

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWCOMEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Redcar

LEA area: Redcar and Cleveland

Unique reference number: 111638

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Linthwaite

Lead inspector: Mr Keith Edwards

Dates of inspection: 7–10 June 2004

Inspection number: 257011

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:	397
School address:	Trent Road Redcar
Postcode:	TS10 1NL
Telephone number:	01642 484318
Fax number:	01642 481089
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Sanderson
Date of previous inspection:	1 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Newcomen Primary serves a suburban area on the outskirts of Redcar. Although the school draws most of its children from the immediate locality, an increasing number (40 per cent) are drawn from further afield. Numbers on roll have fallen since the time of the last inspection. Pupil mobility is high; many children start or leave school at other times than the beginning and end of the school year. There are 374 full-time boys and girls as well as 46 children who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. The pupils are taught in discrete year groups. Almost all of the children are white and come from homes where English is the first language. Twenty-seven per cent of the pupils have an entitlement to free school meals. This is above the national average. The school admits an increasing number of children from refugee and asylum seeker families.

Most of the children who start in the school's Nursery transfer into the Reception class. There is one intake into the Reception classes during the course of the year. The attainment of many children on entry to the Nursery is well below average in their communication skills and in their personal and social development. There is a wide spread of ability in each class. Twenty-three per cent of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is above the national average. Seven of these pupils have a statement of Special Educational Needs. The school has a small involvement in the Excellence in Cities and Single Regeneration Budget schemes to support aspects of its pastoral work.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21190	Keith Edwards	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Music English as an additional language
12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector	
15236	Morag Thorpe	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage
22274	Vera Rogers	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education
22624	Sally Kaminski-Gaze	Team inspector	Science Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school, which has made good progress since the last inspection. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has moved forward rapidly in the last two years and the staff are working as a team to achieve further success. The school has retained the ethos of care and respect that has a positive impact on the personal development of the pupils. They are making good progress and achieving well because the overall quality of teaching and learning is good and the school has improved its assessment systems. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership. The leadership has raised expectations and has successfully introduced guidelines for teaching and tracking systems to enhance the children's progress. There is scope for the further development of the senior management team to have a sharper focus on raising standards.
- The quality of teaching, particularly in the junior classes, is good and the pupils achieve well.
- The school has developed very good marking and assessment systems in English and mathematics.
- Too little emphasis is given to history and geography and standards are below expectations. The school misses opportunities to develop literacy skills through the humanities.
- The provision in the Foundation Stage is good.
- The school provides very well for the moral development of its pupils and standards of behaviour are very good.
- The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils; the classroom assistants make a very valuable contribution to the children's welfare.
- The school has developed very good links with parents.
- The school needs to do more to promote the children's awareness of life in a multi-cultural society.
- Standards in art and design are above average and the school makes good use of the children's artwork to enhance the working environment.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Many aspects of school life, including the issues identified in the last report, have improved, particularly in the last two years. The school has improved its assessment procedures and its approach to teaching mathematics. Furthermore, the school has made good progress in developing its capacity to teach information and communication technology. The role of the subject manager has developed since the last inspection but there remains scope for further improvements.

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	D	E	C
mathematics	E	D	E	C
science	D	C	D	B

*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.*

In 2003, standards in the national test results were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The improvement in standards has not kept pace with the national trend. However, it is an improving situation because the quality of teaching has improved in Years 3

to 6 and the school is making better use of assessment data to plan work. Although standards in Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, the **pupils achieve well** because standards on entry are well below average. Standards in science are average and those in religious education meet expectations. Standards in history and geography are too low throughout the school as too little time is spent on these subjects. Standards in art and design exceed national expectations and standards in music are improving rapidly.

The pupils in the infant classes achieve satisfactorily in learning the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. In the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 2, standards have risen faster than the national trend in recent years. In the Foundation Stage, although many of the children are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals set for them, they make good progress.

Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and the school has clear plans to tackle this issue. Punctuality is satisfactory. The pupils have positive attitudes towards school and their behaviour is very good. **The pupils have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** but there are too few opportunities for the pupils to appreciate and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and this represents a significant improvement in the Foundation Stage, particularly in terms of the children's personal and social development. The quality of teaching in the infant classes is satisfactory overall and this enables the pupils to develop a reasonable grasp of the basic skills. The overall quality of teaching in the junior classes is better and good overall. A few lessons are very exciting and enable the pupils to achieve very well, particularly in mathematics and music. Information and communication technology is taught systematically but there are too few opportunities for the pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Strengths include the school's provision for the children in the Foundation Stage. The headteacher and staff work hard to try to ensure that all receive the same kind of experiences and opportunities. The school provides a good number of activities in art and design and physical education, but too little time is given to the humanities. The school has made good progress in developing the accommodation to meet the demands of the curriculum. It has formed good partnerships with the parents and sound relationships with the community. The school provides very well for the care and welfare of its pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of management is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The overall impact of the headteacher is very significant because she has motivated her colleagues to raise expectations of themselves and the children. She has a clear vision of how the school should be performing and has introduced a range of management innovations to make the school more effective. The management of the school is good. There remains scope for the development of the role of the senior management team to have a sharper focus on raising standards. The governors provide good support for the work of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents show a good level of satisfaction in the work of the school. Pupils have very good opinions of their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop the curriculum to raise the profile of the humanities.
- Develop the role of the senior management team so that they have a sharper focus on raising standards.
- Continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology by providing greater opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills through different subjects, particularly the humanities.

- Raise the profile of multi-cultural education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The overall achievement of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. The children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because they are well taught and assessment data are used effectively. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in the infant classes and well in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are below average in Year 6, the pupils make very good gains in their learning in the junior classes in English, mathematics and science, in comparison to their performance in Year 2.
- Standards are too low in history and geography.
- Standards in art and design are above average and music is a developing strength.
- The children achieve well in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

1. In the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 2, standards have risen faster than the national trend. In 2003, the achievement in reading and writing for pupils in the Year 2 tests was above that of pupils in similar schools. This was a significant achievement for the school as a high percentage of pupils achieved the expected standard (Level 2) than in previous years. However, fewer pupils achieved the higher standard (Level 3) in reading, writing and mathematics than in similar schools. Provisional results in mathematics in the 2004 tests indicate that the school has been successful in boosting the percentage of Level 3s in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (14.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.1 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the national tests for pupils in Year 6, the improvement in standards has not kept pace with the national trend. In 2003, standards were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Only a small proportion of the pupils achieved the higher levels (Level 5) in each subject. This is because the full benefits of the school's new rigorous approach to target setting and the use of assessment to plan more challenging work have yet to work their way through the school. Furthermore, a higher than average proportion of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. Although these pupils' needs are appropriately identified and they have individual plans for learning, their difficulties mean that they are unable to make the rapid rate of progress that they require in order to achieve the national averages. A further contributory factor to below average standards in Year 6 has been the significant number of pupils who are admitted to the school other than at the usual time of starting school, with many of these having learning and social difficulties. Overall, by the end of Year 6, the pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science in comparison to

