

INSPECTION REPORT

THE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees

LEA area: Stockton-on-Tees

Unique reference number: 111559

Headteacher: Mrs P A Gibb

Lead inspector: Mrs O. M. Cooper

Dates of inspection: 04 – 06 May 2004

Inspection number: 258169

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:	219
School address:	Windsor Road Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees
Postcode:	TS17 8PW
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Aileen Mather
Date of previous inspection:	21-09-1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized community primary school serves a densely populated area with many terraced houses, either owned privately or by the local council. Although pupils come from the full range of socio-economic home backgrounds, many come from disadvantaged families. The pupils are predominantly white and of British heritage. A small number are of mixed race. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. Moderate learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties and dyslexia are the most prominent difficulties. Three pupils have formal statements of their special educational needs. The movement of pupils into the school other than at the beginning of a school year is not an issue. Overall attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below the level expected for the children's age. The school has received several awards in recent years. A Gold Artsmark for creativity and the Basic Skills Quality Mark were gained in 2003. A Schools Achievement Award in recognition of the rising standards was awarded in 2002 and the school has just had its Investors in People status renewed. The school is within an Education Action Zone and receives funding through the Single Regeneration Budget to support its drive to raise standards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10859	Mrs O Cooper	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education English as an additional language
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30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education Foundation stage Special educational needs
19289	Mr J Corn	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Village is a good school where pupils achieve well. It has the potential to become a very good school. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good and instrumental in the rising and broadly average standards now being attained by the pupils. Other key factors influencing the improvements are the good teaching and learning, the interesting curriculum and the skilful way in which the ethos of the school helps the staff to develop each child's self-confidence and esteem. The school is successful in establishing good relationships with parents, but struggles to engage a significant number successfully in supporting their children's learning at home. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very clear direction for school development and improvement.
- The good quality of teaching which enables pupils to achieve well.
- Results of national tests in Year 6 in 2003 were well above those found in other schools with pupils from similar home backgrounds.
- The innovative curriculum which is interesting and enjoyable for pupils.
- Pupils are very well cared for and their behaviour is good.
- Parents think very highly of the school.
- Assessment procedures in science are not specific enough.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of marking and the presentation of pupils' work.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. All the key issues identified for improvement in the previous inspection report have been remedied. Individual pupil profiles track progress made each year. The medium and short term planning is consistent in format and of very good quality. Teaching is monitored regularly and has improved since the previous inspection. The school improvement plan is monitored each term by staff and governors to determine the success of action taken. In addition several other aspects of the school have improved and the strengths have been maintained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	D	D
Mathematics	E	D	D	D
Science	D	E	D	D

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. In Years 5 and 6 pupils achieve very well because of the very good quality of teaching. The table above indicates that the pupils who left the school in July 2003 underachieved when compared to schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. This was due to the relatively high level of staff absence and some inconsistency in teaching. However, when compared to schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to receive free school meals the results were well above average. Children enter the Nursery with skills well below the level expected for their age, especially in their social and language development. By the end of their time in the Reception class overall attainment has improved because of the good provision, but remains below the level expected for the children's ages. A significant proportion are not on course to reach the goals children are expected to reach in all areas of learning, particularly in literacy, numeracy and social skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment shows further improvement and standards are

broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is a significant improvement from the standards reported in recent years. In 2003 the school's results in mathematics were in the lowest five percent of schools nationally. This was due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group and the key priority being English. In Year 6, current standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This shows improvement from the standards achieved in 2003 as shown in the table above. The teaching methods and innovative curriculum are key factors in the rising standards. In all other subjects inspected standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils in Years 2 and 6, and in design and technology, art and design rise above. In singing standards are high.

Pupils' personal development is good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils behave well and there are high levels of respect between pupils and teachers and other adults. The school ethos is good and conducive to learning. The level of exclusions for unacceptable behaviour has decreased significantly. Attendance rates have improved this academic year and are now above the national average. Punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are very well planned and include interesting activities. Drama and information and communication technology resources are used very effectively and successfully in lessons as a means of motivating pupils. Pupils have very good knowledge of what they need to do to improve because target-setting procedures are good. The curricular provision is good with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' creativity through linking subjects closely together. The care for pupils is very good and in turn they feel well supported and listened to. Close links with other schools help in enhancing the provision.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very clear direction for the development of the school and leads by example in taking on additional responsibilities when staff are absent. The key stage co-ordinators provide very good support for the headteacher in leading developments. The management of the school is good, although the deputy headteacher does not have a prominent management role. The careful selection of new members of staff has led to a cohesive team committed to adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils. The governance of the school is good and all statutory requirements are met. The school has received several awards in recent years acknowledging its good practice.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very pleased with the school's provision. The school is enjoying an improving reputation and attracting pupils from further afield as a result of parental comments and views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure assessments in science give more specific information on pupils' attainment.
- Eliminate the inconsistency in the quality of marking and presentation of pupils' work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good overall in all the areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well in most subjects and very well in art and design, design and technology and aspects of music such as singing. In science, religious education, physical education, history and geography achievement is satisfactory. The inclusion of science in the cross-curricular topics is leading to some underachievement among higher attaining pupils. There is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls, apparent differences in Year 2 in recent years are due to the proportion of boys with special educational needs. Pupils of differing attainment achieve equally well in most subjects, but a few higher attaining Year 4 pupils underachieve when insufficiently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are potentially gifted and talented achieve as well as their peers, as they are identified early, well supported and sufficiently challenged in lessons. Current standards in Years 2 and 6 show improvement from those reported in 2003 and are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Standards at the end of Year 2 have not been rising as fast as found nationally in recent years, but in 2003, some inaccurate marking of writing tests depressed the standards as reported. At the end of Year 6, standards have been rising in line with the national trend over the last five years. In 2003, the improvement was better than found nationally and overall standards rose from being well below average in 2002 to below the national average in 2003. The school is on course to reach the targets set for 2004.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall standards in Year 6 in 2003 were well above those found in schools with pupils from similar home backgrounds. However, staff absence led to these pupils not doing as well as in other schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2.
- Pupils achieve very well in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets.
- Standards in art and design and design and technology are above those expected in Years 2 and 6.
- Standards in singing are well above those expected in Year 6.
- Accuracy in spelling and the range of pupils' vocabulary need improvement. (This has already been identified by the school)

Commentary

1. Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2003, as shown in the table below, were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and were the lowest since 2000. This year group contained a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs and standards were expected to dip. In mathematics, the results were in fact in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. When compared with similar schools the results in reading were broadly average, but in writing and mathematics fell well below the average. As the school had been working to improve standards in writing as a priority, the test papers were analysed carefully. This analysis revealed some very rigorous marking and consequently, 21 of the 28 papers were upgraded when remarked by an external marker. This makes standards in writing broadly average, but well above the average for similar schools. The revised average points score in writing is 14.5.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.9 (13.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	11.9 (13.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.6 (16.0)	16.3 (16.5)

