

INSPECTION REPORT

**MIDDLETON-IN-TEESDALE NURSERY AND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Barnard Castle

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114109

Headteacher: Mr Steve Vallack

Lead inspector: Mrs Lesley Clark

Dates of inspection: 23rd - 25th February 2004

Inspection number: 256909

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	123
School address:	Town End Middleton-in-Teesdale Barnard Castle County Durham
Postcode:	DL12 0TG
Telephone number:	01833 640382
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sheila Milnes
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Middleton-in-Teesdale primary school is smaller than most primary schools with 123 pupils on roll. It serves the local community, as well as outlying farms and villages. A large number of pupils travel to school by bus or taxi. Overall, the school's socio-economic context is about average but its take-up for free school meals is below average. The pupils are all from white, British backgrounds and there are no pupils learning English as an additional language. When children first start school, their attainment overall is broadly average but their communication skills are below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (15 per cent) is a little below average, whereas the proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is much higher than the average. The range of needs includes moderate and severe learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication problems, physical impairments and autism. The nursery is the local centre for young children with special educational needs. Both the headteacher and deputy had been in post for only a matter of weeks before the inspection took place. The headteacher has had intermittent periods as acting headteacher during the previous two years, in his role as deputy. At the time of the inspection, three teachers were on long-term sick leave; two were newly qualified, one on a temporary contract. Two teachers were on short-term supply covering prolonged staff absence. This means that there was a much higher than usual proportion of staff who were either temporary or new to the school, including the whole of the Foundation Stage and the infants.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25431	Lesley Clark	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Music
19446	Susan Wood	Lay inspector	
31615	Elaine Radley	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education
32750	Peter Jones	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school gives pupils a sound education. The majority of pupils are achieving well, but unavoidable staffing problems in recent months have contributed to unsatisfactory achievement for some younger pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The high aspirations of the headteacher and deputy head are already beginning to drive up standards. Individuals are warmly valued and the school's strong, caring ethos results in the effective personal development of all pupils. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils attain good standards in reading, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 because they are well taught;
- Standards are below average in writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school because assessment has not been used well enough to give suitably challenging work to pupils of different abilities;
- The new headteacher and deputy have a strong sense of purpose and very clear plans for the future of the school, which are already proving to be effective in raising achievement;
- Good provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development leads to very well behaved, responsible pupils who have very good attitudes to their work and play a keen part in helping to run the school;
- The curriculum, assessment and resources are unsatisfactory in the reception year;
- The strong emphasis on pupils' participation in the arts, sport and extra-curricular activities enriches their learning but literacy, numeracy and ICT are not used extensively in other subjects.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. The school has tackled most of the key issues identified in its previous inspection satisfactorily. Much of the action has been very recent. All statutory requirements are now met. The quality of school development planning is better, but while the curriculum and assessment have been strengthened, there is still some work to do on both.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	C	E	C
mathematics	A	B	C	A
science	B	A	E	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' overall achievement is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, while the majority achieve satisfactorily, a substantial minority of reception children have been underachieving because they have had not had access to a wide enough range of play equipment and the curriculum is too formal for their needs. Although provision for their needs has improved in some respects, they are still unlikely to reach the expected goals for the end of the reception year in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. They are on course to meet them in personal, social and emotional development and to exceed them in physical development. By Year 2, standards are below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Problems in the past to do with staffing, assessment and low expectations have had a residual effect. This has particularly affected the progress of higher attaining pupils because not enough was expected of them. Pupils are now working well, though standards are still not high enough. By Year 6, standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science and the school's challenging targets are likely to be met. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, are achieving well because the work they are set matches their different needs well, offering them

challenge. Standards are below average in ICT because pupils do not have enough opportunity to use the computers to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject. Standards are at expected levels in religious education and art and above those expected in physical education.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and they are keen to learn and to take part in additional activities after school. They get on well with each other and with the adults they work with. Attendance is better than average and pupils arrive in good time for the start of school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory on balance. It is good in Years 3 to 6 and largely satisfactory in all other classes. Pupils' learning, however, has been unsatisfactory until recently, in both reception and Year 2. Although much has been done this term to link teaching in the nursery with that in the reception class, the curriculum is too formal for reception children and this, combined with unsatisfactory assessment systems, has made it very difficult for inexperienced teachers to teach effectively all of the time. Despite these factors, many children are learning well and catching up fast as the teaching has improvised imaginatively to make best use of the limited space and resources. Teaching in Year 2 is largely satisfactory. There has, however, been a period of adjustment when temporary teachers had to work out how to challenge different groups of pupils effectively when there were no adequate assessments or records of previous work. Although pupils are now learning well, their learning over time has been unsatisfactory and they still have a lot of catching up to do. Changes this term in the way the teaching is organised in Years 3 to 6 have greatly benefited pupils' learning as teachers teach the subjects they have expertise in and pupils are taught well in ability groups. Pupils' learning is now good, as a result of the teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiastic approach. This is particularly noticeable in English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is satisfactory in terms of breadth and balance overall, apart from the Foundation Stage, but the way the timetable is arranged means that some subjects are not taught as regularly as they should be and some time is wasted in the mornings. Partnerships with parents are satisfactory. They now receive a lot of information about what goes in school, but not enough about how well their children are learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with strengths in the lead given by the new headteacher and deputy to drive up standards. Already they are making their mark on the school and the pace of change is rapid. The management has clear plans to ensure improvement; the benefit is already being seen in younger pupils' improved achievement. The temporary nature of so many staff means that currently responsibilities for leading subjects lies with the senior managers and one other teacher. Leadership of the core subjects is good, but that of other subjects is underdeveloped. The governing body takes its responsibilities seriously and gives sound support.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents think the school is on the up and welcome the regular and detailed information they are now receiving. They think the school takes good care of their children. The pupils like school very much, particularly the new library, the school council and the wide range of sporting activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 by ensuring that suitably challenging work is provided for all abilities;
- Raise standards in ICT throughout the school;
- Establish a unified approach through good leadership to the curriculum, resources, planning and assessment for children in the Foundation Stage;
- Use literacy, numeracy and ICT more effectively in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Achievement is best in Years 3 to 6, where standards are also generally above average because pupils are well taught and work is well matched to their capabilities. Achievement is satisfactory overall in all other year groups, though until this term a substantial minority have underachieved in both the reception year and in Year 2, where standards are generally below average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- While the majority of children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily, a substantial proportion have underachieved until recently because of limited curriculum and resources;
- Standards at the age of 7 are below average in writing and science and well below average in mathematics because of previous problems to do with assessment and teachers' low expectations;
- Standards at the age of 11 are above average in reading, mathematics and science because pupils are well taught in groups according to their ability;
- Pupils with statements of special needs achieve well;
- Standards are below average in ICT.