the national picture and in comparison to pupils in similar schools. Boys and girls have similar achievements.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.1 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.8 (25.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.8 (28.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage from well below average standards on entry to the Nursery to below average standards at the end of Reception Year in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Most children are well placed to reach the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative development and physical development. This shows an improvement from the findings of the last inspection as standards on entry to the Nursery are now well below average.
4. Current standards in the work seen in reading, writing and mathematics are below average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expected levels at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. This is because the benefits of the new resources and the systematic approach to the teaching of skills are yet to work their way through the school. The school's good resources are used effectively so that the pupils gain sound skill levels but opportunities to apply these skills across the full breadth of the National Curriculum are not yet fully developed. Standards in science and religious education are in line with expected levels in Year 2 and in Year 6. However, standards in history and geography are too low as too little lesson time has been allocated to these subjects and the pupils' knowledge is patchy. The school has successfully maintained the profile of art reported in the last inspection and standards are above average in Year 6. Music is a developing strength and standards are in line with expectations in the infant and junior classes.
5. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Over time pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported. Support staff maintain detailed and regular records of the pupils' progress and refer to targets on the pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) though are not involved in the formal review meeting of pupils' progress towards their targets.
6. There is no significant variation between the achievements of boys and girls or pupils who speak English as an additional language; the pupils make the same level of progress as other pupils in their class. While there are still areas where the pupils' achievements need to be improved and standards raised further, notably in reading and writing, the school's improvement strategy is beginning to take effect. There is a clear commitment to further improvement. The new headteacher has raised expectations of the pupils' performance. The teaching team, particularly in the junior classes, have responded well to the increased rigour in the management systems. They have made effective use of opportunities for professional development and staff training, performance management, data analysis, monitoring and evaluation to support improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They are very well behaved and respond positively in lessons. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, attendance levels are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's measures to promote positive attitudes and behaviour are very effective.
- Pupils' personal qualities are well developed; their moral development is very good, their social development is good whilst their spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory.
- Attendance rates are below average.

Commentary

7. Most pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils ranked school ahead of hobbies, on a par with friends and only behind family in a list of the important things in their lives. They appreciate especially the range of clubs, the friendships with other pupils and the encouragement and support provided by teachers. They enjoy most of their lessons and the very positive atmosphere during playtimes and lunchtime. In lessons, pupils' attitudes towards their work are good. In most lessons, pupils listen well and show good levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. Pupils respond particularly well when expectations are high, lesson tasks are demanding and they are able to engage in a variety of practical activities. Their enthusiasm for practical activities is clearly evident in art and design and physical education lessons.
8. Behaviour in classrooms, during lunchtime and playtimes is very good. Staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and most pupils are very keen not to let down their teachers or themselves. The very good and reliable behaviour of nearly all pupils is a key element in the positive atmosphere for learning that prevails. Whilst the main emphasis is rightly on recognising good behaviour, teachers consistently apply the very clear and effective procedures when pupils' behaviour falls below expectations. The sanctions are carefully staged and are accompanied by clear behaviour improvement measures. As a result, pupils and parents fully support them. The atmosphere in the dining hall is calm and sociable. Aided significantly by a wide range of playground equipment, the playground is a happy, purposeful place that pupils enjoy. Parents and pupils confirm that racist incidents are very rare. Such incidents are taken very seriously by all staff, fully investigated and reported to governors and the local authority. There are some incidents of bullying, mostly verbal taunting. Pupils are clear on the importance of reporting such incidents, which they confirm are thoroughly, fairly and consistently investigated. There were no exclusions in the last school year.
9. Very harmonious relationships among pupils, irrespective of background or gender, are a very positive feature. Teachers value pupils' work and effectively praise effort and good work. This significantly assists pupils' learning.
10. Pupils make good progress and most achieve the Early Learning Goals related to their personal, social and emotional development, by the end of Reception Class. Allowing for pupils' age, a significant majority of pupils in all classes are noticeably calm, mature, happy and consistently well mannered. As a result, teachers are able to rely on the majority of pupils to work sensibly in pairs during lessons. Opportunities for pupils to work in larger groups are limited, however. The school's use of 'Circle Time', when pupils share their feelings and concerns, is an important contributor to pupils' good social development. Nearly all pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. They hold the rewards system in high regard and fully support the school's sanctions, where needed. Pupils justifiably talk of the confidence they get from teachers, who treat them as more grown-up as they get older. Nearly all pupils show respect and care for others. They hold doors open for adults and are kind to peers who are feeling unwell or left out. Older pupils exercise responsibility for themselves and others in a sensible way. When questioned in groups, pupils listen calmly and with respect to different views expressed by others.

11. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning, together with the opportunities for reflection in assemblies and lessons, make important contributions to their satisfactory spiritual development. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is good, aided significantly by visits to local museums and direct involvement in local church and sports events. There are positive features in pupils' multi-cultural development, including pupils' exposure to the beliefs of the major world faiths in religious education. However, the school does not use a full range of opportunities to develop the pupils' multi-cultural awareness - through its artwork and visits programme, for example.

Attendance

12. For a number of years, attendance has been consistently below the national average. The table below provides attendance and absence data for the latest complete reporting year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.5%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.0	School data:	0.6
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 (2002/3).

13. Attendance levels in the current year are similar to those of previous years. The school's measures to monitor absence and promote high attendance are currently satisfactory. As part of a *Behaviour Improvement Project*, the school plans to extend these measures. A minority of parents do not deliver on their key responsibilities, to ensure pupils regularly attend school or to contact school, in the event of absence. As a result, around a fifth of pupils have some unauthorised absence leading to an overall level that is above the national median. Whilst illness is the main reason for absence, holidays taken during term time make an important secondary contribution. Most pupils routinely arrive on time. However, a small minority of pupils are late, some on a regular basis.

Exclusions

14. There have been no pupil exclusions in the last school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The curriculum is satisfactory and the school provides a very good level of care.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school's assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage and this enables the children to make a good start to their education.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good with some very good features.
- Assessment procedures are used effectively to help the pupils to learn in English and mathematics.
- There is some unsatisfactory teaching in Year 2.

- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are taught well.
- Classroom assistants make a very good contribution to learning.