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

- Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were below the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2, standards were also below average in all three subjects, indicating that these pupils could have done better. The school had a high rate of staff absence in 2002/3, with some inconsistency in the teaching, which affected overall standards. However, when compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, the results were well above the average in English and science and above the average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was above the national average in all three subjects, but the proportion reaching the higher level was below the national average which brought the overall standards below the national average. The table below shows the school improved its average point scores in all three subjects compared with 2002 and in English and science to a greater extent than found nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.5 (24.9)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.3 (26.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.4 (26.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- This inspection found overall standards at the end of the Foundation Stage to be below the expected level for children of this age. The large majority of children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development by the end of their year in Reception. However, a significant proportion of children is unlikely to reach the goals expected in language, mathematics and social development because of the low levels of development on entry and standards are below those expected in these areas of learning. Many children have a very limited range of vocabulary and poorly developed speaking skills on entry and despite the good provision and good achievement do not reach the levels expected.
- In Year 2, current standards are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' creativity and motivating them to write longer narratives is having a positive influence on standards in writing, although accuracy in spelling requires further attention. The teaching of reading skills outside literacy hours is helping to raise standards, as teaching assistants are deployed effectively to work with groups. Pupils now have a better understanding of how to structure their writing and are beginning to use adjectives to add interest for the reader. The limited range of pupils' vocabulary affects their ability to express their ideas clearly. Information and communication technology is being used effectively to support learning in mathematics with a positive impact on pupils' problem solving skills.
- Standards of work in Year 6 are currently broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The grouping of Year 5 and 6 pupils according to their level of attainment has

reduced the spread of ability in both classes and increased the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils in most lessons in English and mathematics, but this is less evident in science. The higher attaining Year 4 pupils are not challenged sufficiently in the literacy lessons that focus on developing their range of vocabulary. The success of the hard work undertaken to make lessons more interesting, by linking subjects more closely including literacy and numeracy, providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills and extend their range of vocabulary is beginning to become evident in pupils' attainment. More pupils than previously are now exceeding the levels expected for their ages in English, mathematics and science. The 'dominoes project' in mathematics is successful in helping pupils' increase their speed and accuracy in recalling multiplication facts, also in developing pupils' self-esteem as they improve on their previous best score and time. The school has already identified spelling and pupils' vocabulary as the weaker aspects of English and is taking steps to remedy the weakness.

6. Standards in design and technology and art and design have improved since the previous inspection and are above those expected in Years 2 and 6. In singing, standards are well above those expected and the school is renowned for this. Overall standards in music are above those expected in Year 6. In all other subjects standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6.
7. Pupils have individual targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics and know what they have to do to move to the next stage in their learning. Year 6 pupils discuss their targets confidently, but too many pupils and parents do not see National Curriculum tests as being important to the extent that the headteacher collects some pupils from home to ensure they attend. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities and targets set in their individual education or behaviour plans. These pupils are well supported by their class teachers and teaching assistants. The education plans are reviewed and monitored regularly by the special needs co-ordinator.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils have a **good** attitude to learning and behave well. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance has improved significantly and is now better than the national average. Punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very good relationship with their teachers.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a very positive work ethic as a result of very good teaching.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school.
- Attendance has improved as a result of very effective monitoring procedures.
- Pupils develop into confident, well-rounded and interesting individuals due to the school's good provision for personal development.

Commentary

8. Pupils enjoy coming to school, a point confirmed overwhelmingly by parents. Pupils think it is a very good school and the best thing about it is the teachers – to whom they show a high level of respect. The positive atmosphere created by these good relationships permeates the whole school and means that pupils settle down quickly, know that they are there to learn and are enthusiastic about joining in. Pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to school, as they know they will get the support they need. Lessons generally succeed in engaging pupils and work is taken seriously even though pupils often consider it to be fun. In every class pupils are keen to show off what they have achieved. The positive attitudes, which are apparent throughout the school, come to a head in Years 5 and 6 where consistently very good teaching results in pupils trying very hard to do their best. School

clubs are very well attended and pupils are very proud to represent their school, for instance, in public performances by the choir and in sporting tournaments with other schools.

9. The pupils behave well in classes, when moving around the school and in the playground. The school's behaviour policy is low key but applied consistently. High standards are expected and generally achieved. Pupils understand the rules and think they are fair. Bullying, which has been an issue in the past is not a current concern. Pupils express complete confidence in the staff's ability to sort out any problems. No signs of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. There are no racial problems at the school. Exclusions, which were high in 2002/3 as shown in the table below, have dropped dramatically; in the first two terms of the current year there have been two exclusions.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	192	19	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0

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

10. Many children start the school with poor social skills and a low sense of self worth. The good school ethos promotes pupils' personal development well. By the time they leave, most pupils are confident, sensible and with a good grounding in social and moral values. The school puts considerable effort into pupils' personal development particularly in the boosting of self-esteem and this is effective. Achievements are widely celebrated, for instance at the weekly special awards assembly where pupils' efforts are recognised over a wide range from good work to being 'singer of the week'. The school makes very good use of photographs in displays to celebrate pupils' achievements – these can take the form of league tables of individuals who are very quick on their multiplication tables, to demonstrations of dancing ability. Pupils' work is widely displayed, for instance an 'I am Special' display in the school hall has contributions from over 70 pupils. This wide public recognition of the individual child is very effectively creating an environment where all pupils feel they can succeed. Social skills are being well developed through collaborative work in class and participation in school clubs. An awareness of a wider world is being developed well through for instance, pupils in Years 3 to 6 having the opportunity to meditate for 15 minutes during the weekly 'stillness' assembly. Pupils are successfully introduced to western creative arts through dance, music and the study of famous artists together with a familiarity with other cultures for instance Japanese painting. Staff provide good role models for moral and social standards. The overall provision for personal development has improved since the previous inspection.
11. The school has had a blitz on improving attendance, supported by funding from the Education Action Zone, and this has worked. In the last year attendance has gone from below to above the national average for primary schools. The table below shows the below average attendance rates for 2002/3. Attendance now has a far higher profile - registers are monitored closely, all absences without reason are followed up immediately and any concerns are notified weekly to the Educational Welfare Service. Good attendance is recognised by displaying in the hall, the previous week's attendance figures for each class. Photographs of pupils with very good attendance are also displayed. A well-run breakfast club that is very popular with the pupils has had a positive impact on attendance figures and punctuality. The improving attendance rates and good attitudes and behaviour have a positive effect on pupils' attainment and achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The teaching is good overall and enables pupils to achieve well. The curriculum is good, innovative and with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' creativity. The resources for learning are good and used well, but the accommodation of Year 3 and 4 pupils and Nursery children in mobile units prevents free access to all resources. Care for pupils is **very good**, links with parents are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good, or better, in a significant proportion of lessons.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 has improved since the previous inspection.
- Lessons are very well planned and interesting.
- Teaching assistants and support staff are deployed very well to support pupils' learning.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of marking and presentation of pupils' work.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work in English and mathematics, as individual targets are set. This is not the case in science.

Commentary

12. The overall good teaching is a key strength of the school enabling pupils to acquire knowledge and develop skills at a good pace. Careful consideration has been given to the different ways in which pupils learn and most lessons are planned taking full account of the pupils' needs. The table below shows that in almost half the lessons teaching is very good or better with no unsatisfactory lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when two per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The low expectations of pupils found in Years 1 and 2 at the time of the previous inspection have been overcome.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (16 %)	12 (32 %)	10 (26 %)	10 (26%)	0 (0 %)	0 (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.

