

INSPECTION REPORT

AIRY HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whitby

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121345

Headteacher: Mr Tom Hardy

Lead inspector: Dr John Hill

Dates of inspection: 8th - 10th June 2004

Inspection number: 258399

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: | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 209 |
| School address: | Waterstead Lane Whitby North Yorkshire |
| Postcode: | YO21 1PZ |
| Telephone number: | (01947) 602 688 |
| Fax number: | (01947) 821 749 |
| Appropriate authority: | Local education authority |
| Name of chair of governors: | Sally Wardell |
| Date of previous inspection: | 15 th June 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Airy Hill is a smaller than average community primary school. Most pupils live within the local area and come from a mixture of backgrounds. Attainment on entry is average. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is below average and there are only a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, with all pupils speaking English as their first language. There are just over 25 per cent of pupils on the special educational needs register, which is above the national average. Only two of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time was well below average. In 2002, the school was given a School Achievement Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| MEMBERS OF THE INSPECTION TEAM | | | SUBJECT RESPONSIBILITIES |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 21165 | Dr John Hill | Lead inspector | Science Information and communication technology Design and technology English as an additional language (EAL) Special educational needs (SEN) |
| 11072 | Shirley Elomari | Lay inspector | |
| 24260 | Dr Derek Allenby | Team inspector | English Mathematics Geography |
| 22452 | Mary Farman | Team inspector | Foundation Stage Art and design History Music Physical education Religious education |

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BSN 2BN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and standards are above average. The very effective leadership of the head teacher combined with a supportive and well informed governing body and school staff have helped to create an atmosphere in which pupils succeed and are valued as individuals. Teaching is good and the curriculum caters effectively for pupils of all abilities. Within this very inclusive school, parents are seen as positive partners in promoting the education of their children. The result is a happy and high achieving school. Overall the school gives good value for money.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Pupils achieve well overall. This is the result of good and often very good teaching.
- The headteacher provides a very positive lead for the direction of the school.
- The governing body work well together and carry out their roles successfully.
- This is a very inclusive school in which all pupils are very well cared for and supported.
- The school has very good links with parents and the community.
- There is a very good range of after school activities.
- Pupils are very happy at school and get on very well with each other.
- The school does not effectively plan for the teaching of ICT across the curriculum.
- The school does not use assessment data effectively to track pupils' progress in a number of foundation subjects.
- The lack of an outdoor learning area for the Foundation Stage restricts children's opportunities for physical development.

Overall, the school has made very good progress since its last inspection in 1998. The key areas for improvement, such as the standards in literacy and numeracy, have been successfully addressed. Whilst improvements in pupils' skills and knowledge in information and communication technology (ICT) have taken place, they are only satisfactory. There has been significant improvement in teaching in both key stages but systems for assessing pupils' progress, although improved, are only satisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

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

Pupils achieve well overall. This is a consequence of good, and often very good, teaching, alongside good support from teaching assistants. Overall, the skills,

knowledge and understanding of the children entering the Reception class are average. Children within the Foundation Stage settle well into school and nearly all attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. Most of them exceed these expectations. In comparison to similar schools, standards at age seven are above average in reading, very high in writing and average in mathematics. By the age of 11 pupils attain standards that are well above average in both English and mathematics and average in science. Standards in both key stages are above average in music, physical education and art and design. Standards are average in all other subjects. Overall, pupils' attainments have risen in both Years 2 and 6 in national tests since the last inspection. The findings during the week of the inspection support this rise in standards and indicate that at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, have attained very well, which is an improvement on the last inspection when this was a key issue. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. Both boys and girls have improved in national tests since the last inspection, with little difference between them in overall performance. The one area where improvements could be made is in ICT. Here, the lack of planning to improve provision across the curriculum limits the opportunities of pupils to make progress.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their interest in school life, their attitudes, behaviour and their spiritual, moral and cultural understanding are very good. The pupils behave very well at all times. Relationships are very good and pupils are respectful of all adults within the school. Older pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities and there is a notable lack of harassment or bullying. Any incidents are followed up carefully. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good, and often very good, throughout the school. Pupils learn effectively and make good, and often very good, progress as a result of the successful teaching methods and the positive support given by teachers and teaching assistants. Staff know the pupils very well and plan very effectively to meet their needs. Children in the Early Years are well provided for, although the lack of an outdoor learning area limits opportunities for play. Teaching and learning in English are very good. They are good in mathematics. The school caters very effectively for pupils of all abilities. The curriculum is firmly based on the National Curriculum and national guidance. A vast range of local community and outside school links and visits enhances the work in school very effectively. Parents give significant support to these activities. However, the planning for the teaching of ICT is not fully developed across the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. There is a shared commitment by staff and governors to provide the very best education and to raise standards for all. The headteacher leads a strong and united staff very successfully. He leads by example and has helped to create a very inclusive school. Teachers with key responsibilities manage their areas very well. The governors are very committed and hardworking. They use their expertise well to offer both support and challenge and meet all their statutory responsibilities. Ancillary staff within the school, including dinner supervisors, cleaners and office staff, also play an important supportive role in ensuring that the school runs well on a day to day basis.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They support its welcoming and inclusive nature and feel that their children are very well supported. Parents have no major concerns about the school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, whose opinions were sought, feel that the school is very good and were particularly positive in their comments about the staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:

- Extend systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy to all other areas of the curriculum.
- Improve the teaching of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Provide an outdoor learning area for Foundation Stage children.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Pupils achieve well overall. In the Foundation Stage achievement is good in all areas of learning. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. There is no significant difference in the standards of boys and girls, with both achieving well.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Higher attaining pupils achieve very well in most curriculum areas.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of very effective planning for their needs and good support from teaching assistants.
- Although attainment in ICT is as expected, better-planned links across the curriculum would help to improve standards.

COMMENTARY

Starting school

1. When children start school in the Reception class, assessment information shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are mostly above average. As a result of good teaching, they achieve well, and by the age of five, nearly all have reached the early learning goals expected, with most having exceeded them.

School's results in national tests

2. Overall standards in Year 2 and Year 6 have risen considerably since the last inspection. The table below shows that in the 2003 national tests, standards in Year 2 were above average in reading, well above average in writing and in line with national averages in mathematics. There has been a significant improvement in national test results in Key Stage 1. This is particularly the case for higher attaining pupils, whose results have improved considerably. Results within writing, which has been a particular focus of the school, have been especially good. The improvement in standards is a result of the clear focus of the school in raising the quality of teaching in the areas concerned.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.6 (18.0) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 17.7 (15.5) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 16.7 (15.8) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were pupils 30 in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The table below shows that in 2003 standards in Year 6 national tests were well above average in mathematics, above average in English and in line with national averages in

science. These results indicate that standards among higher attaining pupils have risen considerably since the last inspection, especially within mathematics. Both boys and girls achieve above average standards in Year 6 tests. The higher attainment of pupils in English and mathematics are the result of the considerable efforts made by the school to improve results in these areas.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 28.0 (28.2) | 26.8 (27) |
| mathematics | 29.1 (28.9) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 29.0 (28.6) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

INSPECTION FINDINGS

The Foundation Stage

4. At the time of the inspection, most children in the Reception class have been at school for two terms. They have all settled and are achieving well. Assessment evidence indicates that nearly all children will reach the goals expected for them by the end of the Reception Year in all the areas of learning. Many will exceed them. The one area where there are limitations on the children's opportunities is in the development of their physical skills on account of the lack of an enclosed, planned outdoor play area. However, this is recognised by the school and plans are in place to remedy this.

Years 1 and 2

5. Pupils achieve above average standards as a result of good teaching and well planned provision to support their development. The standards attained by pupils are well above average in all areas of English and above average in mathematics. This is a result of the significant efforts made by the school in raising standards in these key areas. Standards are above average in science and vary between above average and average in lessons seen in other subjects. Higher attaining pupils attain very well and respond well to the high expectations demanded of them. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teaching assistants in the classroom and achieve much success.