Commentary

13. There has been an element of underachievement in the reception year until very recently because of lack of records of previous learning, a too formal curriculum and unsatisfactory resourcing for the children's age and their particular stage of development. They are achieving well in lessons now because the teaching encourages them to be curious and to try things out for themselves. However, overall, they are unlikely to meet the goals expected at the end of the reception year in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. Lower and average attainers make slow progress initially in learning to read and to write because these early skills are not taught systematically and progressively from nursery through to reception. Children's achievement, until this term, has been slowed down by lack of access to a wide range of practical activities designed to enable them to learn through finding out for themselves. This has had an impact on lower attainers' achievement, in particular in mathematical development, as basic concepts have not previously been reinforced through practical tasks. The children are on course to meet the goals expected in personal, social and emotional development and to exceed them in physical development because of good provision in the nursery and imaginative teaching in this aspect in the reception class.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (13.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.4 (12.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.4 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

14. The Year 2 results in the national tests in 2003 show that pupils attained broadly average standards in reading and mathematics and below average standards in writing. Compared to schools in a similar band for free school meals, pupils' attainment was well below

average. These results have to be treated with caution because the year groups they refer to are very small. However, from looking at pupils' performance over time, it is evident that the trend in results for this year group is lower than the national one. In the current Year 2, standards are average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Past problems relating to staffing, assessment and teachers' low expectations have contributed to lower standards in writing and mathematics. The standards in reading have improved because of the decision this term by the leadership to give more time to teaching reading and allocating additional resources in terms of extra support for those with special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils have been underachieving because not enough was expected of them - this has affected their overall attainment in science. The evidence is that this trend has now been reversed because of consistent expectations, clear learning objectives and a better match of work to pupils' capabilities. Although standards are still not high enough in writing, science and mathematics, pupils' achievement is back on track though there is still some way to go before standards improve overall.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.8 (27.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.3 (27.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.0 (30.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

15. Standards at the end of Year 6 fluctuate quite dramatically according to the composition and size of the year group. In 2003, for example, three pupils with specific learning difficulties were disapplied from taking the tests. Over time, standards in mathematics and science are better than those in English, with boys doing slightly better than girls. Although the trend in the school's results has tended to be below the national, pupils' performance over the past three years has exceeded nationally expected levels in both mathematics and science. Past assessments show that the rise and fall in standards has been partly linked to the quality of teaching and resourcing. The decision taken by the new leadership and management to reorganise teaching in Years 3 to 6, to enable English and mathematics to be taught in sets according to ability and for science to be taught throughout the key stage by the subject co-ordinator, has led to a sharp rise in standards. In addition, the focus on reading, giving extra tuition to pupils whose attainment borders on average and the reorganisation and resourcing of a new library from the start of the term, have contributed to improved standards and to raising boys' interest in reading. Currently, standards in Year 6 are set to be above average in reading, mathematics and science, with all pupils expected to reach national standards and a good proportion to exceed these. Boys and girls are achieving equally well; the girls' confidence in mathematics is improving through being taught in small groups. Standards in writing are likely to be close to national norms. The school has set itself challenging targets which it is on course to meet. This is an improvement on standards reported in the last inspection for this key stage.
16. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are achieving similarly to other pupils because the work they are set matches their different needs well. Those with statements make good progress because they are given good quality support which helps them to achieve effectively against the targets set on their individual education plans.
17. Standards are below average in ICT overall. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to use the computers to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject. However, standards are up to expected levels in those aspects that are fully covered with some good work done in using ICT to present information using text and pictures imaginatively. Standards are at expected levels in religious education and art and above those expected in physical education, reflecting the headteacher and deputy head's keenness to develop sport through

giving extended time one afternoon a week to developing a wide range of skills in different aspects. Standards overall, have improved since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they enjoy their lessons. They behave very well in lessons and the school is an orderly community. The attendance figures for the school are broadly in line with national rates and pupils arrive punctually. There is good provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy their lessons;
- There are good relationships throughout the school;
- Behaviour is very good and results in a calm and purposeful learning environment;
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and show initiative;
- Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved considerably since the last inspection;
- Parents and carers give good support, ensuring their children come to school in good time and ready to learn.

Commentary

18. Pupils show great interest in their lessons and say they like school because their teachers make lessons interesting which enables them to discover new information. They clearly enjoy their learning. They concentrate very well and the majority remain on task for the allocated time. Where teaching is less focused, a few pupils become restless or easily distracted. Pupils are able to discuss their work and that of their classmates in a constructive and sensible way and they listen to each other's views in a mature manner. Pupils respond very well and show respect for the values and feelings of others. They generally settle quickly at the start of lessons and work well as individuals, pairs or in groups. Pupils are very polite to visitors and are happy to show their work and talk about their experiences in school. Pupils' own interests are also reflected in the entrance hall, such as the display of vintage vehicles, which a pupil collects. The school encourages such hobbies to broaden pupils' interests.
19. The good relationships throughout the school result in the very good behaviour of the pupils who clearly know what is right or wrong and that the school has high expectations of them. Each class has designed a Class Charter (class rules) in the autumn term, which each child signs to say that they will abide by them. Their good behaviour is rewarded and celebrated during Friday assemblies, and recognition given in the weekly newsletters that are sent home. Movement around the school is orderly and pupils willingly hold doors open for adults. On the rare occasions when pupils do behave inappropriately or there are instances of bullying or racism, it is dealt with quickly and efficiently. There are no reported exclusions in the last academic year. The school's approach to promoting racial harmony and to preventing bullying as far as possible is effective.
20. There are often opportunities for pupils to show responsibility or initiative. The school council gives its members opportunities to develop their citizenship skills and to involve all pupils by gathering their views and opinions in a suggestion box. There is a range of monitoring roles, such as garden and computer monitors or preparing the school hall for assembly. Pupils are also allowed to organise fund raising events, such as a recent Bring and Buy Sale for the Blue Peter Appeal. This contributes very well to their personal and social development.
21. Pupils feel that their personal development is well taken care of because they have so many adults they can talk to readily. This aspect of the school's provision has improved markedly

since the last inspection, when spiritual development was considered to be unsatisfactory. Assemblies offer extended times for reflection and moral values are clearly taught through a range of stories from different religions. Pupils are encouraged to take part in assemblies and in one were confident enough to act out the story of the rich man and his servant, improvising as they followed the headteacher's lead. Good provision is now made for pupils' cultural, including their multicultural education.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.5	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.