13. Most of the teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 is of very good, or better, quality. The teachers use drama and creative dance very effectively as a means of promoting understanding. In a literacy lesson, for example, pupils explored the meaning of the word 'gallumphing' from 'The Jabberwocky' through movement. This helped pupils decide what the

word might mean. The teachers have very high expectations of the pupils and, because of the very good relationships the pupils rise to the challenges, without fear of being laughed at. Pupils willingly take part, for example, in acting out part of the poem 'The Highwayman' to promote their understanding of how different characters may have felt. These good features are now becoming evident in Reception and Years 1 and 2 where there are examples of very good teaching. There have been staff changes in the last year in both the Year 3 and 4 classes, with one change of teacher being very recent. The teaching in these classes is satisfactory and occasionally good. The expectations of pupils' presentation of their work are not high enough and the quality of marking not as good as found elsewhere. The teachers are still getting to grips with managing some pupils who have behavioural difficulties and the potential to be disruptive, but early signs of success are evident.

14. Throughout the school, lessons are very well planned, with clear outcomes in terms of what pupils are expected to learn. The planning includes specific activities for pupils with special educational needs or those who are potentially gifted and talented. The purposes of the week's lessons in literacy and numeracy are displayed in all classes and provide a focus for pupils' learning. All other subjects are planned through topics under 'creativity'. Some very skilful links have been established as teachers have secure knowledge of the National Curriculum programmes of study and know where effective links between subjects can be made. Pupils remember more of what they have learned, evident from discussions with them about previous topics studied. In literacy in Year 2, for example, a day was devoted to creativity to promote pupils' writing skills. The day began with role-play, involving solving a problem while on a day out. By acting out the scenario out of doors the pupils were well motivated to write good accounts of the visit. The planning for science is less effective leading to some lack of depth in teaching. The school has already recognised the need to teach science as a discrete subject.
15. The teaching assistants have received training, particularly in information and communication technology and provide very good support for both teachers and pupils. They work with groups of pupils for parts of lessons showing the same expectations of pupils as the teachers. They often withdraw pupils for more intensive teaching in a quiet environment, so they have every opportunity to concentrate fully on their work and achieve success. They often work with lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs, helping them to be fully included in lessons, encouraging them to complete their tasks and achieve success, but without doing the work for them. Sometimes these pupils are withdrawn from class to work with the special needs co-ordinator or teaching assistants. Their activities on these occasions are closely linked with their class work. The teaching assistants are well briefed about their tasks each day and prepare resources for lessons to ensure time for learning is used well. The teachers and teaching assistants are careful to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to learn.
16. The procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment have improved well since the previous inspection. In English and mathematics procedures are good, the National Curriculum sub level each pupil is working towards is identified and frequent assessments show their rate of progress. Individual targets based on the assessment information are written on the covers of pupils' books and these targets are often very specific to individual pupils. In science, the procedures are not specific enough to show exactly what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils' attainment is tracked from entry to when they leave and their progress is clear to see in individual pupil profiles. The school is reviewing its assessment procedures in other subjects to match the topics being studied, but teachers do note pupils doing better or not as well as expected in meeting the learning targets, so that additional support can be provided. This will be an on-going process as curriculum changes are made. Another area for development in assessment is in encouraging pupils to assess how well they have done for themselves.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **good** and fully meets statutory requirements. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for enrichment. Recent curriculum innovations are very good. Resources for learning are **good** and the accommodation is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities and experiences for learning and fully meets the needs and interests of the children.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and visits.
- The school's participation in the arts is excellent.
- The inclusion of all pupils, giving them equal opportunities for learning and taking part in school life, is a strong feature of the school's curriculum.
- Recent innovations in the way that the foundation subjects are taught are very good.
- The accommodation for Nursery children and Year 3 and 4 pupils hinders access to some resources for learning.

Commentary

17. The headteacher and staff identified that the curriculum was not meeting the needs and interests of the pupils and decided to make significant changes. As a result of the hard work the teaching staff have made the curriculum rich and exciting for the pupils by combining the foundation subjects as well as science, religious education and information and communication technology into a series of interesting topics. There are close cross-curricular links between the subjects leading to more meaningful experiences for the pupils and improved quality of learning. A full evaluation of the changes to the curriculum is to take place at the end of the school year, but already the school has identified the need to teach science as a discrete subject. The Foundation Stage curriculum is also interesting and securely based on the six areas of learning. All statutory requirements are met. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' creativity, which it does very successfully.
18. Teachers plan very well together and the curriculum leaders take an assertive role to ensure that all year groups contribute to the development of creative topics and themes and underlying skills and experiences many of which link directly to the arts. The school's participation in the arts is excellent. It has recently been awarded the 'Gold Artsmark' an award achieved by only a small number of schools each year for creativity in the curriculum. The school has a very good range of extra-curricular provision, which is well organised by the staff. Pupils enjoy a variety of sports activities including running, table tennis and football. Their interest and enjoyment in learning is also stimulated through a very good range of educational visits including residential visits to France and Carlton in North Yorkshire, which support many areas of the curriculum. These enrich the curriculum and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
19. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are very well established and the improving standards pupils achieve reflect the overall competence and confidence of the teachers. There are sufficient staff and a good balance of expertise and well-qualified support staff to teach all age groups. Recent staff appointments have strengthened their ability to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school monitors the curriculum regularly and carefully and has a clear idea of its strengths and areas for development. For example, teachers are required to produce a commentary on completion of each of the topics in the 'creative curriculum' which states how the topic may be improved before it is taught to the parallel class or in the following year. Curriculum co-ordinators are required to report to staff during their meetings as to how teaching and learning in their subject are developing throughout the school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in classes containing two age groups that are

grouped according to their ability. These procedures enable the teachers to address successfully the needs of pupils of all abilities in most lessons, although the needs of higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are not always met successfully.

20. The school includes all pupils very well. Pupils with special needs are identified early, have full and equal access to the curriculum, due to the well-targeted support. The pupils' work programmes are well planned and link closely to their individual education plans, which are designed to develop the skills that help pupils learn for themselves. Pupils receive good support from the adults who work with them. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and provides additional opportunities for them to extend their learning and develop their skills.
21. The accommodation is satisfactory. The classrooms are of a good size and there are other areas in which groups of pupils can work. However, three classrooms are mobile units and this prevents pupils having ease of access to the computer suite and library for independent research work and for Nursery children to learn out of doors. Resources are good in all subject areas and classrooms benefit from interactive whiteboards which teachers use effectively to support pupils' learning. The school has identified the need for more computers in classrooms and has plans to purchase a set of laptop computers for this purpose.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well** cared for and are given a very good level of support and guidance. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The procedures for taking account of pupils' views are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very high level of care in a safe and secure environment.
- There are very good procedures for supporting pupils based on very good knowledge of their personal circumstances and very good systematic monitoring of their progress.
- Pupils are not benefiting enough from the school council.