Commentary

15. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The teachers' planning is good and addresses the six areas of learning. The Nursery and Reception classes are organised into well-structured learning areas. The wide range of interesting activities and attractive displays provide a welcoming environment where children feel secure and motivated to learn. In most lessons teachers have high expectations of good behaviour. In a few lessons classroom management was unsatisfactory and resulted in pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour. In the large majority of the areas of learning, assessment is good and guides planning. Teachers track the children's progress well. Target-setting is well established in mathematics and some aspects of language.
16. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the infant classes is satisfactory. In one of the Year 1 classes, the quality of teaching is consistently good because the teacher has established very good relationships within his class, particularly with those children who have special educational needs and who are learning English as an additional language. Very careful use is made of assessment data in this class to ensure that the work set is closely matched to the pupils' ability. This is not consistently the case in the other infant classes. A particular strength of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is the quality of the teamwork with the other adults who support in class. Furthermore, the behaviour of the pupils is managed well. The overall quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. However, the teachers provide too few opportunities for the pupils to record their work and the teaching of reading lacks rigour. Assessment information is not used consistently to prepare work for the different ability groups within each class and a minority of lessons lack pace. This is a particular characteristic of the teaching in Year 2, where two lessons were unsatisfactory. Furthermore, not enough use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects.
17. In Years 3 to 6, the emphasis that each teacher gives to the pupils' personal and social development is a strength. This focus raises the pupils' confidence and self-esteem and nurtures a very positive attitude towards learning. Very good attention is paid to the pupils' previous attainment when planning work in literacy and numeracy. This ensures that these lessons run smoothly. There is often an appropriate variation in the work set for the range of ability in each group. The feedback to pupils is good and in the best examples, particularly in Years 5 and 6, the pupils are clearly informed about what they need to do to improve their work. The improvement in the marking of the pupils' work has been a significant area of progress since the arrival of the new headteacher and it has had a marked impact on raising achievement.
18. There is a high level of consistency of approach brought about by the teamwork of the teachers in each year group. They plan their work together and share their ideas and evaluate the outcomes. As a result, the quality of teaching in over three quarters of the lessons seen was good or better. The teamwork generated by the headteacher has allowed each teaching team to work collectively and successfully to raise standards, particularly in literacy and information and communication technology. There is a shared commitment to providing the pupils with activities that interest, stimulate and challenge them. Many lessons begin with very lively question and answer sessions that build on what the pupils know from a previous lesson or unit of work.
19. The school is developing new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. There is a heightened awareness amongst the staff about different learning styles following training in this area. In addition, the music curriculum has been enlivened by intensive staff training by the subject co-ordinator. This has given staff renewed confidence and is impacting well on

learning. The grouping of pupils into sets for mathematics is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. Whilst a considerable amount of curriculum time is given to teaching literacy, more could be done to plan work to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils.

20. Class teachers track the progress of the pupils with special educational needs closely, which helps them to plan work accurately and prepare well-matched tasks. For example, in a Year 1 geography lesson, the pupils sequenced vehicles in time with the support from a teaching assistant, and made good gains in their learning. By the end of their English lesson in Year 4, the pupils had written very effective slogans using superlatives: 'Toffee Twirls – nicest in the world; coolest, smoothest Toffee Twirls'; and from a child with a statement: 'Midnight Dream, the sweetest chocolate bar you could dream of'.
21. The support for those pupils who are learning English as an additional language is very good. The staff know the needs of these pupils well and plan appropriate programmes for learning. They have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and of how they should behave. The high expectations and encouragement given ensure that the pupils try their hardest and they consequently achieve well. The quality of interactions between the pupils and the adults is consistently of a high standard. In particular, in Year 1, the class teacher converses with the pupil in his mother tongue and this has helped to establish a relationship that enables the pupil to prosper.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (6 %)	9 (18 %)	19 (39 %)	15 (31 %)	3 (6 %)	0 (0 %)	(0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broadly satisfactory and meets statutory requirements, as it did at the time of the last inspection. However, the time allocation given to some subjects is insufficient and does not provide an appropriate balance to timetabled subjects. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good.
- The school provides well for numeracy and literacy.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who are learning English as an additional language is good.
- The school has made good progress in developing the music curriculum.
- The provision for history and geography is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

22. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good overall and satisfactory in communication, language and literacy; it supports the pupils' progress well. The provision for personal social and emotional development has improved since the previous inspection. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good and consequently the children achieve as well as other children in the classes. Where additional support is required the headteacher and staff have taken appropriate steps to provide it. The National Numeracy Strategy is well adapted to meet the needs of all children in the Foundation Stage. The planning for the National Literacy Strategy is broadly satisfactory but there are too few

opportunities for children to develop writing skills and some inaccuracies occur in the teaching of phonics. The curriculum is enriched by the use of the outdoor accommodation, the computer suite and a wide range of visits.

23. Whilst the provision for English, mathematics, science, music, physical education, art and design, music and ICT is good, there are weaknesses in history and geography and, to a lesser extent, religious education. The curriculum is not planned adequately to ensure a balanced coverage for the humanities. This results in considerably reduced opportunities for pupils to learn in these subjects. A considerable amount of time is given to teaching literacy in addition to the Literacy Hour, resulting in the humanities being squeezed into less time. This means that standards in geography and history are below average. There are too few opportunities for the pupils to develop their reading and writing through these subjects. In numeracy lessons, mental, oral and final sessions are used well to develop speaking and listening skills. The use of ICT across the curriculum is limited. Satisfactory policies are in place for all subjects and these are regularly monitored by subject co-ordinators. The school provides good opportunities to develop skills of citizenship and personal, social and health education.
24. All pupils have good access to the learning opportunities offered by the school. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are well looked after. Support offered by special needs auxiliaries is often very good. There are good systems and clear procedures in place, which closely follow the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of pupils. IEPs are in place. However, not all targets are clear, realistic, achievable and measurable. The school is aware of this and plans to review IEP writing soon. There is a good balance of support within lessons and withdrawing pupils to undertake similar classwork which encompasses their targets, in a smaller group. The policy, recently reviewed, provides useful guidance to staff.
25. Support for learning outside the school day is satisfactory. There is a reasonable range of mainly sporting activities for pupils to attend. A before- and after-school facility and a Saturday morning maths club at the local senior school, for higher attaining pupils, are also available. A regular residential visit for Year 5 pupils is undertaken. This, together with the other clubs, contributes to pupils' good personal development. Participation in the arts and sporting activities is good. The provision is further enhanced by visits to areas of local historic, geographical and commercial interest.
26. There are sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. The match of support staff to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory in the infant and junior classes, which maximises learning, especially of the pupils with special needs. The number of support staff in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. There are insufficient teaching assistants in the Reception classes but, during the inspection, children were well supported by students and parent helpers. Taking into account the particular difficulties of the current building, which does not allow accessibility to all areas of the school for those with disability, the accommodation is scrupulously clean, attractive and stimulating. Classrooms provide adequate teaching space and are well organised, providing an attractive learning environment. Resources are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares very well for its pupils. Pupils get good support, advice and guidance. There are very good measures to involve pupils in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares very well for its pupils.
- Support, advice and guidance are very good.
- The school regards the views of pupils as important to its work.

Commentary

27. The formal policies and practices relating to health and safety and child protection are well considered and properly carried out. Levels of minor accidents, mainly in the playground, are low. Separate play areas for infants and juniors together with the very good range of playground games make playtime inherently safer and more purposeful. The arrangements for induction into the Nursery are well-established and very effective. Staff know the pupils very well and address their needs very effectively. They act quickly if a pupil is unhappy or under pressure and are careful to make sure new arrivals are helped to settle in. The school makes good use of its learning mentor, to support those pupils liable to experience difficulties with transfer to secondary school. As a result, nearly all pupils feel fairly treated and have a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults, as the pupil survey confirms. Parents rightly speak very positively about the quality of care provided.
28. Good attitudes, work and achievements outside school are effectively recognised at weekly celebration assemblies. Year 6 pupils say that teachers expect them to behave in a more grown up way as they move through school. Teachers discuss the outcomes of tests with pupils and marking provides helpful suggestions on how their work can be improved. Targets are well used to support pupils on the special needs register. For other pupils, use of individual targets is at an early stage of development. Whilst older pupils have targets for their personal development and academic progress, they are not involved in identifying the targets.
29. The very good relationships between pupils and their teachers create a very positive atmosphere in which to hear pupils' views. Pupils in all year groups create a set of class rules at the start of each school year. 'Circle Time', where pupils share their feelings and concerns, is a very well established feature in all classes. The junior School Council has a very positive impact through fundraising and identification of additional play equipment, for example. The council also suggested that the no-smoking zone be extended to include the whole site. The governors have recently confirmed this decision. This is a striking indication of the positive influence of the council and that its views are taken seriously by adults. Not surprisingly, the great majority of pupils surveyed strongly agree with the statement that school listens to their ideas.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are good links with parents. Links with the wider community make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good information to support pupils' progress.
- Despite the school's best efforts, there is room for improvement in pupils' attendance and parental attendance at parents' evenings.
- In relation to pupil transfer, the good pastoral links are not supported by appropriate curriculum links.