Attendance

Commentary

- The good attendance rates of the school are broadly in line with the national figures. There are very few instances where pupils are late to school. Parents and carers clearly understand the importance of good attendance and ensure their children arrive in good time to enable lessons to start promptly. This is helped by a reliable bus and taxi system, which is used by many pupils

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in junior classes. The curriculum is broadly satisfactory, with areas of weakness in the provision for reception and strengths in additional activities that enrich sport and art. The school provides satisfactory care, support and guidance for its pupils. Assessment of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory overall: it is sound in Years 3 to 6 but unsatisfactory in other year groups. The school has a sound partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in the other classes. Pupils learn well in the junior classes and at a satisfactory rate elsewhere. Factors in the past have slowed the rate of pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2 and in the reception class. Pupils are now learning at a much better rate in response to more effective teaching though they have some catching up to do.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6; the headteacher and deputy give a very good lead to teaching;
- Assessment systems are unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage and the limited resources for the reception class means that there have been unsatisfactory elements in children's learning;
- Pupils' learning in Year 2 has recently begun to improve in response to systematic teaching, after a slow start caused by inadequate assessments and records of what pupils had learnt previously; higher attainers could learn at a faster rate;
- Pupils with special educational needs learn at a satisfactory rate, overall and well when they are given additional specialist support.

Commentary

23. At present, the nursery and reception classes do not follow the same systems for assessment. Those in the nursery are numerous and labour intensive, whereas those in reception do not give sufficient detail about children's progress towards the goals expected at the end of the reception year. The two systems do not mesh well and so it is hard to chart the children's progress across the key stage. These factors have combined to slow the learning of a substantial proportion of reception children until very recently, since when regular but informal assessments of what the children know and understand are being used effectively to guide the teaching. These are not linked closely enough, however, to the nationally recognised 'stepping stones of learning'. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the nursery in the wide variety of resources and play activities for children to choose from and daily opportunities to use the hall and the outside play area for physical development. In reception, strengths in the teaching lie in the imaginative use made of limited space and resources to provide a satisfactory range of activities for children to choose from and provide some exciting opportunities for learning, as in the role play area, creatively established in a walk-in cupboard. Unsatisfactory elements in the teaching occur when it is too formal for this age group, linked to a curriculum that is better suited to the pupils in Year 1. The lack of additional adult support in some lessons slows the learning of lower attaining pupils and those who need extra help. Despite these factors, many children are learning well and catching up fast.
24. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is largely satisfactory. Pupils' learning is now satisfactory though there has been a time of adjustment when their learning stood still as temporary teachers established what pupils knew and could do, as there were no records of previous work last term and limited information to guide the teaching from previous assessments. Although their learning over time has been unsatisfactory, pupils are now learning well but they still have a significant amount to make up. Strengths in the teaching include a methodical approach with clear introductions that set out the learning objectives so that pupils know what it is they have to do and opportunities at the end of lessons for pupils to establish what they have learnt. The teaching expects pupils to work independently and has set up good systems to ensure that pupils concentrate during these times. Some, however, still work at a much slower rate when left to their own devices because they have been unaccustomed to working independently before now. The next step is to offer greater challenges to more able pupils, many of whom could learn at a faster rate than they are doing at present.
25. Most of the lessons taught in Years 3 to 6 are of good quality and reflect the benefits of reorganising the teaching of different subjects so that staff teach those they have the greatest expertise in. This decision was taken in order to improve the rate of pupils' learning, which over time has been erratic, depending on which teacher taught which subject. This has led to improved learning in science, religious education and ICT. In addition, the decision to teach pupils in ability groups in mathematics and English has benefited pupils' learning which is now good as a result, in these subjects. The leadership team gives a very good lead to teaching, their own practice demonstrating how to teach pupils of a wide range of ability effectively with work closely matched to pupils' needs, yet challenging so that they learn very well. Elements of unsatisfactory teaching relate to lack of challenge for different ability groups within the class in a very small minority of lessons. Strengths in the teaching include: snappy introductions that set the tone for the fast pace of lessons that follows; lots of practical activities that involve pupils in thinking and working independently; and a lively, encouraging sense of humour that keeps pupils on their toes. Learning objectives are clear and in very good lessons, pupils have their own laminated copy of the learning objectives for the week so they are in no doubt about what they have to achieve. This gives pupils high expectations of themselves. Target setting is being used well in junior classes to reinforce learning. Assessment is used effectively at this stage and past performance in national tests is used to indicate what pupils should learn next in Year 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	6	14	2	0	0

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

26. The school provides specialist provision for nursery children in the local area who have special educational needs. They are given good quality support that enables them to learn well. The school provides well for its above average proportion of pupils with statements of special need. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good elements. Where work is set in lessons appropriate to the needs and abilities of these pupils, they make good progress. For example, in a Year 3 numeracy lesson with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils did well because the teacher had carefully matched the tasks to individual pupils. Sensitive and skilful strategies successfully involved all pupils in the class discussion. In a physical education lesson, the staff made sure that the pupils, some of whom had severe needs, fully participated and gained new skills. In lessons where work and discussion does not always cater for the specific needs of pupils, as in Year 2, for example, learning is satisfactory rather than good.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched through a range of interesting activities;
- The accommodation is good and the school makes good use of the facilities;
- Pupils in the juniors do not spend enough time in lessons;
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of the children in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

27. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is broadly satisfactory due to recent changes in the way in which some subjects are delivered. However, the organisation of the school day does not make the best use of the time available to ensure that all subjects are covered in sufficient depth. The amount of time spent in lessons in the juniors is currently significantly below the recommended 23 hours and because of this some subjects, such as music, personal, social and health education (PSHE), geography and history are only taught intermittently. Until very recently, the school ran a system whereby subjects such as religious education and design and technology were taught in blocks at the end or start of each half term. Coverage of religious education under this system was criticised in the last inspection report as a contributory factor to below average standards in that subject. The school has just started to develop a longer-term plan for the delivery of the curriculum and this will help to ensure that all subjects receive appropriate coverage in the future. It is too soon to measure the impact of this. Current concerns are to increase the amount of practical and investigative activities available to all age groups. As yet, planning to use literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum is informal and intermittent. This aspect of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The development plan for the special needs curriculum is good, including the use of targets achieved from the previous year to guide the setting of individual education plans. Currently, the new co-ordinator is going through these with the class teachers to ensure the curriculum suits each pupil's special needs.
28. The school works hard to provide a range of exciting activities to enrich the curriculum. Additional dance workshops and artists working within the school stimulate the pupils to express themselves in a variety of forms. During the inspection an artist working in the

nursery successfully developed children's artistic and language skills when she encouraged them to use chalk pastels to represent stories and retell them in their own words. Children in Years 3 and 4 are currently working with a dance company developing their own dance, which they will perform with six other local schools. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs that cater for pupils of all ages. These are run by staff, parents and in one case, a qualified football coach. They are well attended and pupils get regular opportunities to take part in local competitions.