Commentary

22. This is a very caring school where pupils feel safe and loved. Staff are very friendly and listen very sympathetically when pupils have concerns or problems. The headteacher knows every child by name. Pupils look upon their teachers as friends and all staff including the catering staff and the caretaker are very much part of the close-knit school community. Very good provision is made for coping with individual pupil's concerns for instance by having an adult available every morning for children with problems to chat to. A nurture group for the most vulnerable pupils is currently being set up to provide intensive teaching and enable them to make more rapid progress. The lunchtime Friendship Club is available for any children who fancy somewhere quieter than the playground. Supervision of the pupils is good at all times. Child protection and health and safety matters are treated very seriously. First aid cover is good. Parents are right to feel confident that while at school, their children are well looked after and in safe hands.
23. Pupils are very well supported whilst at school. The staff know the pupils well and any advice and guidance is based on a secure understanding of individual circumstances. Pupils know very well what they have to do to improve; their targets for English and mathematics are well understood and regularly reviewed. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and the teaching assistants. The special needs co-ordinator monitors individual progress of pupils carefully and helps teachers plan suitable work to ensure progress is made. There is good liaison with external agencies to ensure the support needed is available to pupils.

24. The role of the school council is not well developed and has little impact on the life of the school. It is not being used effectively as a way of developing organisational skills and responsibilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the local community and other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a very high opinion of the school.
- Parents are well informed on their children's progress and the life of the school.
- The school tries hard to involve parents in their children's learning but is not very successful.
- Pupils benefit from good links with the local community and schools in the area.

Commentary

25. Parents are very pleased with the school. They particularly like the approachability of the staff, the quality of the teaching and that their children are expected to work hard. Bullying had been a problem but parents commented on how behaviour has improved in recent times. The inspectors endorse these views.
26. The quality of information given to parents is good. Most documents are written in an easy to understand style and give a useful overview on the life of the school. Parents are given an outline each term of what their children are about to be taught, but additional detail would allow parents to be more involved in their children's learning. Pupils' reports clearly state progress and include realistic targets for development. The writing is free from jargon and the sections on personal development give an honest appraisal of the children's strengths and weaknesses. There are good formal arrangements for parents to meet teachers with efficient follow-up procedures that ensure that all parents are contacted. Parents have an easy relationship with the staff and informal contact is encouraged before or after school any day. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in review meetings and so know how they can support their children at home. There is good liaison with other schools when these pupils move to the next stage of their education.
27. The school regularly arranges courses for parents to understand better what their children are learning, for instance on how English is taught and on computer skills. These courses usually require a commitment of six weeks and although some never get off the ground others start but not enough parents attend regularly to keep the courses going. In spite of their best efforts the school has not been successful in involving parents in these courses. A Family Learning Outreach worker has now been appointed to the school to try and overcome the lack of active parental interest.
28. Good use is made of the local community. Pupils study the local area, for instance the design of local bridges over the Tees, they visit the local church, the town hall, a local supermarket and the fire service. The choir is well known through public performances. Visitors to the school have included the Mayor, the Member of Parliament and members of the American Baptist church and they effectively support pupils' learning and achievement. Good links with other schools allow pupils to take part in many sporting events and tournaments. Pupils benefit from teachers from the local secondary school giving some specialist teaching in science, dance and physical education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision to raise standards, develop the curriculum and provide a high quality and happy learning environment.
- The governors know the school well, ensure statutory requirements are met and that the school receives best value from all its spending.
- The deputy headteacher does not have a prominent management role.
- Self-evaluation procedures are good and are used well to plan for further improvement.
- Staff with senior management roles carry them out effectively, but co-ordinators have not had opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment procedures in their subjects recently.
- Financial management and control are good.

Commentary

29. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has a clear vision for the school. Her high and innovative aspirations are clearly reflected in the school improvement plan, and carried out through the development of the creative curriculum and the strong teamwork of the staff. They are well supported by the governors. The senior management team provide good support for the headteacher, and key stage co-ordinators lead their teams well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and organised. The special needs co-ordinator does not have class responsibility and this has led to good improvement in the provision since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher does not have a high enough profile in the daily running of the school and its administrative systems to be able to take on the running of the school in the absence of the headteacher. The effectiveness of the aims and vision for the school, set out in the mission statement, is shown in the way standards are rising and in pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils show very strong commitment to their school and are keen to be involved in the wide range of activities provided for them. Good attention is given to the provision of equal opportunities and the full inclusion of all pupils in all activities.
30. Governance is good. The governors have good knowledge of their school. They support the headteacher and senior management team well and have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They question and challenge decisions, and are equally committed to raising standards and providing a caring environment in which children can develop academically and personally. Links between governors and subject co-ordinators contribute to this good understanding of the school's performance. The governors have initiated training to increase their knowledge and effectiveness, and intend to pursue this further in order to increase their ability to contribute even more meaningfully to school development and improvement. All governors carry out their duties in an organised way. They bring a good range of expertise and experience to the school, which they use effectively through a system of committees that meet regularly, particularly the finance committee.
31. The management of the school is good. The school evaluates its own performance well and acts on the outcomes. The school improvement plan is a clear, well-structured management tool. The senior management team meet regularly to review the work of the school and monitor the progress of the school improvement plan. Performance management targets for all staff, including the teaching assistants, are firmly linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. The subject co-ordinators have not had opportunities to monitor teaching, learning or the implications for subject assessment procedures following the introduction of the creative curriculum. Good management provides some time out of class for co-ordinators to develop their subjects. Induction procedures are good for new members of staff. All staff willingly provide support, guidance and subject expertise to help newcomers become part of the staff team.

32. Financial management at all levels is good, and fully supports initiatives in the school improvement plan, for example, to provide more resources to stimulate pupils' creative writing. The school budget is carefully monitored, and the principles of best value are rigorously applied to all decisions regarding spending. The governors planned strategically for the dip in pupil numbers to ensure the good provision was maintained. The school office administration is very efficient, makes good use of information and communication technology and ensures day-to-day management runs smoothly. The final carry forward figure for 2003/4 is not yet available, the previous year's financial information is given below. From the level of attainment on entry, pupils achieve well and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. The level of expenditure per pupil is below the national average and the school is providing good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	635,995
Total expenditure	626,494
Expenditure per pupil	2,688.82

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,366
Balance carried forward to the next	9,501

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and has improved since the time of the previous inspection.

33. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and often very good in the Reception class. Very good provision for personal, social and emotional well-being helps children develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. The Nursery and Reception classes link different areas of learning together well through shared themes, such as the story of 'The Three Bears'.
34. When children enter the Nursery, there is a broad spread of ability, but for the majority, attainment is well below that normally seen. Achievement is good overall, due to the good quality teaching and learning experiences offered to all the children. The majority of children do not reach the goals expected nationally in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy or in mathematics, due to their low attainment in these vital areas of learning when they start in the Nursery. The majority meet the goals expected for the end of the Reception year (the early learning goals) in knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.
35. Children with special educational needs are supported well, and fully included in the wide range of activities. The children behave well, and show good attitudes because they are well cared for, enjoy all their activities and feel safe and secure in school. Leadership and management are good. The Nursery and Reception class staff form a strong team. They have good knowledge of the curriculum for the early years. Very well planned learning activities and good use of assessment information make children's learning continuous and progressive. The warm, welcoming atmosphere in both classes is attractive to children and parents, and they feel secure and valued. There are very good links with parents, several of whom help regularly in school. Good procedures make transition smooth and easy for the children when they start school and move on to the next stage of education. The children in the Reception class do not have direct access to the outdoor learning area, which is awaiting development to provide the full range of learning opportunities and experiences.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in this area of learning.
- Children achieve well but few reach the early learning goals.
- Children enjoy the varied learning activities.
- Children are helped to become independent and to develop a sense of responsibility.
- Warm, friendly relationships make the children feel secure and valued, and their attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Children understand the difference between right and wrong.