Commentary

30. Teachers are accessible and approachable and listen to and effectively address parents' concerns. Very well led by the headteacher, the school positively seeks to work constructively and engage with parents. For example, newsletters are regularly used to seek parents' views on the things they like or could be improved. The outcomes and any proposed changes are promptly shared with parents. As a result, parents have an effective medium for raising suggestions and concerns, and complaints are minimal. Additional detailed surveys on specific issues, such as homework, have also taken place. Pupils' learning at home is supported by termly curriculum information. The inspection survey reveals a high level of satisfaction with what the school provides and achieves.
31. Pupils' written annual reports are of very good quality. They provide a clear indication of how pupils are getting on by national standards and the effort they are making and identify key targets. They also include space for parental comments, to which a minority respond. The practice of issuing the reports towards the end of the spring term is a positive and innovative feature. As a result, all parties have a clear understanding of the key areas for development, while there is still time to influence progress. Each parents' evening is held over two evenings, at different times, to maximise parental attendance.
32. Through the 'Friends' of Newcomen', parents organise a variety of successful fund-raising events. These events contribute to the children's personal development and the very good sense of community that prevails, as staff, parents and pupils are involved in many of these events. For example, termly discos contribute significantly to their social development. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement in pupils' attendance and parental attendance at parents' evenings.
33. The school plays its part as a resource for the local community, in terms of the use of its premises for adult education classes in computers, *Surestart* courses and by a multi-cultural dance group. There are close links with two local churches. Pupils attend church services, and the vicars speak in assemblies and make contributions to the religious education curriculum. Football coaches and visits to Middlesborough FC contribute to pupils' football skills and understanding of healthy living. Public services, such as the police and fire services, enrich the curriculum with contributions on personal safety and healthy living. Pupils take part in a range of collections and sponsored events for charity.
34. The school has forged effective links with a number of local primary schools, centred around sports, the arts and mental maths strategies. The links with the adjacent secondary school present a mixed picture, in relation to pupil transfer. There are good pastoral links but these are not supported by appropriate curricular links, such as bridging projects in key subjects, for example. Plans are in place for additional weekend lessons in literacy and numeracy as well as dance and drama lessons as part of the secondary school's specialist status in the performing arts. Student teachers, from Durham University, Ripon and St John College in York, take part of their teaching practice at the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governors provide good support for the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good.
- The school's commitment to inclusion, equality and concern for the needs of individuals is very good.
- The governors provide effective support and have developed their role as critical friends of the school.

- The senior management team is yet to develop its role in raising standards.
- Financial systems are efficient and secure.

Commentary

35. Since the last inspection, the school drifted for a sustained period of time whilst it was without a permanent headteacher. The governors were not encouraged to become involved as critical friends. However, over the last two years, with the new headteacher in post, the school has made rapid progress and is well placed to raise achievement. The governing body and the headteacher are united in their determination to move the school forward and have achieved much in a relatively short period of time. Standards are rising as the impact of more rigorous guidelines for teaching and learning take effect.
36. The headteacher sets a very good example in terms of the quality of the relationship she has established with the pupils and their parents and provides a very good role model for all of her colleagues. The headteacher has been successful in maintaining the ethos of social inclusion and promoting higher expectations of the pupils' achievement. The school has a strong commitment to developing the pupils' individual talents and to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are happy to come to school; this is reflected in the positive response of the parents and their children in the questionnaires and at the meetings prior to the inspection. The school has a growing reputation within the community and draws an increasing number of its pupils from beyond its natural catchment area.
37. The curriculum priorities identified in the school development plan are entirely appropriate. However, there is considerable variance in the effectiveness of the roles of teachers with management responsibilities and of the curriculum co-ordinators. For example, the co-ordinator for information and communication technology has achieved much in ensuring that the school's new resources are used systematically and effectively. The co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage has taken very successful steps to ensure that the Nursery and Reception classes are working as one unit. Expectations of pupils in the Nursery class have significantly improved since the previous inspection when their attainment on entry was much higher than it is now. Music now enjoys a much higher profile in the school as the subject manager has made the most of recent further training to build the confidence of her colleagues in music lessons. However, there are weaknesses in the management systems that are yet to be resolved. For example, although there is a shared commitment to raise standards, not all subject co-ordinators have developed their area of responsibility by evaluating achievement in their subject in a planned and systematic way. There are shortcomings in the co-ordination of literacy in the school. The deputy headteacher has a much greater classroom commitment than at the time of the last inspection. Although he continues to make a strong contribution on the pastoral side, his managerial role has diminished as a result, in terms of both his role as special educational needs co-ordinator and his key role of evaluating achievement.
38. The governing body has developed its role since the last inspection and now takes a much fuller part in the life of the school. It is very supportive of the headteacher. The committee structure is successful in recruiting an adequate number of suitably committed governors and they are well informed about curricular matters. Through regular meetings with the headteacher, the governors have an increased awareness of standards and target setting. They have provided strong support for the school's drive for raised expectations.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	925,255	Balance from previous year	44,311
Total expenditure	906,183	Balance carried forward to the next	63,383
Expenditure per pupil	2,249		

39. The school has secure financial systems. Financial administration is efficient and effective. For example, the school administrator can readily provide accurate budget information to guide the senior management team and governors in making their spending decisions. The school seeks best value in its spending decisions by evaluating the relative costs of services required. Good use is made of resources allocated to support specific groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs. The school gives good value for money because of the quality of education it provides, although standards are below average in important subjects by the time the pupils leave school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall and has improved since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and are interested learners because of generally good teaching and high expectations of behaviour in most classes.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that children share the resources well and take turns.
- Good relationships are established between teachers and children in most classes.
- In the majority of classes very positive relationships are established and most children develop good social skills.
- The provision for this area of learning has significantly improved since the previous inspection.

Commentary

40. Children make good progress in this area of learning because of generally good partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants. The majority of children are well placed to achieve the Early Learning Goals. Children enter the Nursery with well below average standards and by the end of the Reception Year have a good understanding of fair and acceptable behaviour in most cases. Children listen and participate in many stories and activities and work well in groups. They are encouraged to feel proud of their achievements and reminded of the high standards of behaviour expected. Most children share equipment and take turns, putting up their hands before answering questions. They enjoy shared experiences, especially singing and assembly and understand and respond well to the teachers' guidance and instructions in most cases. There are small pockets of unsatisfactory class management and, in these lessons, personal and social skills were not well developed.
41. The assembly shared with Years 1 and 2 contributes very well to children's personal, social and emotional development. However, the children have too few opportunities for learning about the wide range of cultures and faiths of people in multi-cultural Britain.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in the majority of classes and the staff develop the children's speaking and listening skills well.
- Children enter the Nursery class with well below average standards in this area of learning and they achieve well in reading, and speaking and listening.
- Children have too few opportunities to practise handwriting skills.