29. The school accommodation is good and classrooms are light and airy. A newly equipped and computerised library is well used by pupils and Year 6 pupils delight in the opportunity to act as librarians. The school also makes good use of the village hall to provide additional sports facilities.
30. A number of the permanent staff are currently absent and the school has had to make temporary arrangements to cover classes in the nursery and infants. However, a lack of existing systems for planning and assessment has meant that, at best, these arrangements are satisfactory and frequently the curriculum offered to pupils in their reception year is not appropriate because it is too formal. The headteacher and deputy head have worked very hard since taking up their positions at the beginning of this term. They have improved the provision for pupils with special educational needs, they have revised the curriculum and while much remains to be done they have made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a calm and caring environment in which pupils feel secure and happy. They receive satisfactory guidance and support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel confident to approach an adult in the school if they have worries or concerns;
- Pupils are given opportunities to share their views and ideas;
- Academic support and guidance is at an early stage and until recently, has been unsatisfactory for younger pupils. Pupils with special educational needs receive helpful individual education plans.

Commentary

31. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The arrangements for child protection are appropriate and all members of staff are aware of the procedures. The policy for race equality has been implemented well and its effectiveness is closely monitored. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for and pupils are confident to ask for assistance when they need it. Pupils feel confident that adults will listen to their worries and concerns and action will be taken to help them and this has a positive impact on the very good relationships seen in the school. Each classroom also has a 'worry/think box' to enable pupils to raise their thoughts and concerns. This is evident in the classrooms where pupils happily ask for help when they are unsure of the given tasks and also at lunchtimes when a tranquil and friendly atmosphere has been created in the lunch hall.
32. The school listens to pupils' ideas and views through the school council and through questionnaires, which are acted upon. The school council has run and organised 'Children in Need' activities and is currently looking at renaming the school houses and the way they are organised in consultation with all pupils.
33. Targets have been introduced throughout the school to raise pupils' expectations of what they can do through involving them in monitoring their own learning. It is too early to gauge how effective these are. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs contain clear evidence of pupils' strengths as well as areas for development. They

contain targets for literacy, numeracy and behaviour, where appropriate, and are regularly reviewed. Some targets could be shorter, simpler and more precise to aid the closer evaluation of pupils' progress, but overall the documents are satisfactory.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher is working hard to improve the links with parents to enable them to become more involved. Parents clearly appreciate and support the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Regular information keeps parents informed about the life and work of the school;
- Good use is made of the school by the community;
- Annual written reports to parents do not fully meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

34. Parents were full of praise for the weekly newsletter which gives examples of their children's work, general information, the menu for the lunches and also the theme for the week for assemblies. The newsletters are well presented and keep parents informed about the routines and events in school. Until this term, parents received little information on the topics and curriculum that their children are studying to enable them to help and support through providing artefacts or contributing their experience. Parents would like more information to give them guidance as to how they might best help their children. They were delighted with the recent information which laid out for them the long-term plan for their children's work this term but would like clearer guidelines as to how to help their children academically and expressed some puzzlement, for example, as to how reading was taught. Although there is a school homework policy this is not followed consistently to enable parents to see how well their children are currently learning. There were some queries from parents as to whether teachers actually check the home/school reading books. Overall, parents feel welcomed in school and find 'the genuine open-door policy' encouraging. They are invited to the Wednesday assembly, known as a 'poem and prayer' assembly, led by a different class each week as well as to special assemblies or occasions visitors come to school.
35. The annual written reports do not fully meet the reporting requirements to parents as they do not clearly identify all areas of learning. This is a weakness for reception children's reports as well. Comments are often general and do not consistently inform parents about what their children have studied, how well they are doing and if they are experiencing difficulties. Some parents commented that there were 'too many flattering words' and not enough information as to what could be improved. Targets for improvement, however, are clearly defined to enable parents to support their children's future learning. Parents of those who have special educational needs are fully involved in the construction and review of the individual education plan for their child.
36. The school has developed many links with the community and uses the surrounding area well to enhance the learning opportunities for the children. Walks round the village help pupils to understand their own local culture. This was used to especially good effect in the nursery as an inspiration for an art project undertaken with the support of a visiting artist. The local community police, fire service and rural rangers talk to pupils on current issues to raise awareness of wider issues within the community. The school also visits local museums and places of historical and national interest to broaden pupils' experience. The community uses the school hall regularly and it provides a central meeting place for groups such as the adult education satellite centre, a local youth club, and musical and sports activities. A hard working 'Friends of Middleton-in-Teesdale' group arrange social and fund raising events that enable them to help support the school by purchasing additional

resources. Recently, for example, they provided money to help the school buy new books and ICT equipment for its library.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. There are emerging strengths in a shared vision for raising standards, innovative leads to teaching and high aspirations reflected in rapid changes and developments since the headteacher and deputy took up office at the start of term.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Together the headteacher and deputy are ensuring rapid improvement in a short space of time;
- The management plan provides a clear vision for the future of the school based on an honest analysis of where the school is at and what it needs to do to improve;
- High aspirations and good role models are leading to significant changes in the way teaching and learning are organised;
- The school is committed to inclusion and concern for the needs of individuals;
- The governors have not evaluated sufficiently well where teaching and learning are most effective.

Commentary

37. At the time of the last inspection, the leadership, management and efficiency of the school were judged to be in need of improvement. In the last two years, little action had been taken because the school was led and managed intermittently by teachers acting as both head and deputy, covering for the former headteacher's unavoidable absences. The parents recognise that the school appeared to stagnate during this time and have welcomed the rapid changes currently taking place to improve the standards their children attain. Some issues left outstanding since the last inspection have been successfully tackled, such as the moving of the library from a staircase into a room which has been fully equipped and the library catalogue computerised in a matter of weeks. The room is now used by a different class each day during breaks and lunchtimes and is having a marked impact on boys' reading in particular. Others, such as the curriculum and assessment, still require more work.
38. The management has set in motion a series of significant changes, designed to raise standards throughout the school. In six weeks, the whole of the curriculum has been audited and development plans for each subject have been produced and organised according to priority in the school improvement plan. Some actions were taken instantly as a result of this, such as:
- removing 'spelling made easy' which took place for one and a half hours each week instead of literacy;
 - separating reading from the literacy hour to raise standards in Year 2;
 - reorganising the timetable so that religious education is taught each week rather than in a block at the end of term (a practice criticised in the last inspection);
 - establishing reading tests throughout the school to ascertain standards and work out what needs to be done to improve;
 - monitoring teaching and learning in each class;
 - working out what assessments are carried out when for all subjects and introducing targets in order to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils should be achieving.
- Urgent plans as a result of this include reorganising the nursery and reception into a Foundation Stage unit and transferring the small group of Year 1 pupils currently taught with reception to the Year 1/2 class to be taught as an infant class. A start has been made on the former by facilitating joint planning and some sharing of resources between the nursery and reception classes. It is too soon, however, to judge the impact of these promising changes. However, the proposed changes are based on an accurate assessment of what needs to be

done in order to raise standards. The management, so far, shows itself to be thorough and far reaching in what it has outlined for the future.

