoal, paint and crayons. Their paintings of animal patterns demonstrate that they can use their observations well to choose the appropriate colours and methods to create the different patterns on the skin. However, in some instances there is too much adult direction, and this restricts freedom to express their own ideas. Some of the older children in the nursery are beginning to use the resources in role-play areas well to develop their imagination and enjoyment. In one of the sessions observed, the teacher in the nursery introduced different animals as she noticed the need to intervene and support for the play to move forward and withdrew support as the children started the play again. This type of careful intervention and support is helping children to achieve well in developing their imagination. Focused observations and tracking are used effectively to gauge how and which children use these areas. Children in both classes make good progress and the majority of the children in the current reception class are working towards the early learning goals.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range of teaching and learning styles is raising standards, particularly in Years 3-6.
- The subject is very well led with clear targets and strategies for improvement.
- Standards in reading are particularly good.
- There is good linking of English to other subjects and ICT is used very effectively to support learning.
- Standards in writing are lower than other aspects.

Commentary

57. The subject leader has set very clear targets for the subject's development and has introduced a very good range of improvements in resources, approaches and teaching and learning styles. All of this has had a very positive effect upon the quality of educational provision and is raising standards.
58. The quality of teaching is good overall, and often very good in Years 5 and 6. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 where lessons do not always have the pace and excitement of some of the very good lessons in Years 5 and 6. As a result, standards are rising fastest with the oldest pupils. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are not as high as last year. This is because both classes started at a lower point and have a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, the underlying trend is one of improvement, and achievement is good overall taking account of pupils' starting points.
59. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, both in class and in the two special classes. There is effective support from teaching assistants and a good focus on individual need that allows pupils to progress.

Speaking and listening

60. Standards are low in both the areas across the school. Most pupils are confident and willing to express their ideas, and most have interesting ideas to express. However, many struggle to do so with clarity and fluency. There is now a range of good opportunities for pupils to extend their skills through such activities as paired and group discussion and through role-play. These improved teaching and learning methods are improving standards, but it will take time for this to happen. Now that opportunities for discussion have been extended there needs to be more focus on the quality of speaking and listening within those discussions and the structures that encourage pupils to refine their explanations and responses. For example, the discussion of the simple question, "How would you feel if you met Jesus?" in a religious education lesson provoked some thought but did not take discussion to an extended stage. The discussion of the more open-ended question, "Why do we find more of these insects near the wall than in the open?" in a science lesson led to more extended speaking and listening where pupils had to put forward and sustain an argument for one or other point of view.

Reading

61. Standards of reading are higher than writing across the school. This is partly the result of more time devoted to this aspect. Pupils take books home and read to their parents, younger pupils read individually to their teachers and other adults, and there are extra guided reading sessions in addition to the Literacy Hour. There is a good focus within these activities, particularly during the Literacy Hour, on the higher order skills of understanding the structure of stories and the

literary devices used by authors, as well as on the straightforward recognition of words. The extra guided reading sessions are most valuable for those pupils reading with an adult, and there are times when pupils reading by themselves make very little progress in these sessions; particularly those at the lower levels of attainment. By the end of Year 2, standards of attainment are well below average overall. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard (Level 2) where they read simple texts with accuracy and understanding is much lower than in 2003, and very few indeed reach the higher level where reading is fluent and accurate. By the end of Year 6, standards are below the national average, but most pupils attain the expected level (Level 4) where they understand a range of texts and begin to look for meanings beyond the literal. Relatively few attain the higher level, but a greater focus on the needs of Level 5 is beginning to raise standards here.

Writing

62. One of the reasons why standards in writing are lower than in reading is that there has been less time devoted to this. This is now changing and there is a good programme for the teaching of writing which involves pupils in a good range of activities. Writing is not a skill that improves overnight, and so there is an inevitable lag between improving provision and rising standards. The school needs to continue its present wide range of methods and keep its focus on monitoring the quality of pupils' work and the targets set. There are particularly effective opportunities for older pupils to check each other's work. This is not only in terms of accuracy of spelling and grammar, but also in terms of clarity, style and effectiveness. As a result, many pupils are very clear in their minds about what is required in a good piece of writing and are beginning to reflect this in their own work. It is a technique that could be extended to younger pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. There is some very good use of other subjects to provide opportunities for extending speaking and listening skills, and examples are given in religious education and science. There are good opportunities for developing and using writing skills in subjects such as history and geography, with some good extended pieces of writing in Years 3 and 4. Opportunities for developing reading skills through independent research are comparatively restricted and relatively little use is made of the school library by pupils independently. The present layout of the library with its cramped shelves does not encourage either browsing or extended research. The provision of books in classrooms varies. There is a good overall stock, but there are few really attractive reading areas with a range of literature beyond books that would encourage the casual reader.
64. ICT is used very effectively to promote literacy. Teachers make very good use of ICT in the presentation of their lessons; for example, enabling pupils to relate words to actions on the 'interactive whiteboard'. There are some good computer programs for developing reading skills through software associated with the basic reading scheme. Word processing packages are used effectively for pupils to revise their work, and give valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss their work as they amend it. Older pupils have extended their communication skills well into 'PowerPoint' presentations where words, pictures and moving graphics are combined with sounds to convey a whole message.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress across the school and achieve well.
- Pupils are regularly involved in investigation opportunities.
- In some lessons, some aspects of work are not well matched to pupils' previous learning.
- There is good use of ICT to support learning.