Commentary

42. It is clear from discussions with children and the analysis of written work that children achieve well; their attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average, in this area of learning and by the end of the Reception Year standards are below average although the higher-attaining children exceed the Early Learning Goals and some average children reach them. Children achieve well in speaking and listening because all teachers plan many varied opportunities for group and paired discussions in all areas of learning. The staff plan many opportunities to develop children's vocabulary and experiences by their choice of books and through probing questions. The weekly feature book is very popular with all children; they listen avidly and participate well. The majority of children remember the sequence of the stories and are bursting with enthusiasm for the next chapter. During the inspection, the book focused on a train journey and children shared their experiences of travel. Teachers ensure that all children are included well and the provision for all children is good. Many children speak with interest about a previous book 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' and recalled many of the activities that they had experienced.
43. Higher-attaining and average children read fluently and accurately with good understanding as the books chosen are generally well matched to their abilities. They use reasoning skills well and retell the stories in the correct sequence. Although they read familiar texts well, some children are hesitant when reading unseen texts. Lower attaining children discussed the illustrations, recognised some words, especially frequently used words, and some blends. Although the majority of teachers have developed rigorous and tightly structured plans for the teaching of sounds with the emphasis on children's ability to recognise and say them, this is not consistent throughout the Foundation Stage. Some aspects of the teaching of phonics in one class are unsatisfactory. Children are encouraged to hold pencils with the correct grip; higher-attaining and some average-attaining children write in sentences. There are a large number of lower-attaining children in both Reception classes who are not well placed to achieve the expected goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are good.
- Teachers plan a wide range of structured activities to ensure that children understand mathematics and apply their skills to other areas of learning.
- Children have very positive attitudes to this area of learning.
- Standards overall are below those expected for children of this age but they achieve well.

Commentary

44. Although standards are below expectations in this area of learning, the children achieve well because of good teaching, rigorous assessment and target setting, which guide planning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the teaching assistant and students support the learning of the different ability groups. Higher-attaining and some average-attaining children count to over 50 and solve addition and subtraction problems to 20. Lower-attaining children are confident in using numbers to 10. Most children in the Reception classes understand position and use the terms 'above', 'next to' and 'below' accurately. They are confident in this area of learning, enjoy the activities and work well. Teachers plan a wide variety of mathematical activities associated with other areas of learning and this develops children's understanding of fractions and capacity. Occasionally, some children spend too much time in the water and sand activities and become restless and lose interest.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are good.
- The range of interesting activities promotes effective learning and interest in this area.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning very effectively to enhance children's understanding.
- Although children achieve well there are a significant number who are not well placed to achieve all aspects of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. Standards, therefore, are below average.

Commentary

45. From the activities observed, discussions with children and analysis of planning and completed work, it is evident that children achieve well in this area of learning. Although the higher attaining and some average-attaining children are well placed to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year, there are a significant number of children who are not. Below average standards in literacy and numeracy prevent children from researching and learning independently.
46. During the activities based on 'Travel' children prepared the type of sandwiches that would be eaten on a journey and this activity enhanced their knowledge and understanding of a healthy diet and personal and social development. From previous work on 'Growth' children discussed how they had planted seeds and know the conditions needed for growth. They identify a wide range of insects, birds and mammals and compare and contrast seaside resorts with inland areas. Children have many opportunities for making models from a wide range of construction equipment.
47. During the inspection they used an ICT paint program and produced realistic drawings of trains associated with the topic. Children in the Reception class use the Computer Suite each week and ICT is incorporated well into the curriculum. Children have insufficient opportunities for using listening centres, as they are located outside the classrooms.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for outdoor and indoor activities.
- Teaching, learning and achievement are good in most areas of learning especially when children are using large equipment.
- Children in the Reception classes have insufficient opportunities for developing handwriting skills.
- All staff make effective use of the available accommodation.
- Class management is unsatisfactory in one of the classes.

Commentary

48. In the outdoor activities observed children showed a good awareness of space and direction. In the Nursery children controlled a wide variety of wheeled toys well and followed a circuit accurately. The teacher used these activities well in order to develop good personal and social skills. In the Reception classes children aimed objects into hoops with good levels of activity.

49. Activities involving the soft play area were particularly successful when children took part in an assault course with high levels of mobility and awareness of direction. They were very well supervised by the teaching assistant and a parent helper. In the main class activities the management of children was unsatisfactory, resulting in time wastage and lack of concentration. Children are well placed to reach the expected goals in most areas by the end of the year.
50. Children handle construction equipment, paintbrushes, scissors and pencils with good levels of dexterity and accuracy. Although they hold pencils accurately, they have insufficient opportunities for practising handwriting and, in the work observed and analysed, standards were below average. Children identified as needing additional help are given good support and encouragement and achieve as well as other children in the classes.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the artistic and singing aspects are good.
- This area of learning contributes well to children's personal and social development.

Commentary

51. From the displays and discussions with children, it is clear that they are well placed to reach the expected levels in most aspects apart from imaginative writing. Planning shows that over the year children have a wide range of opportunities which develop their artistic and singing skills. They sing with accurate pitch, a good sense of rhythm and good dynamic range. They have a wide repertoire of songs, which enhances many areas of learning for children in the Nursery. The standards of singing in the Nursery are above those expected for children of this age. A particular strength is their good awareness of shape and texture in art. Children produce attractive designs and symmetrical patterns. During the inspection children in the Reception classes created imaginative seascapes using a wide range of media; they applied paint smoothly and carefully and then used glue and sand to produce the effect of a beach.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average in Years 2 and 6.
- Achievement is good overall in relation to pupils' prior attainment.
- Procedures for assessment are good and are used well.
- The range of opportunities to write in subjects other than English is limited.
- The school library is a good resource, although it is not used as well as it could be to develop pupils' learning.

Commentary

52. Although the pupils make steady progress in the infant classes, standards are below average in Year 2. Progress is better in Years 3 to 6, where pupils make good gains in their learning, largely as a result of the stronger teaching, so that, overall, pupils achieve well, although overall standards remain below those expected nationally.

53. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced a number of strategies to improve standards, such as reading intervention programmes and a wider range of resources. However, there remain weaknesses in a planned and structured approach to the development of basic reading skills, particularly for the younger pupils. The improvement of writing standards has been a priority over the past year, where staff have concentrated on developing skills to model and develop writing and these efforts are beginning to bring success. As a result, it is predicted that the percentage of pupils achieving at the higher levels in this year's (2004) national tests in writing has improved.
54. The pupils enter school with low levels of speaking skills and although the teachers work hard to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, the standards that they achieve are below those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. The teachers provide regular opportunities to promote speaking within many areas of the curriculum and try hard to extend and improve pupils' vocabulary by introducing opportunities for discussion. Pupils' listening skills are generally better than their speaking skills; most teachers manage their pupils well and have good relationships with them. As a result, the majority of pupils listen well to the teachers, although some need a good deal of encouragement to join in discussions. Many lack confidence and have a restricted vocabulary. The school has recognised the need to develop a more structured approach to developing pupils' speaking skills as a priority for development.
55. Although the school has improved its resources for reading, there remains a lack of a consistent and systematic approach to the progressive development of pupils' reading skills. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in Years 1 and 2, where pupils do not have a secure grasp of letter sounds to help them tackle words that are new to them. However, the school has introduced time outside the Literacy Hour for group reading sessions. This has made a positive contribution to developing pupils' comprehension and to broadening their knowledge of books. The school has improved the school library, which is an attractive learning area. Older pupils know how to use the classification system to find a book in the library and the index and contents pages to help them to locate information. They do not yet use the school library sufficiently as a learning resource and this impedes the development of research skills. Pupils have a home/school reading diary or journal, which is used well in some classes to encourage the participation of parents and carers in supporting their children and which forms a dialogue between home and school, although the quality in the use of these journals is not consistent across the school.
56. Standards in writing, although below average, are improving, with more pupils achieving at higher levels, particularly at the end of Year 6. There is a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs, which means that pupils' achievements are below average overall. The school has worked hard, with the help of the LEA advisory staff, to improve the quality of the teaching of writing and to provide a structured approach to developing the necessary skills. Although teachers ensure that writing tasks cover a range of genres within the writing sessions, there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their skills further by writing in other subjects such as geography and history.
57. Pupils on the register of special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Their needs are identified appropriately and the teaching assistants provide good support to enable them to participate in lessons and work towards the development of early reading and writing skills. When necessary, programmes of work such as that for Additional Literacy provide good support for those who need it.
58. The quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. This leads to good achievement over time in writing and satisfactory achievement in reading. In the very good lessons seen in a Year 1 and a Year 3 class, the teachers engaged the interest of the pupils well by using a range of strategies which were appropriately pitched. They involved the pupils well in discussion and high levels of questioning, which ensured that pupils were constantly challenged to develop their vocabulary and experiment with language. In the Year 1 class the teacher made good and regular

reference to the targets for the lesson, which ensured that the pupils were clear about their learning and remained on task. In most lessons, the teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage them well, so that most have established good working habits. The ends of lessons are mostly used appropriately both to reflect on what they have learned and in the more effective lessons to provide further challenges for the pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills. The quality of teachers' marking is good. They make good reference to pupils' targets and give good suggestions for improvement.

59. The school has developed good procedures to assess the achievements of its pupils, based on regular evaluations by class teachers and standardised tests. This information, alongside that gained from the assessment of pupils' attainment soon after they start school, is used to plot the achievements of pupils as they move through the school. The school also makes good use of this information to set individual targets in writing. These are shared with the pupils, who are quite clear about what they need to concentrate on if they are to improve.
60. The leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator is barely satisfactory at present. However, the headteacher has made the development of literacy a priority in the school improvement plan and has introduced a more rigorous approach to raising standards. For example, the school has started to evaluate the pupils' achievements to identify common weaknesses and there have been opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. The school recognises that there is scope for greater improvements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills in other subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education as there is an over-dependence on the use of worksheets or other forms of writing that do not require the pupils to write independently. There are some opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills, particularly word processing, in writing and the Internet for research in their work, although these opportunities are not yet sufficiently well structured within teachers' medium-term planning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for the subject is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall with some excellent teaching in Years 1, 5 and 6.
- Assessment is very well established and effectively used to guide planning and setting.
- Target setting is very well established and pupils know their own targets.
- The setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6 are extremely successful in raising standards of the higher-attaining pupils and supporting the lower-attaining.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good and contributes to good rates of learning.
- Although standards at the end of Year 6 are below the national average, the challenge for higher attaining pupils ensures that they are well placed to achieve and in a significant number of cases exceed the national average.
- The subject leader provides good leadership and good management.

Commentary

62. Throughout the school pupils achieve well in mathematics. The subject leader and teachers ensure that pupils who can achieve well have the challenges and opportunities to exceed the national average. In each year there are a significant number of pupils in the lower-attaining sets who are not well placed to meet national expectations. There is a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a high level of mobility in the school.
63. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well in all aspects of the subject. The higher-attaining and average-attaining pupils use a wide range of methods for problem solving and planning investigations. Their very good understanding of place value is reflected in their ability to multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals. They have a secure understanding of the equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages and the angle properties of many 2D shapes. They organise their work methodically and justify their reasoning. The very good teaching and setting arrangements contribute to rapidly improving standards for higher-attaining and average-attaining pupils as the pace is excellent and gifted and talented pupils are given additional challenges. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve very well because of well-focused support from teachers and teaching assistants.
64. In Year 2 standards are average overall, with higher-attaining pupils well placed to exceed them. For most pupils this represents good progress from the standards achieved at the beginning of Year 1. Higher-attaining pupils understand place value to over 500. They have good mental recall of multiplication tables and add and subtract two-digit numbers mentally. Pupils apply their number skills effectively to all aspects of mathematics. They tell the time, to quarter to and quarter past the hour and classify a wide range of two and three-dimensional shapes using a range of properties including symmetry. Their data handling skills are also well developed. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils become confident mathematicians. They rise to the challenges set by the teachers, try different approaches when solving problems and show high levels of mathematical reasoning.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but the lessons observed varied between excellent and unsatisfactory. Excellent teaching was observed in Years 1, 5 and 6. In the lessons where teaching was good or better expectations were high and lessons were stimulating and challenging and moved at a brisk pace. Pupils were given many opportunities for investigations and higher-attaining pupils rose to the challenges set because they have the intellectual capability for these activities. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory higher attaining pupils were insufficiently challenged and the mixed ability groups and pupils did not make the good gains in learning that were a feature of learning in the other classes. Although marking is up to date, the highest quality marking is where teachers develop good dialogue with pupils and make high demands on rates of work and standards of presentation.
66. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils in their classes because of good support from teaching assistants and work is well planned to meet their needs. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Since the last inspection and particularly since the appointment of the new headteacher provision and achievement have improved significantly.
67. Teaching of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is of an equally high standard because work is well matched to their abilities. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the pace was slow, insufficient time was given to direct mathematical teaching and the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy were not met.

68. The provision for the subject has improved since the previous inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is now well established in the large majority of classes. ICT is effectively used to develop pupils' data handling and computational skills. The quality of teaching, monitoring and tracking of pupils' achievements is very good and has significantly improved. Pupils are now encouraged to use accurate mathematical vocabulary.
69. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader organises the available resources well, monitors teachers' planning and ensures good coverage of the curriculum. She analyses test results and teachers organise pupils in Years 5 and 6 into sets and amend curricular planning. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from attending the Saturday school for mathematics and the headteacher has ensured that teachers have attended a wide range of professional training.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Pupils use mathematics as an integral part of work in science and in shape and symmetry in art and design. During the inspection numeracy was very well applied to a physical education lesson when pupils measured distances run by their partners and then recorded the results using ICT. Pupils have insufficient opportunities for applying numeracy skills to history and geography, as there is insufficient coverage of these subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science match national averages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6; pupils' achievements are good overall.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.
- The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning.
- The co-ordinator manages the subject well and is developing leadership skills of monitoring and analysis.
- Assessment data are not used sufficiently to fully maximise pupils' learning.