39. The headteacher and deputy are effective in leading the setting up teams of enthusiastic people who want to move the school forward. They provide very good role models with their own teaching, concentrating on raising standards in the juniors initially. This has included providing practical tasks to enable pupils to learn through finding out for themselves in science and mathematics, for example, re-organising the groups in which pupils are taught in mathematics so that pupils who have different needs are challenged. Standards are higher as a result. The headteacher recognises that the next step is to introduce team teaching in the infant class to raise teachers' expectations and to give a lead to setting appropriately challenging tasks for pupils of different abilities. The governing body is involved appropriately and along with all staff, for example, attended a workshop on how to use ICT effectively as a tool for teaching. As a result, the school is now equipped properly for such innovative teaching techniques, teaching music, for example, in Years 5 and 6. In the reception class, additional resources have been squeezed into a former cloakroom area to give children access to water and other practical aids to enable them to learn through discovering for themselves. More needs to be done in terms of making all resources accessible to these young children such as some of the books that are currently stored out of reach and to give them greater access to the play equipment outside.
40. Most of the leadership and management's immediate actions have been aimed at promoting inclusion and to seeing that pupils of different abilities and with different interests get a fair deal. The recently established after school club offers different activities to pupils and the newly established school council is involving pupils appropriately. The leadership and management of special educational needs have recently passed to the deputy head and he is working hard to update files and records. He has clearly identified the issues for action and these are detailed in a very effective development plan. The aim is to make sure that the provision for pupils with special educational needs becomes more embedded in the school's culture and systems. This area is satisfactory and rapidly improving. The governors are concerned that the burden of managing subjects within the school is falling on the headteacher, the deputy and one other experienced teacher because of long-term staff absences and the appointment of newly qualified teachers who are not in a position to lead subjects at present. As a result, leadership and management of the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT are good; that of the other subjects is less well developed though curriculum audits of each have been carried out. Part of the problems in the Foundation Stage, though, stem from the lack of an effective leader to ensure that the nursery and reception classes work together as a unit.
41. The governors are fully involved in helping to manage change and are backing the pace of these changes with energetic support and advice, updating their own training, for example, so as to become more effective. Governors' understanding of best value is satisfactory in terms of managing finance and in comparing, competing and challenging prices for resources and buildings. The next step is to evaluate the cost effectiveness of spending decisions in terms of educational value in a broader sense. For example, the governing body's decision to employ newly qualified staff on temporary contracts is understandable in view of financial constraints, intensified recently by the amount being spent on supply cover for absent staff. However, they have not evaluated the very good value in terms of good and very good teaching which has led to much improved learning this term.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	487027
Total expenditure	496960
Expenditure per pupil	3206

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	37005
Balance carried forward to the next	26269

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in terms of curriculum and resources is much better in the nursery than in the reception class. Until this term, reception children did not have free access to water; different writing and drawing materials, resources such as malleable dough or a role play area. The new headteacher recognised the problems immediately and took appropriate steps to give reception children better opportunities for learning. This term, the two classes have planned together to give children a range of relevant and practical activities to enable reception children to work independently and at their own level. Inevitably, the children have some catching up to do, particularly in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. The headteacher is aware that the nursery and reception classes have not been functioning as a Foundation Stage and plans are in place to put this right in the very near future. The leadership and management of this key stage is 'on hold' at the moment.

At present, the two classes do not follow the same systems for assessment. These are cumbersome in the nursery and over simplified in the reception class and do not relate sufficiently well to the individual stepping stones to chart children's progress against these nationally expected norms. These factors have combined to slow the learning of a substantial proportion of reception children until very recently when they have begun to make much better progress as their needs are being catered for more appropriately, based on continuous, albeit informal, assessments of what they know and understand.

It is not possible to report in full on knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development individually because too few lessons were seen to make secure judgements on standards; however, these areas of learning were sampled. The overall quality of teaching seen throughout the Foundation Stage was satisfactory. The children's achievement, in lessons, was satisfactory in the main though at times the limited resources resulted in unsatisfactory learning. The nursery has specialist provision for children in the local area who have special educational needs. They are given good quality support that enables them to learn well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults have very good relationships with the children which enables them to grow in confidence and maturity;
- The teaching is calm and orderly and sensitive to children's needs.

Commentary

42. Children enter the nursery with a wide spread of attainment. About a third of children are unused to doing much for themselves and many find it hard to relate to other children at first. Adults in both classes give children a great deal of encouragement, spending time talking to them and helping them to become independent. As a result, the children quickly learn the school routines and feel secure and valued. The teaching, which is satisfactory in both classes, helps children to take responsibility for themselves. Consequently, they get ready for physical education lessons sensibly and quickly and tidy away resources efficiently and without fuss. By the reception year, children begin to concentrate for extended periods of time, listening carefully to what their teacher says before organising themselves to do different activities. Their attainment is likely to be in line with expected levels at the end of the year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too many different and sometimes conflicting systems are in place to develop children's skills so that what is learnt in one class is not built on sufficiently well in the other;
- The lack of records of previous learning in the reception class meant that valuable learning time was lost in the first two weeks of term, although children are now catching up.

Commentary

43. Children enter the nursery with levels of communication, language and literacy that are below average overall. Their attainment is likely to be below average at the end of the reception year, with only a few children reaching the goals expected. Their achievement is satisfactory in the main though average and lower attainers make slow progress to begin with when they join the reception class. This is because they have to get used to a whole new way of learning. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory in both classes and has some good features, such as reading stories out loud well to interest children and arouse their curiosity, the way that children learn the early skills of reading and writing has not been thought through sufficiently well. There is evidence that children are now making much better progress as the teaching in reception is giving appropriate support to children of different abilities, based on regular ongoing assessment of what they can do and adapting the work accordingly.
44. Two entirely different ways of learning letters, both capitals and lower case, and their sounds are taught. While higher attainers quickly adapt, the rest find it puzzling and so reception children are still at an early stage of being secure about which letters make which sound. In the nursery, the system whereby a child talks and an adult scribes exactly what the child says is used daily. However, although this means that individual children are given a chance to talk at length, the drawback is that it cuts down the opportunities to extend and develop children's vocabulary through purposeful discussion and through children using early writing as a means of expression. In reception, children learn to write through copying and writing over adult's cursive handwriting. This again makes it hard for lower and average attainers who have to get used to understanding print for individual letters and words in published texts and then learn a totally different way of writing themselves. Consequently, the majority of children's writing is still at a very early stage with only a few higher attainers writing recognisable words. It also causes problems for lower attainers when they try to read adult script; for example, some confused 'l' with 'b' and could not read 'bear' though they recognised it straight away in the printed book of 'Goldilocks'. Children enjoy using pens and pencils in the writing corner to write their own letters, but the system operating in both classes to develop fine motor skills through drawing specified shaped lines, such as wavy lines and stars, in a pre-drawn shape, is largely ignored by reception children and does not seem to be usefully developing their handwriting skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in reception and helps children to learn well though they have a lot to catch up on as lack of assessments of previous learning has meant a slight delay in their progress;
- The children have not had access to a wide enough range of practical activities to support their learning in this area and so they lack understanding of some basic mathematical vocabulary.