Commentary

36. Very good teaching and varied learning opportunities enable children to achieve very well in personal and social development. However, because their attainment is low when they start Nursery, few children reach the early learning goals. Simple, well-established routines provide a secure framework. When Nursery children hear the music, they know it is time to

tidy up. At snack-time, they select their piece of fruit and mix happily together. Reception children change efficiently for physical education lessons, showing an increasing sense of personal responsibility and independence. They know what makes them happy or sad. Patient explanations help them consider the feelings of other children and learn the difference between right and wrong. Behaviour is good because the children feel secure, well supported and valued. Their self-confidence grows, and even the youngest children are keen to sing solos using the microphone in the school hall. Staff make very good use of photographs and displays to record and celebrate the children's activities at work and play, and this develops their self-confidence further.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, and children achieve well.
- The majority of the children are working at a level below that expected for their age.
- Activities are enjoyable, meaningful and make learning fun.

Commentary

37. Good overall teaching and very good in Reception provides a varied range of meaningful and enjoyable activities. Most Nursery children have a limited vocabulary and do not speak confidently or clearly. Staff talk with them at every opportunity, aiming to extend language skills and knowledge of words. Most Nursery children know that words are made up of sounds, and can pick out the first sound in a word. A lively game in the playground helped the Reception children recognise the final sound in words they meet frequently, such as cap, pig and pan. In the Nursery, boys and girls begin writing at the 'mark-making' tables, and practice 'painting' large letter shapes on the playground. A higher attaining child fluently dictated 'The Three Bears' story whilst the teacher wrote the words for her. Children in the Reception class successfully used photographs of themselves as characters from the story as a starting point for writing. Most wrote at least one sentence, and the higher attaining children completed several sentences with a 'finger space' between each word. The children enjoy stories, and take books home to read. Most parents willingly support their children with reading practice at home.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures the children progress well, and are close to meeting the early learning goals by the end of their time in Reception.
- Good resources encourage children to investigate mathematical concepts.

Commentary

38. Good teaching strongly emphasising practical activities provides the children with a wide variety of opportunities to investigate mathematical ideas and concepts. The mathematics areas are well resourced for counting, matching, sorting and recognising numbers, values and shapes. Children enjoy investigating how much sand or water different containers hold, and useful guidance on activities ensures helpers interact well with the children. Learning activities are turned into games, and the children really enjoy this approach. Reception children reinforced counting skills in a game giving bones to the dog, adding one more bone

to different amounts up to 10, and ordering different amounts up to 20. They recognise numbers and basic shapes. Some children count to 50. Calculations and the knowledge of numbers are not yet fully accurate. By the end of their time in the Reception class, children have achieved well, but most do not meet the early learning goals.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good. Children reach the early learning goals at the end of the Reception class.
- A varied range of activities makes learning interesting and exciting.
- A good range of visits widens the children's experience.
- The outside area provides some opportunities for learning, but is not very easy to access.

Commentary

39. Good teaching provides exciting and worthwhile activities for the children to widen their knowledge and they meet the early learning goals at the end of Reception. Regular lessons in the computer suite ensure they use the various computer functions competently. Nursery children controlled different tools well to draw self-portraits, and Reception children recorded science results. The children follow the journeys of the class bears and learn about other locations. Families of dolls help the children learn about other cultures. The children use the construction equipment well to design houses and robots. Carefully planned visits, such as travelling on the train to the seaside and walking to the fire station, effectively extend the children's experiences. The outdoor area is difficult to access and is awaiting development to provide a wider range of activities. There are some opportunities for gardening and learning outdoors, where Reception children discovered that millipedes '*have a lot of legs*'.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, and the children meet the early learning goals.
- Children use the school hall for physical education lessons.
- The outdoor learning area has limited facilities for challenging physical activities.

Commentary

40. Children move confidently with control, balance and co-ordination. Their good attitudes and behaviour ensure they use equipment confidently and safely. The outdoor area offers limited opportunities for the children to gain experience of physically challenging activities, so lessons are taken in the school hall or playground. Nursery children enjoy moving freely to favourite action songs in the hall, but tend to crowd together in spite of having plenty of space. Small tools, equipment, pencils and brushes are handled satisfactorily.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, and the children meet the early learning goals.

- Children express their imaginative ideas using a wide range of materials.
- Singing is developed well.
- Role-play is used well to enrich all activities.

Commentary

41. Good teaching and closely linked activities help children to meet the early learning goals at the end of Reception. Plenty of materials enable the children to express ideas in many ways, and they use colour boldly and confidently. They enjoyed using their fingers to create patterns in thick paint, and made portraits of their faces with clay, collage materials and the computer. The children successfully coloured houses for The Three Bears on fabric. A good supply of musical instruments encourages children to investigate sounds. The children sing tunefully and joyfully, due to regular lessons accompanied by the specialist music teacher, and many have the confidence to sing solos. Dressing up to act 'The Three Bears' story helped Reception children remember the main events in their writing. One child then went into the puppet theatre and confidently retold the story aloud, adapting her voice well to the various characters.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well to meet the learning needs of the pupils.
- Overall teaching is good and is very good in Years 5 and 6.
- The subject is very well led and well managed and standards are rising, although standards in spelling are weaker.
- Assessment and target setting procedures are good.
- There is inconsistency in the marking and presentation of pupils' work.

Commentary

42. The published results of national tests in reading and writing in Year 2 in 2003 showed standards to be well below the national average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar home backgrounds the results in reading were broadly average, but in writing fell well below the average. The school has recently had the writing tests remarked and the grades for over half of the pupils were raised, indicating the original assessments were very rigorous. At the end of Year 6, standards were below the national average, but well above the average for similar schools. This inspection found an improvement in standards in reading and writing in both Years 2 and 6, but spelling and vocabulary are still the weaker aspects, as already identified by the school. This is partly because of the way spelling patterns have been taught previously and the pupils' limited range of vocabulary on entry. Current standards are broadly average in speaking and listening, reading and writing in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well overall and very well in Years 5 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, where there have been changes of teacher in both classes in the last two years.
43. Several steps have been taken to raise standards recently and success is evident. Further training has been undertaken, an independent literacy consultant is supporting the teaching in Year 2 and the use of worksheets has been discontinued. The use of role play or visits as part of creativity days in Year 2 is effective in motivating pupils to write longer and more interesting narratives. The proportions of pupils reaching the level expected and the higher level at age seven is now close to the national average. The use of drama in Years 5 and 6

has been most successful in helping pupils to understand what they have read and to begin to understand the author's intentions. In a lesson based on the poem 'The Highwayman', for example, pupils gained greater insights into how specific characters felt having acted out part of the poem. Spelling and vocabulary are areas for further development and new resources have been purchased recently to support the teaching. One literacy lesson per week is devoted to teaching spelling patterns and vocabulary in some classes. In a Year 3 and 4 class, for example, pupils learned to spell words associated with their history topic on the ancient Greeks. In addition they improved their ability to give clear definitions for the words, something they find difficult. In this work, however, the higher attaining Year 4 pupils were insufficiently challenged and there was some underachievement.