Commentary

71. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are in line with national averages. Higher-achieving pupils in the junior classes attain standards which exceed those nationally because the quality of teaching is consistently strong. This is a strength. Pupils' achievements in both key stages are good. Standards have been maintained in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection. In Year 6, standards currently match national averages whereas at the time of the last inspection they were above. For a substantial period of time between these two inspections, science was without a co-ordinator. This, together with the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, accounts largely for the apparent reduction in standards.
72. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand how simple electrical circuits work. While investigating how well seeds grow, they predict that they will need soil, water and light. They accurately label parts of a sunflower and the cycle of its growth. They know about healthy food and make simple classifications of materials.
73. By Year 6 pupils have a very secure understanding of fair testing and know that all factors must remain the same except one, while investigating whether temperature affects dissolving. They know about and name solids, liquids and gases including carbon dioxide and monoxide, oxygen and water vapour. They label parts of a flowering plant and main stages of its life

accurately. Higher-achieving pupils confidently explain the process of photosynthesis and seed dispersal. They know about the functions of major internal body organs, such as kidneys and circulatory system, including the effect of exercise on the heart. Pupils understand the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise to maintain good health and know the dangers of smoking. This contributes well to their personal development. They know about the properties of rocks and magnets and how shadows are formed.

74. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and consistently good in Years 5 and 6. In these lessons teachers use probing open-ended questions, which require pupils to think more deeply and explain their thoughts and ideas; this pushes pupils' learning forwards. In most lessons, objectives are made crystal clear so that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn and how they are to achieve it. During each lesson's conclusion, teachers return to the objective to assess pupils' understanding and often move them towards the next learning step. This is a strength of teaching. For example, Year 5 know that by the end of the lesson they will be able to recognise, name and know the function of a flowering plants separate parts. At the end of the lesson this new knowledge leads them on to learning about reproduction in preparation for the next lesson. Year 1 know that a visit to the garden helps them to identify mini beasts. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and resources are well chosen. Teaching is unsatisfactory in a Year 2 class because there is a poor choice of resources and match of activities, which results in pupils becoming restless and bored. Consequently, no new learning takes place.
75. Pupils' learning is strengthened by their attitudes, particularly their enjoyment and enthusiasm for science, especially when experimenting and investigating. They describe learning as 'fun'. Assessment, though generally satisfactory, is an area currently under review. Pupils' self-assessment using the 'traffic light' system is regularly used but pupil 'mind mapping' at the beginning and end of units of work less so. These pupil assessments could be much more effective if teachers planned work using information gained directly from these assessments. Marking generally is evaluative and of good quality. It helps pupils to understand how they can improve their learning.
76. Management of the subject is good. Resources are good and well organised. The co-ordinator provides effective support and guidance for colleagues and has led training sessions for colleagues. Leadership is developing. Detailed analysis of test results identifying strengths and weaknesses in learning is not undertaken by the co-ordinator. This is an area for improvement. The co-ordinator works diligently, is keen to raise standards and has appropriately identified assessment, cross-curricular links and investigative science for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising.
- The provision has improved since the last inspection; the school has a well-equipped suite and the pupils have access to computers in their classrooms.
- The school does not make enough use of computers to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

77. Standards are in line with the levels expected in Year 2 and below at the end of Year 6. The provision and standards have improved since the last inspection, although the benefits of the enhanced resources are still working their way through the school. The pupils achieve well because lesson plans are detailed and well focused upon developing pupils' skills. The school's commitment to training all staff has led to increased confidence and a willingness to

make full use of the computer suite, which is timetabled regularly for each class. This ensures that the basic skills are taught systematically. The school is making satisfactory use of available computer resources to support learning in other subjects.

78. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers' demonstrations of skills and techniques are sound and this ensures pupils can proceed confidently with their tasks. The teachers make good use of projectors and whiteboards when explaining new techniques to a whole class. The teachers' planning ensures that the pupils use a broad range of computer applications to develop the pupils' skills as they get older. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils develop their keyboard skills as they word process stories and accounts. They learn how to use a graphics program to create firework pictures. They use data handling programs to record information from their traffic surveys. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils' work becomes more sophisticated. For example, older pupils prepare their own project books on themes such as "The Egyptians" and "Mary Rose" and use spreadsheets to organise information when costing the equipment required for a new classroom. Classroom assistants provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs to ensure they develop skills at their own level of ability. Most pupils behave sensibly in the suite and treat the equipment with care.
79. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership. Resources for supporting teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection, mainly as the result of national and community initiatives, and continue to improve. For example, the school plans to introduce interactive whiteboards in the Reception and Year 1 classrooms in September as part of a planned upgrading programme. The quality and range of resources are having a positive impact upon the pupils' progress. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is aware of the strengths and areas for further development throughout the school. For example, although the school has introduced appropriate recording systems to enable the pupils to recognise their achievements, this system is yet to be collated to provide an overview of the pupils' progress. Furthermore, the school recognises that its current arrangements for technical support are unsatisfactory as the school does not consistently receive prompt support when the computers develop faults.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. The school recognises that this is an area for further development. In the infant and junior classes, the teachers plan for the pupils to use computers to help them to learn, particularly in numeracy and literacy, but there is little consistency in the practice. For example, in Year 4 the pupils word process instructions for string and potato printing and pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs use information and communication technology to word process their poems. The pupils carry out some research in geography and history but there is no consistency of planning for information and communication technology opportunities in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

The provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Not enough time is given to the teaching of religious education in some classes.
- There are no procedures for assessing or recording pupils' achievements.
- There are shortages in resources.

Commentary

81. Only two lessons were observed so that it is not possible to make a secure judgement about teaching. Inspectors had discussions with pupils and looked at samples of previous work and teachers' planning. From this, indications are that standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school.
82. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the special features of the Bible and the stories of the life of Christ and learn about the major Christian festivals. They study the main features of Judaism. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make satisfactory gains in their knowledge of Christianity; they learn about the beliefs, festivals and customs of other faiths, particularly Judaism and Islam, and are beginning to make comparisons between them. However, when looking at pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils from Year 6 it is evident that their subject knowledge and understanding lack sufficient depth. There is also some repetition of content in different year groups so that progress is uneven.
83. The co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for the subject, which is managed satisfactorily. At present teachers use the locally agreed syllabus and national guidelines as the basis for their work. The school's planning is to be reviewed later this year to take into account the requirements of the new syllabus. Currently, there are no procedures for the assessment of pupils' work. The school recognises that there are some shortages in resources and plans to address these in the next financial year.

Geography

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in geography are below those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Insufficient time is given to the subject in some year groups to ensure full coverage of the curriculum.
- Work is not consistently matched to the pupils' differing ability levels.