- Pupils do not always have appropriate practical materials to help learning.
- Teaching assistants offer good support, especially for pupils with special needs.

Commentary

65. The introduction of a wider range of teaching and learning styles together with some very effective use of ICT and investigative work is raising standards. Standards in neither Year 2 nor Year 6 are at the unusually high levels attained in the 2003 national tests because there is a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs in these classes and because many started at a lower point. Standards are below the national average, but higher than in the years up to 2002, and represent good achievement for the pupils taking account of their starting point. Standards have improved since the previous inspection
66. In Year 2, most pupils are on line to attain the expected level (Level 2) in all aspects of the subject, but there is a higher proportion still at Level 1 than is usually found. The number of pupils attaining the higher expected level (Level 3) is far smaller than usual. There has been a good focus on the mental-oral aspects of numeracy lessons, as recommended nationally and where pupils learn tables and other links between numbers, and as a result most pupils have an appropriate recall of facts. However, some pupils need much more practical experience with actual objects to ensure that they fully understand the concepts involved. Teaching is generally satisfactory in these years, with some good teaching where challenge is high and practical tasks underpin learning.
67. By Year 6, most pupils attain the expected level (Level 4) with a small number attaining the higher level (Level 5). Good teaching across Years 3-6 with some very good teaching of the oldest pupils is often effective in extending understanding as well as teaching basic facts. However, pupils in the mixed age classes do not always follow the appropriate national programme of study when pupils from both year groups do the same work. This is not always a problem, particularly when topics are 'self-contained' and do not follow directly from previous work, but when the national programmes were designed to build knowledge and understanding year-on-year it can create difficulties. For example, one lesson was unsuccessful when younger pupils were unable to cope with the work designed for the older age group and so became disruptive. In other lessons, more able pupils are insufficiently challenged because learning objectives are more appropriate for younger pupils, and some pupils repeat work they already understand.
68. There are regular opportunities for pupils to investigate mathematical problems. In mental-oral sessions pupils' thinking is well challenged. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were asked to identify missing numbers following a given set of tight criteria, such as 'find me a square number between 50 and 100 which is a multiple of 2'. There is good use of ICT to support teaching, reinforce learning and to motivate pupils in oral and mental sessions. Multiplication tables are incorporated into the mental and oral maths sessions and most pupils have sound recall of appropriate multiplication facts.
69. Teaching assistants offer good support for pupils with special needs. This is particularly successful when they work with small groups on individual education plans, providing encouragement and attractive learning materials.
70. The subject is well led and the subject leader has overseen a significant improvement in provision since the previous inspection. There are good resources and good links with other subjects such as science. Planning now needs to consider the range of entitlement to the programme of study for those pupils in mixed age classes to ensure that they are provided with the full range of mathematical experiences of sufficient challenge and they are not repeating previous learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. Pupils use mathematics well as part of their work in other subjects. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in science and geography. There is some very good use of computers to provide stimulating learning materials, and to support the provision of effective mental and oral sessions, a result of which is the motivation, engagement and better understanding of the pupils.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching.
- There is a good range of teaching styles.
- There are good opportunities for investigations and practical work.
- Challenge for the more able pupils could be extended.