Commentary

45. Children enter the nursery with broadly average levels of attainment. They are achieving well in lessons now, though overall they may not meet the goals expected at the end of the reception year because they have missed out on some earlier learning. Lively introductions instantly engage the children's attention and they enjoy the game of giving clues to the person wearing the crown as to the shape pinned on it. They are unsure of the correct mathematical language, saying 'points' for 'corners' though they are quick to point out that the shapes are two-dimensional. The teaching is imaginative and activities such as writing numbers on flags prove to be both enjoyable and productive in terms of learning. The teaching uses ICT very well to help children to sequence numbers to ten and lower attainers count enthusiastically as they jump up and down seven times. In recent weeks, children in reception have had similar opportunities to those in the nursery to use role play to help them, for example, to use money in a pretend shop, and to experiment with volume and capacity using different sized containers in the water tray. The teaching helps lower attainers to count how many pours of bright blue water it takes to fill the bucket and checks their understanding of the different sizes of container. However, these activities are not sufficiently refined to reinforce teaching points and with little additional adult support in the reception class, further opportunities are limited for developing children's understanding of mathematical terms.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is good in the nursery, with ample opportunities for physical development through both indoor and outdoor activities;
- Although provision overall is satisfactory in reception and teaching is largely good, the outdoor play area is not used enough to extend pupils' physical independence.

Commentary

46. Children achieve well overall in this area of learning and are likely to exceed the goals expected at the end of the reception year. This is because they are well taught in both classes, with ample opportunities to use the hall each day in nursery and several times a week in reception. The nursery children's attainment further benefits from regular use of the imaginatively laid out outside area, complete with road track and travellers' caravan. As a result, at the end of nursery, children are physically confident, showing ability to steer vehicles, avoid collisions, co-operate and make allowances for each other. Although reception children do use the outside play area once or twice a week, this aspect of the curriculum is not planned sufficiently well to extend their learning in other areas, such as knowledge and understanding of the world or mathematical development, for instance. Indoors, however, in a physical education lesson, reception children responded very well to music to create a puppet dance. The teaching set high expectations and so higher attainers were enabled to exactly imitate the floppiness of a puppet at rest and average attainers created a sequence of puppet-like movements successfully with a partner. The teaching in both classes is attentive and responsive to the children's needs, ensuring that all, including those with special educational needs, are involved and aware of the opportunities open to them. The children achieve well.
47. In **knowledge and understanding of the world**, weekly educational visits or visitors give children in the nursery good experience of different aspects of this area though often their effectiveness at developing children's knowledge is limited by the practice of writing down what individual children think rather than extending their understanding through purposeful discussion and related activities. Nursery children do, however, have access to a wide

range of varied and stimulating activities such as a garden centre on two different levels, which gives rise to good imaginative play, well supported by constructive questioning by adults. In the reception class, the curriculum for this area of learning is too formal at times for this stage of the children's development, expecting, for example, children to respond through discussion rather than allowing time for them to touch, explore and ask questions. The learning is not planned sufficiently well to link in with other areas. However, the role play area, (a walk-in cupboard), provided a very imaginative space for children to explore light and dark using different types of torches with different switches and various objects, including traffic lights, for the children to explore. They greatly enjoyed pretending to be 'dark detectives' and considered the different beams of light very seriously as they confidently pretended, 'We don't like the light!'

48. In **creative development**, children in the nursery are currently achieving very highly as they take part in a project involving a visiting artist who is helping them to draw a map of their village through different media such as silk screen printing and using pastels to create an impression of the environment. The quality of the work they have produced is outstanding and the children talk enthusiastically about their contributions to a large scale landscape of the locality. By contrast, the work in reception is below average. Although the teaching in the one lesson seen was satisfactory in terms of giving instruction, the other activities planned to extend the children's learning were less successful because there was insufficient adult help to develop their language or creative skills more fully. Consequently, most children did not achieve their full potential.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are higher than those in writing across the school and are above average in Year 6;
- Writing standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and achievement until very recently has been unsatisfactory;
- Teaching is satisfactory overall but better in the junior classes and as a result, pupils make better progress;
- The lack of continuity in the leadership and management of the subject has had an adverse impact on pupils' achievement; current leadership and management is much more effective.

Commentary

49. Pupils achieve better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. In reading and writing in Year 2, standards have dipped below national averages and are well below average when compared with schools with a similar take-up for free school meals. The picture for junior pupils is similar, with results of the most recent tests at the end of Year 6 showing standards in English well below national averages, though satisfactory when compared to similar schools. The test results do fluctuate quite significantly because of small numbers in each year group. Standards in the present Year 2 class at the end of the year are likely to be close to last year's, while those for the present Year 6 pupils are expected to be significantly higher. The achievement of pupils in the infant classes has been disrupted by the long-term absence of some regular teaching staff. Standards are improving rapidly in junior classes because of improvements in the way the subject is taught.
50. Standards in reading are broadly average in infant classes and above average in junior classes. Reading resources across the school, including the provision of reading schemes,

have recently been improved and the new school library is a high quality facility with great potential for future class and individual progress. Guided reading techniques are used effectively in all classes and opportunities for group and individual reading are now provided for all pupils. A few higher ability pupils are able to skim read and scan texts for information, showing good comprehension skills, as seen in a junior class where the teacher skilfully led a discussion of a text with pupils who demonstrated very good oral interpretation and analysis. There is scope for greater development of these skills across the school. The assessment, recording and monitoring of reading is satisfactory. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well overall.

51. Standards in writing in infant classes are below average, at present and are not as good as they should be. In part, this is the result of previous low expectations. Pupils do not write at any length and a lot of writing is copied. The range of writing opportunities offered is limited and some pupils are not always given work appropriate to their ability. This means that pupils with special educational needs make slow progress and writing becomes rather a chore for many pupils. Handwriting standards are above average, with many pupils using cursive script from reception onwards, but this aspect of writing is over emphasised and inhibits the progress and confidence of some lower ability pupils. In part, this contributes to younger pupils writing little rather than developing writing at greater length. Writing in the junior classes is of a better standard with pupils writing in a variety of forms with attention to accuracy of spelling and expression. The work set is generally appropriate to pupils' ability. Opportunities for pupils to learn on their own, reading and finding things out for themselves, for example, particularly for higher ability pupils, are still somewhat limited and need to be extended across the school. There is little evidence of pupils' work in their own handwriting on display to act as an incentive to others and also to celebrate pupils' achievement, though there were some good examples of word processed writing.
52. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are broadly average in Years 1 and 2 and above average in the junior classes. A few younger pupils can articulate ideas and develop a line of thought orally, but most answer questions in single words or phrases. Many can expand on their answers if skilfully prompted and encouraged by the teacher. The recent satisfactory teaching of these year groups provides opportunities for pupils to talk about their work to the rest of the class. Pupils in junior classes display above average skills and engaged in some lively and worthwhile class and paired discussions. Opportunities were missed, however, to carry over the ideas they produced into meaningful extended writing.
53. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the Year 1/2 class, very recent teaching has improved, but over time teaching has lacked variety and has not been appropriate to the range of abilities in the class. As a result, pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable, particularly those with lower and higher abilities. Targets for pupils' writing and the use of exercise books have been recently introduced but have yet to make a significant impact on standards. In the junior classes, teaching is satisfactory with some good elements. In lessons where the quality of teaching is good, the teachers have high expectations, plan effectively for all abilities and challenge pupils effectively. Marking is satisfactory overall, and better in junior classes where some teachers use an effective combination of praise and encouragement with developmental comments and pointers to encourage progress.
54. The lack of continuity of the leadership and management in English has had a negative impact on pupils' achievements and the overall effectiveness of teaching. The long-term absence of the English co-ordinator has led to the headteacher temporarily leading the subject. The subject development planning contains potentially effective strategies to raise standards, but their full implementation and the monitoring of their effectiveness is patchy and behind schedule. Leadership and management at the present time promises well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Provision is unsatisfactory. There is no overall planned approach and only a few isolated examples were evident of teachers using language and literacy skills across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2 are not high enough;
- Pupils make good progress throughout the juniors and by Year 6 are achieving well;
- Pupils in the juniors are taught well;
- Too little opportunity is created for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other areas.