Commentary

84. Although few lessons were seen during the inspection, discussions were held with pupils and past work was examined. From this and the few lessons observed it is clear that pupils do not achieve at the standards expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. The quality and amount of recorded work varies across the school, which indicates that pupils' progress is uneven. By the end of Year 6, pupils have limited geographical knowledge and understanding. As pupils are usually given the same tasks to complete, it is not possible to judge how well pupils of differing capability achieve. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils' independent and extended writing and little evidence of pupils carrying out independent enquiry. On occasions, the curriculum is enriched by drawing on the pupils' first-hand experiences. For example, in the infants the pupils explore maps and journeys based on their daily route to and from school. Older pupils explore rivers from source to estuary by visiting and studying the River Tees.
85. The co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for geography and history and has made a satisfactory start. She has carried out a review of provision and written a new policy and scheme which is based on the national guidelines. She has introduced assessment procedures based on coverage of the units of work. However, these are not yet used effectively to ensure that teachers are aware of pupils' previous achievements or provide work that matches the ability levels of all pupils within lessons. The teachers' planning is monitored regularly and the co-ordinator has recently started to monitor teaching.

History

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- There are too few history lessons to ensure full coverage of the curriculum.
- Too little consideration is given to the range of ability in each class when work is set.

Commentary

86. Although few lessons were seen during the inspection, discussions were held with pupils and past work was examined. From this and the few lessons observed it is clear that pupils do not achieve at the standards expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. The quality and amount of recorded work varies across the school, which indicates that pupils' progress is uneven. By the end of Year 6, pupils have limited historical knowledge and understanding. For example, many pupils struggle to sequence major historical periods and events. As pupils are usually given the same tasks to complete, it is not possible to judge how well pupils of differing capability achieve. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils' independent and extended writing and little evidence of pupils carrying out independent enquiry.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music

The provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership.
- The pupils are very enthusiastic and this supports learning.

Commentary

87. Music has been a key feature of the school's improvement plan in the last academic year and the benefits of the initiative are beginning to show in the pupils' performance. The school has made a significant investment in further training for the subject manager and in new resources. Through careful planning, the co-ordinator has been able to work alongside her colleagues and support them so that there is a renewed confidence in the school about teaching music.

88. Standards of composition and performance are rising. Currently, standards are broadly in line with expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6 as they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards in singing are good. Pupils sing confidently with appropriate attention to diction and expression. They have a good sense of rhythm. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is because they get very good support from classroom and special educational needs assistants. In Year 2, the pupils make good progress in learning appropriate musical vocabulary such as "pulse", "stress" and "rhythm". They choose their musical instruments carefully to represent different weather conditions and co-operate well when composing and playing together. In Years 3, 4 and 5, the pupils respond very well to the enthusiasm of the teachers. The quality of teaching is good as it ensures that all of the pupils are fully involved in music making. Relationships are very good and the teamwork between members of staff, and the example they set, motivates the pupils to achieve their best. The teaching ensures that learning is fun.

89. The subject manager has developed the curriculum well to ensure that music links well with other subjects. For example, when a Year 4 class were studying rivers, they performed a musical piece to depict the journey of the River Tees and used a landscape painting as their musical score. However, the co-ordinator recognises that more could be done to develop music through information and communication technology. The school is beginning to develop extra-curricular opportunities for music. A few pupils receive peripatetic lessons in stringed and brass instruments and a small recorder group for pupils in Year 4 has started recently. However, more could be done to broaden the range of the pupils' experiences to include instruments and musical traditions from other cultures.
90. As no lessons were observed in **art and design** no judgement has been made about overall provision; there are many strengths and a few areas for improvement;
- From the work displayed standards are above those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6.
 - The attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the environment of the school.
 - The subject leader monitors teaching and learning by analysing displays and all planning.
 - The multicultural aspects of art are unsatisfactory.
91. The high quality of work displayed is varied and shows good progression of artistic skills. As no lessons were observed, no judgements were made on teaching and learning. From the analysis of displays it is clear that effective use is made of the resources and pupils learn how to use a wide range of techniques and media. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 produced an exciting range of work, including a paper collage in the style of L. S. Lowry and collages and computer-generated illustrations in the style of Mondrian.
92. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 discussed the work of a wide range of artists, including Monet. They produced particularly good work related to the topic on Egyptians and over the years have acquired a wide range of skills and techniques. A strength of the planning is the way in which art supports pupils' knowledge and understanding of a wide range of subjects, including science and design and technology. At present pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to study the work of artists from the wide range of cultures represented in multicultural Britain. This aspect has not improved since the previous inspection.
93. A successful recent initiative has been the development of a Space for Sport and Creative Arts; this studio is equipped with a kiln and all resources for pottery. Accommodation and resources have improved since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has recently re-introduced the use of sketch books into Years 1 and 2 but this is not established throughout the school at this stage and was an area for development at the previous inspection.
94. As no lessons were observed, no judgement has been made about overall provision; there are many strengths and a few areas for improvement. The curricular provision has improved since the previous inspection in the progression of skills and pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of artists.
95. Too few lessons were observed in **physical education** in order to make an overall judgement about provision but from the information gathered, including discussions with pupils, a small sample of lessons and discussions with the co-ordinator, there are many strengths:
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
 - The school maintains effective links with local clubs.
 - Partnerships with other schools increase the quality and range of opportunities for competitive sport.
 - The spacious accommodation and wide ranging resources enhance pupils' learning.
 - The provision for outdoor and strenuous pursuits is good.
 - The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and a very good role model for teachers and pupils.

96. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but analysis of the planning and discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator reflect good provision.
97. In Years 3 to 6 pupils refine and increase their skills in the subject and understand the importance of warming-up and cooling-down when exercising. All pupils are involved in a wide range of sporting activities including netball, football, hockey and athletics. Pupils have swimming lessons and the school's priorities are water safety and confidence in the basic skills of swimming for all and high standards for those who can achieve them. Most pupils reach the standards expected and achieve well in this aspect of the subject. In the Year 6 athletics lesson observed pupils achieved high standards in techniques, speed and accuracy of movements. They have a good understanding of the different techniques required when running over a range of distances and develop good awareness of the need for careful pacing in order to maintain speed yet conserve energy. Pupils acquire very good techniques in throwing, catching and positioning in the games lesson observed. The quality of teaching seen was very good, although insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on teaching. Lessons were very carefully planned and moved at a brisk pace with no time wastage and the teachers observed had very good subject knowledge. They gave very good demonstrations and pupils were so well motivated that their behaviour was of a very high quality. The strong ethos of the subject is evident in the fair play, team spirit and enthusiasm for the subject. Physical education contributes very well to pupils' physical, personal and health education. The provision has improved significantly since the last inspection.
98. As no lessons were observed in design and technology, no judgement has been made about overall provision in the subject. Planning has improved since the last inspection. The curricular provision is good and there is a well-planned progression of skills between the year groups. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and discussed their achievements with enthusiasm. The quality of work displayed was good and varied; pupils in the infant classes had planned healthy meals and their collage work was of a high standard. Pupils in the upper junior classes had designed and made containers and their clay work was of a very high quality. The curricular provision and range of resources have improved since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The provision for this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This subject is taught effectively through a range of subjects

Commentary

99. This is a continuing strength of the school. The provision is effective in the ways in which pupils' attitudes, achievements and self-worth are valued and promoted. The quality of teaching and curricular enrichment, including a range of visits and visitors, contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the local community and the broader society. Aspects of a healthy lifestyle, for example, drugs awareness, health and safety and sex education, are well covered in the curriculum planned. 'Circle time' gives pupils opportunities for voicing their opinions and concerns. The headteacher and staff have sought and acted on pupils' opinions voiced in the School Council.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The effectiveness of management

3

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