Commentary

72. Pupils make good progress through the school from a low baseline as a result of good teaching and some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Standards are below those usually found at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, but this is good achievement for the pupils taking account of their starting point and the proportion with special educational needs. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
73. Teachers use a wide range of teaching styles, including role-play. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson the teacher took the role of a television presenter interviewing groups of pupils who represented the views of politicians, health advisors and others on the subject of smoking. Pupils demonstrated a wide range of knowledge on the effects of and reasons for smoking. In another Year 5-6 lesson, a 'kinaesthetic' approach was taken to learning with pupils playing the role of blood cells in order to investigate the circulation system. The teacher beat a drum as pupils moved through the heart and lungs. The lesson developed to investigate oxygenation of blood and the effects of exercise and diet on circulation. Most pupils' learning was enhanced by this role-play because they were actively involved and interested.
74. Teaching assistants give good support for less able pupils by taking an active part in lessons; for example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, the teaching assistant played the role of filmmaker in order to record pupils' responses as an aid to assessment and to maintain the involvement of all pupils. There is good use of interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning; for example, good use of ICT was made in a Year 5 lesson when the pupils were required to move the heart, lungs and other organs into their correct location in the human body through use of a computer program.
75. There is a good emphasis on practical and investigative work, but the level of challenge for the more able pupils could be extended in some lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2; for example, a lesson on forces was over-directed with insufficient opportunity for pupils to engage in hands-on experience. Pupils throughout the school need to be given further opportunities for independent learning by planning their own investigations and so further extending their scientific skills and understanding.
76. The leadership of the subject is good and clear guidance is given to teachers. The subject leader has been well supported by the local education authority. There are very good cross-curricular links with geography and mathematics. The science curriculum is enhanced by a good range of appropriate visits, and partnerships with industry and York University.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been significant recent improvement in provision and standards.
- The subject is very well led with clear targets and strategies for improvement.
- There is good use of ICT in lessons across a range of subjects.
- Teachers made very good use of ICT for the planning and tracking of pupils' progress.
- There is some particularly good use of ICT in presenting lessons.
- There has been valuable support from the EAZ and its technician.

Commentary

77. The significant recent improvement in provision and standards has been brought about by the quality of leadership and management, the enhancement of the school's hardware and software, and by the support of the EAZ and its technician. Teachers have worked very well indeed to take on new approaches, to learn new skills and to make effective use of the technology in a range of situations. The programme of training has been thorough and well thought-through, and this has underpinned the improvements made. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
78. There is now a good range of equipment and software that is being used effectively to support learning of ICT, and to support learning in other subjects. The programme of studies has been very well organised to ensure that all the expected areas of learning are covered, and that there are effective links to other subjects; for example, pupils use a database when they are studying insects in science and this allows them to classify the insects by characteristics.
79. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures that by the end of Year 2, most pupils reach the expected level (Level 2) where they are confident in using computers in a range of situations. They are able to select programs, use facilities such as painting and writing packages, and can locate and save their work. This is very good achievement in terms of their starting point.
80. The good teaching continues through Years 3 to 6 and is often very good. By Year 6, pupils are confident to use a range of computer programs and applications, such as databases, spreadsheets and measurement facilities. For example, some older pupils used a graphic simulation package to design their own Olympic stadium, and others used temperature sensing devices linked to the computer as part of a science project, and were able to print out graphs to plot temperature fluctuations. This is very good achievement.
81. Teaching is good overall because it is well focused on a particular skill and pupils are given immediate practical experience to consolidate their understanding. In the best lessons there is high challenge to pupils to use applications for themselves and they are given independence to solve their own problems. This was the case when pupils had to rotate the given shapes to fit them into their Olympic stadium. In a few lessons, the teacher's explanation is rather long and pupils lose concentration as they wait to get their hands on the equipment. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and were very keen to demonstrate aspects of their work to inspectors.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. Very good use is made of ICT across the curriculum. This is a two-way process. Firstly, other subjects are used as opportunities to extend ICT skills. For example, word processing in English lessons, or using computer measurement equipment in science, or a spreadsheet in mathematics. Secondly, some very good use is made of ICT to extend understanding in other

subjects. For example, younger pupils use some good programs linked to the reading scheme to develop their reading skills, and pupils with special educational needs use large-scale 'kinaesthetic' programs on the interactive whiteboards for word recognition. Teachers also use ICT effectively to present parts of their lessons, combining words and pictures with elements that the pupils can move around on the screen to extend learning. The use of ICT in this aspect is far better than in the great majority of schools.

HUMANITIES

Within humanities, the subject of religious education is reported in full, but history and geography were only sampled with two geography and three history lessons being seen, and so a briefer report is made on these subjects.

History and geography

83. Pupils are keen to talk about their experiences in these subjects, particularly in terms of the visits they have made. These first-hand experiences, such as visiting castles and museums, going on boats down the River Tees and dressing up as historical characters, have made a great impression on the pupils and have brought the subjects to life for them. A survey of work and discussion with pupils indicates that they make good progress and that although standards are slightly below those usually found, this represents good achievement. In both subjects, most pupils attain the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6, but relatively few attain the higher levels. This is partly because many pupils comes from a fairly low starting point, and partly because the focus of the work undertaken has not always been on these higher levels. For example, in history, most Year 6 pupils are able to talk about the characteristic features of the periods they have studied such as the Ancient Greeks, but few are able to talk about the reasons for changes within those periods, or relate those periods to others they have studied.
84. The subject leadership has ensured a good programme of study that covers the expected areas and which is particularly well linked to the programme of visits and to ICT resources. The next step would be to look more closely at the precise requirements in terms of standards for the different year groups. The strength of the subject is the very good range of first hand experiences in which the pupils are involved.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with expectations and achievement is very good.
- There is good coverage of a range of religions across the school.
- Teaching is good and a variety of teaching styles enhances learning.
- Some lessons are too long and learning objectives too narrow.