44. The pupils are exposed to a much wider range of children's books by different authors, than they were previously and by Year 6 are making informed decisions about their choice of books. All pupils are introduced to the local library and many loan books on a regular basis, as well as taking some of the school's books home to read. In Year 1 and 2 classes, a range of non-fiction books has been introduced and is adding more interest to the reading material available. The guided reading groups have been taken out of the literacy hours, allowing more time to be spent on the selected text and the development of specific skills. Teaching assistants are deployed well to give pupils more opportunities to read to adults. Pupils develop a good range of strategies for attempting to read unfamiliar words. While most pupils become fluent readers and can recall what they have read, some struggle to understand the author's intentions.
45. Speaking skills have been a focus for improvement and many opportunities are provided for pupils to talk to a partner in order to exchange their thoughts and ideas. The use of drama, where pupils take varied roles, provides opportunities for them to contribute to situations with different demands in terms of the speech used. The school's ethos is effective in creating high levels of respect and consequently pupils are willing to take on different roles or be put in the 'hot seat' knowing they will not be laughed at. The action taken has been successful in increasing the pupils' confidence in speaking. Listening skills for most pupils are good by Year 6, shown by answers to questions and a willingness to listen to the views and opinions of others.
46. The quality of teaching is good overall and is very good in Years 5 and 6. Throughout the classes teachers make very good use of the interactive white boards to make lessons more interesting and enjoyable. Other methods, such as putting a pupil in the 'hot seat' as a character from a story or poem and questioning them not only increases pupils understanding of what they have read, but also helps to improve their ability to express their ideas clearly. Excellent teaching in a Year 5/6 class enabled pupils to make a good attempt at interpreting the meaning of 'The Jabberwocky'. Drama was again used very effectively to help pupils decide what the nonsense words might mean, having identified whether the word was a noun, adjective or verb.
47. Leadership of the subject is very good and management is good. The subject leader has a clear overview of the provision and areas for improvement and leads by example in her teaching. Through the scrutiny of pupils' books and the analysis of test papers, relevant areas for development are identified and included in the subject action plan or the whole school improvement plan. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Pupils use their language and literacy skills appropriately in other subjects of the curriculum. From the scrutiny of work and displays around the school there is evidence of some good opportunities for extended writing in other subjects such as history. There were also good examples of opportunities for pupils to develop their range of vocabulary through 'hot seating' and drama. In conversations with pupils it was evident that many pupils through drama and

creativity had a better understanding of different subject areas than they were able to express in their writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has two leading mathematics teachers and teaching is generally very effective with tasks well matched to pupils' capabilities.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and have very good attitudes to the subject.
- The lack of sufficient computers in most classrooms prevents more effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

49. The results of national tests in 2003 showed standards at the end of Year 2 to be low compared with all schools and to be well below the average for similar schools. This partly reflected the unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. At the end of Year 6, the results of national tests in 2003 were below the national average, but were above the average for schools with pupils from similar home backgrounds. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are a key priority for improvement in the school and some success is evident.
50. The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth to enable all pupils' to achieve broadly average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. This reflects an improvement in pupils' knowledge and understanding of space, shape and measures since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs who make good progress towards their targets.
51. The quality of teaching is high, it is very good in Years 1 and 2, satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and often excellent in Years 5 and 6. The leading mathematics teachers have a significant influence on the quality of teaching. Teaching groups of pupils with matched prior attainment has a very positive impact on pupils' progress. Lessons are challenging, proceed at a fast pace and teachers expect pupils to work hard. They try to make difficult areas of the subject interesting and fun, for example, in one Year 5/6 lesson on ratio and proportion the idea of a 'Barter Market' was introduced as a place where surplus fruit and vegetables could be swapped at different rates of exchange. In the same lesson groups of pupils were challenged to provide a 'Village Breakfast' using varying proportions of real ingredients while others used recipe books to work out the quantities of ingredients that would be needed to feed different sized groups of people. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher challenged pupils to identify combinations of toys and other objects they could buy for 5p using priced images projected onto an interactive whiteboard.
52. Teachers frequently introduce a competitive edge into their lessons to encourage fast mental calculations as they did in a Year 5/6 lesson when pupils were timed rounding decimals in an attempt to break the class record. The elements of challenge and competition are mixed together in the crucible known as the School Dominoes League. Here pupils overturn a total of thirty-six dominoes to reveal multiplication sums. For each they read out the sum and give an answer as fast as they can against the clock so that they can progress through the various leagues. The league is expertly managed by the teacher, who gives the whole proceedings an air of status and importance. (The school record currently lies at an impressive 21 seconds) The Dominoes Leagues have made a significant contribution to the speed and accuracy of pupils' mental calculations and are much enjoyed by the pupils.

53. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have a positive, confident attitude to the subject. Their calculation strategies are being developed well and they are given opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge when solving problems. Years 5 and 6 pupils work well together in groups and enjoy the challenge of finding answers and presenting them to the class. Pupils take a pride in what they produce and their written work is neatly laid out for the most part.
54. Teachers use resources well and show real competence in their use of the interactive whiteboards, which they use to good effect in their lessons. However, the lack of sufficient computers in classrooms impedes progress at times, an issue identified by the school. Mathematics is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning and is aware of the strengths and areas for improvement in the subject throughout the school. Assessment information is used to identify areas of mathematics that need to be developed and to set targets for the future. Overall improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Mathematics is used very well across the curriculum to help pupils learn in other subjects. They draw graphs and tables in science in order to record findings from investigations and tally charts when collecting data in geography. The co-ordinator makes a contribution to the 'creative curriculum' and ensures that mathematics appears formally in different subject areas.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are gradually improving.
- Year 6 pupils in 2003 achieved results well above those found in schools with pupils from similar home backgrounds.
- Pupils enjoy the practical tasks, behave well in lessons and have good attitudes to learning.
- Science is included in the school's creative curriculum, but it is not always clear what skills and knowledge are to be learnt.
- Assessment procedures and teachers' marking are not fully used to help individual pupils improve their work.

Commentary

56. In comparison with national results in 2003, standards of work in Year 2 were assessed as below average and the test results for Year 6 were also below the national average. However, the Year 6 results were well above those attained by schools with pupils from similar home backgrounds. Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are acquiring knowledge through reading information texts in literacy lessons as well as in science topics. In Year 1, for example, pupils learned the names of parts of plants and in Year 2 learned about the life cycle of a sunflower. The work in pupils' books in Year 6 supports the school's view that these pupils are on course to meet the 2004 targets. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but progress could be better between Year 2 and Year 6 if science was taught as a discrete subject, and not included in topics. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons.
57. Pupils are encouraged to approach their tasks and gain knowledge and information by posing questions. There are some opportunities for pupils to predict what they think will happen in an investigation, but this is not always expected. Year 2 pupils predicted which material would be the best to keep a container of water warm, and then carried out tests to check. They classify information well, for example, sorting objects attracted or repelled by a magnet, or hard and

soft materials. Pupils in Year 2 used their literacy skills well to describe materials, saying 'a feather is delicate'. Throughout the school, pupils' are not always required to give reasons for their results, so their ability to draw conclusions is limited. Older pupils organise investigations competently, and understand how to make a test fair. However, not all work is based on investigative and practical activities, and information may be copied from the teacher's script. Year 5 and 6 pupils investigated the best method to remove particles from water. They learnt the appropriate vocabulary and by the end of the lesson confidently used 'filtration', 'water vapour' and 'condensation' when reporting their results and discussing the water cycle. Results may be recorded in writing, charts or by diagrams and illustrations, in accordance with the school's policy of encouraging pupils to select their preferred method. Not all work is recorded, which limits opportunities for pupils to organise their thoughts and present scientific information. No examples were seen of pupils using the computer to record their work, but older pupils may research information from a CD-Rom.