Commentary

56. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were attaining standards that were in line with national averages at the end of Years 2 and 6. Following the last inspection, there was an immediate and dramatic rise in standards, however, since this time standards have steadily declined each year. Results do fluctuate quite markedly because of the small numbers in year groups, though overall the trend in results has been below the national picture. This downward trend, however, has now been halted in the juniors and standards are improving rapidly, so that standards in the current Year 6 are now above the national average with all pupils expected to achieve nationally expected levels and approximately a third to exceed them. However, standards at the end of Year 2 have fallen and are now well below nationally expected levels.
57. Throughout the infants, pupils do not make as much progress as they should. The evidence gained from talking to pupils and from looking at their work suggests that their learning in the past has been less effective and as a result, pupils in Year 2 are not achieving as well as they should. Their progress was further slowed at the start of this term by the lack of assessments and records of previous work and so it took a while for the temporary teacher to get to grips with what pupils knew and what they needed to learn next. The teaching is satisfactory and is now providing a sound basis for pupils' learning. However, in the infant class much of the work set is the same for all pupils and there is insufficient challenge for the average ability and more able pupils who need to be able to make progress at a faster rate if standards are to rise appreciably. Although pupils are now making satisfactory progress and beginning to achieve well, they have large gaps in their knowledge; for example, even the most able pupils struggle to name any three-dimensional shapes. Most are unable to measure accurately in centimetres and have very few strategies to support them in making mental calculations; while some pupils are able to double numbers up to 5, most cannot go beyond this.
58. In the current Year 6, standards are above average and this is an improvement on the standards achieved last year. This improvement appears to be due largely to recent changes in the arrangements for teaching mathematics. The arrangement of pupils into ability groups has helped to ensure that most pupils are appropriately challenged and they are now achieving well, as a result. Teachers provide different work for the most able pupils in each set and additional support is often available for the least able. This is effective in helping pupils learn and additional intensive support is provided for borderline attainers in Year 6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall; those who have additional support often achieve well as they benefit from the extra clear explanations to help them to understand.
59. Teaching in the juniors is always good and sometimes very good. Teachers use a range of methods to encourage pupils to assess their own learning and in one good lesson the teacher used a system of traffic light cards, held up by the pupils, to ensure that she quietly

and sensitively offered support to pupils, many of whom had special educational needs, who were struggling. In another very good lesson the clarity of the teacher's explanations, very good subject knowledge and constant reinforcement of the correct mathematical vocabulary ensured that pupils learnt rapidly and to good effect. Pupils enjoy the mental and oral starters to lessons and are striving to calculate mentally at speed. The subject is well led and managed; this too has had a good impact on the rate of change and improvements in achievements by the end of Year 6.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Pupils have limited opportunities to reinforce and use their mathematical skills in other subjects. While teachers capitalise on opportunities when they present themselves, these are not systematically planned and therefore pupils do not have regular and frequent opportunities to apply their knowledge and deepen their mathematical understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection;
- Standards are above average in Year 6 because the teaching has high expectations;
- Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 because pupils do not cover a wide enough range of topics;
- The leadership and management of the subject are good and an important factor in the improving standards.

Commentary

61. Standards were in line with expected levels at the last inspection. The school's results have generally been above average until last year when there was a sharp decline. Over time, pupils' performance has exceeded the national average for their age group at the end of Year 6. This year, standards look set to be higher with all pupils in Year 6 expected to reach nationally expected levels and half to exceed them. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in this subject.
62. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2. Although the majority reach nationally expected levels, very few exceed these. This is because the curriculum the pupils follow is rather thin and they have too few opportunities to learn through finding out for themselves. Until recently, much of pupils' learning has depended too heavily on writing down information they have been given and doing tests to see what they have retained. Pupils of different abilities were given the same level of work and this has held back the progress of higher attainers in particular. At the moment, the allocation of time to science, (an afternoon each week), is far too long for some pupils and the teaching tends to make the material expand to fit the time available. Teaching is satisfactory and good ideas, such as giving one group of pupils their head to design a house using silly materials resulted in a lot of fun as well as purposeful learning as children giggled over incongruous doors made out of jelly. Overall, though, pupils have limited opportunities to think independently and scientific recording tends to rely on copying what the teacher has written, which slows down the recording of lower attaining pupils.
63. Standards are much higher in junior classes and are improving appreciably as the co-ordinator teaches science throughout. This means that expectations are consistently high, the curriculum is well planned and opportunities for practical activities are being introduced in each class. In a very good lesson, the teaching gave pupils in Year 6 responsibility for turning their ideas as to what helps solids dissolve into a practical investigation. The upshot was that different groups worked assiduously on different aspects. One group decided for example that temperature was a factor and went on to test their emerging conviction that

'it's looking pretty conclusive that sugar and salt dissolve quicker the warmer it is' by looking for patterns in their results. One drawback of the specialist teaching is that, in this instance, an opportunity was missed to link this in with data analysis using mathematics and ICT.