Commentary

85. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and a good programme of visits enables them to meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in both Years 2 and 6. This is very good achievement for the pupils, and standards have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils develop a good knowledge of Christianity as well as some other major religions. They know about holy books and places and, through topics such as 'journeys', understand important events in other religions such as Hajj and Ramadan.
86. Teachers employ a good range of teaching and learning styles such a paired discussion and role-play. For example, in Year 3 and 4 lessons, teachers played the role of the disciple Andrew

in order to encourage pupils to think about the effect of miracles upon witnesses as part of a study on qualities of leadership. Pupils were highly engaged and asked appropriate questions. In one lesson, the subsequent discussion did not work well because the topic was too restricted and pupils lost interest, but the general approach is a very valuable one.

87. In Year 5 and 6 some good teaching enabled pupils to think about the things that are important to them and understand that these things do not always have a monetary value. The sharing of the teacher's and pupils' own valued things, together with time for reflection, helped pupils to understand that what is important to one person may not be to another. This was a part of the preparation for visiting a local mosque.
88. There is effective leadership that has ensured that the subject is well planned, resourced and organised and the locally agreed syllabus is covered appropriately. There is a programme of visits, and links with the local church planned for. This could be extended to include visitors and representatives of other religions coming into the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

89. No lessons were observed in art and design. Two lessons were observed in music, one in each key stage. Only one lesson was seen in design and technology and in physical education. It is not therefore possible to make firm judgements about provision. The school makes very good use of local and national initiatives, such as 'Creative Partnerships', to offer pupils opportunities to develop their skills and interests in these subjects both in and out of school times as well as to ensure that these subjects have a high profile.
90. It is evident from the pupils' work and displays around the school that the work covered in art and design is varied and interesting. The lively approach and attention to detail is clearly evident in the work produced by older pupils in Years 3 to 6 while working with the artist, based on the topic 'a sense of place'. It also illustrates how pupils worked collaboratively to produce pictures at various differing scales. Pupils are enthusiastic to talk about how they developed their pictures from their sketches. Year 2 pupils' work shows how they created repeating patterns using different shapes and colours. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrate their ability to evaluate their own and other's work. There is some evidence of the use of sketches to develop ideas. However, there is very little evidence of consistent use of sketch books to develop pupils' drawing skills.
91. In design and technology, discussions with pupils indicate their enthusiasm for the subject. They had experiences of working with a wide range of materials and techniques. Younger pupils explained how they designed and created houses and made models of animals with clay. Older pupils showed the models of the shelters they have made. They could explain how they went about designing, making and evaluating their models. Their finished products show that they can measure, cut and join different materials to create their finished products. They can talk about how they tested the strength of the frame and what they did to improve.
92. In music, younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing well with appropriate attention to pitch. They can identify high and low sounds. Their understanding about rhythm is less secure. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 show appropriate understanding of how music can be used descriptively to demonstrate animal movements. They can choose the appropriate instruments to illustrate the animal movements. A particular feature of this lesson was the way pupils worked together in creating their music and movement and demonstrated it to the rest of the class. Contribution to concerts and performances further enhances pupils' musical experiences. The school uses a specialist teacher to offer violin lessons to some pupils in Years 3 to 6.
93. The school provides pupils with a wide range of sporting activities which enhance the provision for physical education. Pupils had the opportunity to observe professional sporting events and take part in various sports competitions. In the lesson observed in athletics pupils concentrated well to improve their targets to be ready for the competition between the two top year groups in

Years 3 to 6. They made good progress in developing skills of throwing, catching, running and jumping. The school uses its extensive grounds well to develop pupils' sporting and physical skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHE)

94. Too few lessons were seen in this area to make any overall judgement about provision. Personal development is an important priority to the school and there is a wide range of formal and informal provision for classes, groups and individuals. There is a formal programme for PSHE that is taught to all classes through 'Circle Time'. In the one lesson seen, good use was made of a puppet and role-play to gain the pupils' interest and involve them in an understanding of safety. There is also provision for formal and informal counselling for groups and individuals through the learning mentor and other staff. The school gained the 'Healthy School Award' for its work in this area, and its subject leader now advises other schools on their provision. These programmes have impacted positively on pupils' attitudes and personal development. The School Council system works well and is being developed to give all pupils opportunity contribute to the life of the school.

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 | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 6 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 3 |
| 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 | 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 | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The governance of the school | 2 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 2 |
| The effectiveness of management | 2 |

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