58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, evidence in pupils' books shows that the quality varies between classes. Only two lessons were timetabled during the current inspection. Science is taught within the creative curriculum. Teachers' planning shows that all aspects of the curriculum for science receive adequate coverage. Resources are used well to engage pupils' interest and most work with enthusiasm, collaborating well with members of their group. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide good support in lessons. However, the inclusion of science in the creative curriculum does not always make clear when skills and knowledge are to be learnt. Teachers' marking does not show pupils how to improve their work. The current assessment system is unsatisfactory and does not provide sufficient information for staff to track the progress of individual pupils closely enough to set targets, or ascertain weaker areas in their knowledge. Staff may use different on-going systems to assess pupils' progress. The limited amount of recorded work also makes it hard to check exactly how much pupils know, understand and have covered.
59. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the scheme of work. The programmes of study for each year group are prepared jointly. The co-ordinator checks each term to ensure the requirements of the curriculum are met, but has not yet monitored teaching and learning to gain a clear view of standards across the school. Rising standards show satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in resources and staff expertise are helping to raise standards.
- The computer suite is used well to support learning in many subjects.
- There are insufficient computers in classrooms.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

60. Standards are securely in line with those expected in Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve well. Throughout the school pupils show a keen interest in working with computers and by the end of Year 2 are confident in working independently. The weaknesses in controlling external events and handling data, noted in the previous inspection report, have been remedied and good improvement has been made. In Year 1, for example, pupils typed in information about the amounts of different items of food required for a party and presented it in a pictogram. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed keen interest when creating slides for their multi-media presentations, adding sound effects and graphics, but keeping a focus on the intended audience.

61. The criticism of the teaching methods in the previous report has also been remedied with the establishment of the computer suite. All classes have two periods of time allocated for use of the suite each week. In one lesson the focus is on the ICT knowledge or skills, whereas in the other lesson the focus is on other subjects. The school has identified the need for more computers to be available in classrooms to give pupils a chance to follow up skills learned in the suite or carry out research. It already has plans to purchase a set of laptop computers. At the time of the previous inspection there were no records kept of pupils' attainment and progress. This also has been fully remedied, with pupils doing better or not as well as expected being identified and additional support provided where necessary. For example, pupils of higher attainment in Years 5 and 6 support their peers at lunchtimes.
62. Teachers and teaching assistants have undertaken additional training and through the Education Action Zone an additional part-time teaching assistant has been funded to work in the ICT suite. Consequently, the level of subject knowledge among the staff is now good. Teaching assistants play a significant part in supporting pupils and teachers. All classes have interactive whiteboards, which are used in many lessons and add interest for the pupils. Boys are more eager to participate when they can answer questions using the interactive whiteboards. Overall teaching and learning are good, with lessons well planned and tasks sufficiently demanding. The teachers' secure subject knowledge enables them to give clear, succinct explanations or demonstrations, which enable pupils to get started on their tasks quickly. The encouragement and engagement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good because of the quality support they receive and, because pupils are encouraged to help each other. Extension tasks are available for potentially gifted pupils to ensure sufficient challenge. There is evidence of pupils with special educational needs using computers to help them record or edit their work quicker. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons, with adaptations to the seating where necessary, so ensuring they can work in comfort.
63. Leadership and management of the subject are good and influencing the drive to raise standards. A technician is employed to deal with breakdowns to prevent wasting the teachers' time. Year 6 pupils are also trained to deal with everyday maintenance and act as technicians, helping teachers when necessary. Resources are available to support all curriculum subjects, with more needed to support creativity across the curriculum. There is a detailed portfolio to show the full range of work covered and the school standard.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. Information and communication technology is used well in subjects across the curriculum from the early stages. In Reception, for example, the children counted and recorded the buttons on different jackets. By Year 2, a program was used to improve pupils' understanding of solving problems by placing digits in the correct boxes to complete addition facts, such as $8 + 5 = 13$. Research is carried out, often using the Internet, in history, geography, religious education, art and design and science. Designs for cars are created in design and technology. Pupils edit their stories in English, and present the results of science experiments in graphs and charts. They also use programmable toys which they program to travel in certain directions to reach a set location in geography.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in history and only one lesson was seen in geography and so no overall judgement about the quality of provision or teaching can be made in these subjects. However, work was sampled and discussions held with co-ordinators and pupils. History and geography form part of the creative curriculum provided by the school.

65. In history, standards are as expected for pupils by the end of Year 6. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 indicate a developing understanding of the passage of time, however, there is little

work on display or in books to confirm this judgement. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing satisfactory understanding about life in different periods in history. Large detailed maps of Ancient Egypt show the location of specific historical sites such as the Sphinx and Thebes. Pupils show understanding of the farming techniques employed by Ancient Egyptians and the nature of its society. Year 5 and 6 pupils have studied Ancient Greece through masks, pottery and myths and legends. Pupils can talk about the work they have done and are able to consider the similarities and differences between societies at different times and compare them with their own. Pupils' understanding is enriched by educational visits to Carlton where there is an opportunity for them to undertake an historical study and they have visited York. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology to research topics for themselves or to produce extended writing in lessons.

66. In geography, standards are at the expected level by the end of Year 2 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire sound knowledge about other locations by following the journeys of Barney the Bear. They know the difference between pictures and plans, can make decisions about where features in a park should be located and make models showing rural land use. Teaching and learning in the Year 2 lesson seen were satisfactory. Pupils thought about 'change' in the school and the local environment and the features of a typical local park such as; tennis courts, swings and slides. They were able to draw a picture or a plan of the park they would like to have if they could. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 have looked at a community called Beechwood Road, built a model of it and considered the features that a hall built to serve the community might contain. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 know about environmental change and issues concerning pollution through a story entitled 'Dinosaurs and all that rubbish'. They can identify and label river features on a map, such as on the one they have made of the River Tees. These examples of pupils' work show that standards are in line with those expected nationally from pupils in Year 6. The new co-ordinator for humanities is beginning to monitor teachers' planning satisfactorily, also the development of the subject throughout the school. Resources for the humanities are good.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are fully met.
- There is appropriate emphasis on Christianity, and pupils also learn about other major world religions.
- Pupils have good opportunities to respond through art, drama and dance.