64. The subject has received a real boost recently from the enthusiastic co-ordinator, whose specialist interest in science has enabled him to establish quickly which areas need to be improved and how. Analysis of recent national tests revealed that pupils have a sound knowledge base but less experience in investigative work. Currently, the focus is on getting pupils more involved in finding out for themselves and also in developing ways of recording information systematically and progressively as pupils move through the school. The most immediate impact has been in the junior classes; more remains to be done in the infants.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

No lessons were seen in ICT in the infant class and only one in Year 4 as part of a history lesson and so no judgement can be made on provision, teaching and learning. A limited amount of work from Years 1 and 2 was available to scrutinise, indicating that average attainers enter text with appropriate spacing and use the shift key competently when word-processing their work. Discussions were held with groups of pupils from Years 5 and 6 who eagerly demonstrated what they had been learning recently. Although standards throughout the school were average at the time of the last inspection, the nature of the curriculum and the technology involved have changed since then. Within the last year, the school has acquired up-to-date computer equipment in the form of laptops. Pupils are making good progress in those aspects of the curriculum that they have covered and the new technology is being used well to promote learning. However, pupils still have some way to go before standards overall are in line with those expected in all aspects of ICT because they have not yet covered the curriculum. Checking of pupils' progress is still at a very early stage of development and although a portfolio of work gives good guidance as to the standards pupils achieve and to those expected of lower, average and higher attainers just one type of work per age group is represented because there is nothing more to show at the moment.

Pupils are keen to learn and confidently demonstrate their skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed a good grasp of the complexities of adding text and captions to present information about life in pre-war Britain. They scanned pictures from books and downloaded graphics from the Internet to enliven their presentations. Higher attainers demonstrated with great confidence how to insert headings and add moving images and some recorded their voices to provide a soundtrack. The curriculum, however, is a bit thin and pupils of different abilities do not do sufficiently different work. Teaching by the co-ordinator throughout the junior classes is a step towards raising standards by ensuring that pupils build progressively on what they know and understand. This, however, was only started this term and therefore the impact has yet to be seen in higher standards across a range of different skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

ICT is not yet used effectively in other subjects and planning for it to be included regularly is at an early stage of development.

HUMANITIES

Insufficient evidence was collected during the inspection to make a secure judgement on the provision, standards, or the quality of teaching in history and geography as only one lesson was seen and there was limited work to scrutinise. Both subjects are taught 'in turn' on a modular basis across the school with the emphasis on history rather than geography this term. The humanities development plan shows that leadership and management are satisfactory, that the curriculum is regularly reviewed and that updating resources is well planned. There are good training and development programmes for staff and links have been made with a local museum for history. Some interesting initiatives are in place, including the establishment of a 'webcam' link with a European school website and the development of outdoor classrooms to support learning in geography.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils would benefit from a more varied use of resources and artefacts;
- Pupils in both infant and junior classes have a good understanding of the Christian religion.

Commentary

65. At the time of the previous inspection, progress was judged to be unsatisfactory throughout the school. Progress is now satisfactory, with pupils' achievement in Year 2 and Year 6 broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The content of lessons is appropriate and the school has access to suitable resources to enliven learning, but the lessons observed did not make use of these. Consequently, there was a lack of suitable materials and artefacts to stimulate and capture the attention, particularly important with the youngest pupils, where lessons relied heavily on pictures and text and were rather formal in nature. The school is planning to increase its own resources of posters, big books and audio-visual materials but could make better use of what it already has.
66. Teaching across the school is satisfactory. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and lessons are planned in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. The work set is appropriate to the needs of infant pupils, as seen in a lesson on 'How to behave in Church'. A lesson about translating the Bible into English with Year 5 and 6 pupils had lively and interesting teaching and discussion, but the written work set was too difficult for some of the pupils in the class.
67. Pupils show a good knowledge of the Christian faith and a discussion with older pupils showed they were able to give examples of the signs, symbols and festivals of the other major world religious faiths. There are good links with assemblies and the ethos of the school; for example, the 'Poem and Prayer' assembly led by older pupils was a sensitive and thoughtful event strongly reflecting the Christian values of the school.
68. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator's development planning sets realistic targets for curriculum and staff development and the monitoring of standards. Arrangements are in place for fortnightly assemblies taken by a local minister. The visit of an Indian dance company to school lends a multicultural aspect to the curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

It was only possible to observe one lesson in **art and design** and it is not therefore possible to make an overall judgement about provision in this subject. However, from talking to the pupils and looking at pupils work displayed around the school standards in art appear to be similar to those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. The art curriculum is planned in accordance with national guidelines but the school enhances this provision through a range of visitors including several 'artists in residence' who work with different year groups within the school. By Year 6, pupils have experienced a good range of art materials and techniques, they have used clay to make good quality coil pots, made string prints representing houses from the local area and have produced portraits in the style of Picasso. However, their knowledge of the work of other artists is not well developed.

There is a large amount of photographic evidence of pupils' work, which testifies to the importance of **design and technology** within the curriculum. The school sets aside seven weeks throughout the year during which design and technology is taught intensively. In this way the school hopes to ensure that pupils are able to follow an entire project to completion. Pupils are encouraged to design, make, evaluate and improve their models. In the current Year 6 class pupils have been

constructing models of fairground rides and they are eager to explain how they have used pulleys and gears to make their models move.

One lesson was seen in **music** in Year 6 which was very good in terms of quality of teaching and learning but showed plainly that standards in music have slipped because the subject has not received sufficient coverage until very recently. Pupils responded enthusiastically and learnt new material at a very good rate, showing that they have the potential to achieve well in this subject. They sing rounds competently and quickly grasped that some notes played together make a more harmonious sound than others. A large proportion of pupils have instrumental tuition but the school does not as yet have an orchestra to give them opportunities to play together.

Leadership and management in all three subjects is on hold at present since the school is quite rightly concentrating its energies on the core subjects, pending the return of permanent staff members and newly qualified staff completing their first year of teaching.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of specialist teachers and pupils in the juniors are taught well;
- Pupils achieve standards which are above those expected nationally by the end of Year 6.

Commentary

69. It was not possible to make a judgement on the standards achieved or the quality of teaching in the infants as no lessons were observed during the inspection. However, it is evident that in the juniors, pupils achieve very well and attain standards that are above those expected nationally. This good achievement is due to the very good use the school makes of specialist teachers and teachers with very good subject knowledge. The physical education curriculum is delivered on one afternoon per week for all junior aged pupils. During this time good use is made of the local sports centre facilities including the swimming pool and visits by the junior classes are rotated throughout the year. The school also employs a specialist gymnastics teacher whose clear lesson planning and focused teaching helps the pupils learn to refine and perfect their gymnastic movements. The teaching of physical education is good throughout the juniors. In all lessons teachers make clear links to pupils' learning in science and health education, reinforcing the reasons why our hearts beat faster and the need to warm up and cool down carefully. In the best lessons seen the pupils are active throughout. They are challenged to carry out movements with increasing levels of difficulty and are successful due to the clear modelling and demonstration by the teacher.
70. The wide range of extra-curricular activities that go on after school, such as football, netball and tag rugby competitions further enhance the physical education curriculum. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in this area. Since the last inspection, standards have improved and pupils continue to achieve well throughout the juniors.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were seen in this aspect as it is currently planned to alternate with music on a half termly basis and so no judgement can be made on provision, standards or teaching and learning. However, the curriculum covers most elements concerning citizenship, drugs education and growing up.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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