Commentary

67. One lesson was observed during the current inspection. Discussions with pupils, a scrutiny of work, teachers' planning, and the school curriculum provided further evidence. Overall, standards match those expected in the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. Pupils learn about a range of faiths and beliefs through linked themes including celebrations, rituals and ceremonies. They follow the main festivals, for example, Easter and Christmas, Divali and Eid. A member of staff shared her faith with Year 1 pupils by showing them Mendhi patterns. Pupils learned about the Jewish faith by acting out the Sabbath ceremonies. The local vicar came to school and showed vestments worn at different times during the Christian calendar. Pupils enjoyed a visit to the church, looked at the Bible and recalled the symbolism behind the use of incense. Older pupils responded to the Creation story from the Bible with high quality dance and artwork, producing colourful three-dimensional animals and fabric figures.

68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The scheme of work provides a sound framework, which helps staff plan lessons and cover the elements of response and reflection, knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to learn by asking questions and through discussion, consequently the amount of written work is limited. Good links to personal and social education help pupils to develop a reflective approach, and religious education lessons contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities and are well supported. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were taught in design and technology. Only two lessons were observed in art and design and physical education. It is not possible, therefore, to make secure judgements about the overall provision or quality of teaching in these subjects.

Music

The provision in music is **good** overall. There is very good provision for pupils to sing and perform.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of pupils' singing is very high and they really enjoy their lessons.
- Good opportunities to perform and sing build pupils' confidence and self esteem very well.

Commentary

69. Two music lessons were observed during the inspection, one each in Years 1 and 2. Singing and choir practices were also observed. By Year 6, standards in music are above those expected nationally, and are well above in singing because pupils respond eagerly to the enthusiasm of the teacher. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils show very good attitudes, co-operate and behave well because they gain pleasure from their lessons. Good support helps pupils with special educational needs participate fully.
70. Year 1 pupils played a 'magic carpet' game that improved their listening skills. They moved around the room and used actions to show the difference between high and low, loud and soft, long and short notes and sounds. Year 2 pupils recorded graphic scores using pictures after learning about pitch by playing chime bars and organ pipes.
71. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teacher's planning and the scheme of work show suitable coverage of the curriculum for music. Music lessons are taken by the co-ordinator, who uses her good subject knowledge and enthusiasm well. A specialist pianist accompanies music and singing activities. Their effective teamwork contributes strongly to pupils' enjoyment and response. Good opportunities to perform and sing develop pupils' self esteem very well, and the school successfully achieves its aim of building confidence by giving them many opportunities to perform. Pupils of all ages are eager to use the microphone, sing solos confidently, and use their voices very well. Performance opportunities enrich pupils' experience as part of the creative curriculum. The quality of singing and the choir's success in national competitions has helped enhance the school's reputation.
72. Music is well led and managed. The lack of balance in music provision found at the previous inspection has been firmly addressed. Whilst there is still a strong emphasis on singing, pupils develop skills in all aspects of music, and provision is good overall. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

73. It is evident from teachers' planning, the work on display, extra-curricular activities and discussions with pupils that work in art and design is very well planned, varied and interesting. Art and design makes a significant contribution to developing pupils' creativity including pupils with special educational needs, or potentially talented artists. Standards are above those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and their achievement is very good because they experience a wide range of materials. They have many opportunities to explore different techniques. Pupils develop their close observational skills from an early stage, evident in the paintings of sunflowers in Year 1 and the intricate detail in sections of fruit made from clay. A display of work depicting the Creation shows a wide range of skills and techniques being used, with a strong emphasis on three-dimensional work, for example, in the large camel and giraffe. The work planned in art and design is incorporated in creativity lessons, consequently there are very close cross-curricular links such as those between creative dance, information and communication technology and art and design. In a Year 5/6 lesson pupils studied the work of Kandinsky, researching information using the Internet, creating graphical pictures or dances to reflect the shapes and style of Kandinsky's paintings. Other pupils working with a teaching assistant created large group pictures using music as a stimulus. By sharing their work at the end of the lesson pupils built up a good level of knowledge about the artist's work. Extra-curricular activities include fine arts and creative arts and these clubs enrich the school's provision. The subject is well led and managed, a key factor in the very good improvement in provision since the previous inspection. Standards and teaching are monitored closely through the scrutiny of pupils' work and good support and guidance provided for colleagues. Throughout the school, pupil's work is displayed to a high standard and contributes much to the environment for learning. The school thoroughly deserves the Gold Artsmark it received recently.
74. Standards in design and technology are above those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve very well. This is because the very effective co-ordinator ensures that all pupils cover the full breadth of the curriculum and complete a good range of tasks, which involve planning, designing, making and evaluating. Much effort has been put into the development of the subject throughout the school within the creative curriculum. The co-ordinator has a clear view of standards, and through careful monitoring, knows what needs to be improved. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made various models including; puppets, masks, calendars, junk vehicles and rockets. The work currently on display; pupils' heads and 'Material Friends' show a firm understanding of the design process and good making skills. Models are finished to a high standard. Children in the reception have recently won prizes for their design and technology work, including £3,000 for a monster made from washing up liquid bottles and supplies of art materials for a huge centipede. Work produced by the pupils in Years 3 to 6 includes; musical instruments, Greek masks, toys, slippers and controlled movement vehicles. The instruments and masks on display showed good making skills and although there was little evidence of design and evaluation pupils were able to describe clearly how they tackled, reviewed and modified their design and technology projects.
75. In the aspects of physical education seen overall standards match those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6, with standards in creative dance exceeding these levels. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and develop a healthy spirit of competition evident in the team games, and satisfactory skills in throwing, catching, attacking and defending. Teachers encourage pupils to use movement to support learning in other subjects such as art and design and literacy and pupils learn to move with good bodily control and poise. The enthusiasm for dance among the teachers is a key factor in the standards attained. Extra-curricular activities enrich the provision, encourage pupils to try other sports, such as table tennis, and promote the development of their personal skills. The curricular provision is to be reviewed shortly to ensure sufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' physical stamina and specific physical skills through the creative approach.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal development through the school's very positive relationships.
- Drugs education and sex education lessons are delivered with the assistance of local professional groups.

Commentary

76. The school is very keen to promote this area of pupils' learning and is currently pursuing a 'Healthy Schools Award'. There are regular timetabled lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and opportunities within the creative curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum is well organised and planned and is effectively monitored by the head teacher. The very good relationships between pupils and adults in the school do much to support the development of pupils' personal skills.
77. The positive ethos of the school, with its emphasis on co-operation and respect, together with its forward looking curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education provide well for their personal development. Pupils develop self-confidence and learn to respect and tolerate others, an important element in becoming a good citizen. The curriculum fully incorporates sex education and relationships and effectively raises pupils' awareness of the safe use of drugs. The local police and school nurse are involved in teaching these aspects and ensure any questions are answered fully.
78. Circle time begins in the nursery and goes through to Year 6. It is used as a forum in which school based issues such as name calling and bullying as well as other local, national and international issues can be discussed openly. The provision successfully supports the school's ethos and promotes pupils' self esteem. Discussions with pupils and staff indicate that they enjoy the work and appreciate the opportunity to comment on and discuss issues that are important to them. The staff are skilful in taking every opportunity that arises to promote pupils' personal skills. From an early age pupils are encouraged to sing solos in music or to perform dance sequences in celebration assemblies and this helps them to develop self-confidence, which supports their learning in other subjects.

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	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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