Years 3 to 6

6. Pupils achieve above average standards in all year groups. Standards are well above average in English and are above average in mathematics. They reflect the positive focus of the school to maintain the high standards set in Key Stage 1. Standards are above average in science. Standards in the lessons seen in other subjects vary between very good and average. Pupils of all abilities are successfully challenged and are very well supported to meet their individual needs.
7. The good and very good standards being achieved by pupils are due to a number of measures taken by the school. There is a very strong inclusive ethos within the school and a commitment to mixed ability teaching. This approach is shared by all the staff and every effort is made to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their abilities, do their best and succeed well. Significant emphasis is placed on raising standards amongst higher attaining pupils and this has been positively reflected in national tests. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress in their learning as a result of good teaching and clearly focused targets in individual education

plans. It is also due to the very positive teaching in small withdrawn groups for intensive literacy and numeracy lessons. The emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy has had a very positive effect on standards. The one area of the school where standards could improve, however, is in ICT. Whilst pupils achieve at an average level when it is taught as a separate subject within the new computer room, there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to use ICT in most of the foundation subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

8. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic about the wide range of activities provided for them. Their behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. The positive ethos of the school fosters care and consideration for others and supports pupils' personal development very well. The pupils develop into mature youngsters who benefit from very good relationships with one another and with members of staff. Bullying is rare. Pupils' moral and social development is very good. Their spiritual and cultural development is good. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good. All areas have shown improvement since the previous inspection.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils are very keen to learn. They behave very well, both in lessons and outside the classroom because they enjoy their lessons and other activities.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. They are confident and very willing to take responsibility.
- Pupils form very good, respectful relationships with others. They take very good care of one another and there is very little bullying.
- Attendance is good and punctuality very good.

COMMENTARY

9. Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well. Within the Foundation Stage, the emphasis on personal and social development, along with sensitive and supportive teaching, ensures children quickly relate well to each other and adults. Within Key Stages 1 and 2, high expectations of behaviour result in children developing positive attitudes to learning and an eagerness to do well. Behaviour in lessons is almost always very good because pupils are interested in what they are learning. Pupils appreciate that teachers make lessons enjoyable. They concentrate very well and try hard to do their best. Pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to one another. They participate enthusiastically, both in lessons and in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are very well motivated by the praise and rewards they receive. They understand the 'golden rules' and learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The school is a very orderly and happy community where pupils are polite and show consideration to others. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
10. Pupils' personal development is very good overall. Their moral and social development is very good. Pupils develop a very good understanding of right and wrong. They are willing to stand up for their own opinions, as in a Year 5 lesson when one pupil defended his belief that snacks should not be allowed in school. Although his views were unpopular, his classmates listened carefully to his ideas, giving him the confidence to continue. Pupils gain a very good understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community and are very willing to take responsibility. They carry out their jobs around school both seriously

and sensibly. A particular feature of the school is the way older pupils are consistently encouraged to take care of the younger ones. This helps to create a strong sense of community. Spiritual and cultural developments are good. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities they have to reflect on their own and others' feelings and on what they are learning. Pupils have the opportunity to think about meaningful issues in assemblies and in many lessons. The wide range of visits and visitors, together with the school's very good involvement in the local community, makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils gain an understanding of lives that are very different from their own through the partnership with a South African school.

11. Pupils form very good relationships with one another and with members of staff. Teachers and other adults provide very good role models and the school fosters pupils' self-esteem very well by celebrating their achievements and skills. There are very high levels of respect between pupils and adults. This means that pupils participate confidently in lessons and in school life generally because they know that their contributions are valued. They also have confidence to participate in sports and other competitions outside school. The very good quality of the relationships means that bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and, when they do occur, are not tolerated. Pupils enjoy working and playing together.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.7 | School data | 0.0 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.4 |

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

12. Attendance is consistently good and punctuality very good because pupils enjoy coming to school. There is no unauthorised absence. The school ensures that all parents understand the importance of regular, prompt attendance. It is unusual for parents not to inform the school very quickly of the reasons for any absence. All unexplained absences are followed up on the first day. Good attendance makes a positive contribution to the good standards pupils achieve.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils and they learn well because of good teaching. This is an improvement on the last inspection, where there were some shortcomings in the quality of teaching in both key stages. The head and deputy headteacher have placed a great emphasis on raising the quality of teaching in the core subjects and this effort has had a significant effect. There is a strong focus on the needs of individual pupils and this is very well supported by a very extensive range of community links. Systems for assessing the progress of pupils are good in English and mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection where the quality of assessment was a key issue. There is, however, still room for improvement in other curriculum areas, where assessment systems are only satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching throughout the school is overall good and sometimes very good. Teaching is very good in English and good in mathematics in both key stages. It is good in science, music,

physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in all other areas of the curriculum. Pupils throughout the school achieve well because of the good planning and the high expectations that the staff have for them, regardless of their ability level. The improvement in planning, both for higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs, has aided the substantial rise in standards across the school. Teachers have strong links with parents and keep them well informed of their children’s progress. They also consult with parents and pupils on a regular basis. In addition, teaching is very well supported by a large range of community-based activities, which enhance the curriculum within school. This inclusive approach is supported by the effective systems for the monitoring and assessment of pupils’ work in English and mathematics, although this has yet to be extended across the curriculum. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting voiced their strong approval of teaching throughout the school. The one area where teaching could be improved, however, is ICT, where most subject co-ordinators do not plan for its effective use within their curriculum areas.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils, setting a firm foundation for learning.
- Good support from teaching assistants helps pupils to move forward.
- Higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are very effectively provided for.
- Assessment in English and mathematics is fully used to inform what to teach the pupils next. However, this is not fully applied to the foundation subjects.
- Teachers’ planning is clear and effective.
- Teachers do not yet plan effectively for the use of ICT within their lessons.

COMMENTARY

13. The table below indicates the quality of teaching across the school. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching and learning between the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 respectively.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 0 (0%) | 10 (28%) | 19 (53%) | 6 (19%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

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

Foundation Stage

14. The quality of teaching is good across the Foundation Stage. Its strongest features are relationships, encouragement, behaviour management and teamwork. This ensures that all children achieve well in learning and using new skills. Children respond well to the interesting, varied and stimulating activities. The adults keep careful notes of individual achievement and use these to plan children’s work. This effective partnership between staff ensures that each child is supported according to their needs. There are good arrangements for children entering the Reception class and the arrangements for their

transfer to Year 1 are smooth. These enable children to settle quickly into school routines.

Years 1 and 2

15. In Years 1 and 2, there are some common strengths in teaching that underpin the good quality of pupils' learning. These include an inclusive approach that recognises the potential of all pupils and seeks to get the very best from them. These high expectations are reinforced by the very good relationships between teachers and pupils and the shared trust between them. This enables pupils to be confident, to do their best at all times and to be fully involved in their learning. Teachers are particularly skillful in helping to develop pupils' writing skills and take time to ensure that they understand the basics of grammar and can write well in sentences. Good support from learning support assistants means that all pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, have the opportunity within the classroom to receive clear and well directed adult help.

Years 3 to 6

16. In Years 3 to 6, teachers effectively build on the good teaching of previous years. In the very best lessons, interesting activities and a lively approach gained pupils' interest and helped them to move forward quickly. Very good questioning enables pupils to think carefully and develop their understanding and pupils' speaking and listening skills are very well developed. The significant improvement in their writing skills is also a result of the attention to detail and the emphasis on encouraging pupils to think for themselves. Examples of very good teaching are evident across the school, especially in the core subjects, as well as in music, physical education and religious education.

Whole school matters

17. All the classes are very well organised, with equipment and books easily accessible. Teachers meet regularly together and plan as a team, both in terms of individual subject and key stage requirements. The good and often very good planning allows teachers to be consistent in the way they approach different subjects and confident in their own abilities. The result of such an approach is that pupils of all ages and abilities learn well. There is, however, a limited use of ICT to support learning in most of the foundation subjects. Curriculum co-ordinators are aware that this is an issue and the headteacher has made this a priority in the school development plan.
18. There are good procedures in place to assess the progress of pupils in English and mathematics and for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection where systems for assessment were judged to be unsatisfactory. Non-statutory tests and teacher assessments are very well used to track pupils and to set targets for improvement. However, these good systems are not systematically applied to all other subjects. Teachers recognise the need to improve systems for monitoring pupils' progress in a number of subject areas, especially in ICT. Homework is appropriately set and parents at the pre-inspection meeting indicated that teachers were consistent in its use. Teachers' marking is satisfactory overall, and examples of some very good marking were observed, especially in supporting pupils' writing skills. The headteacher has placed this as a priority in the school development plan.

THE CURRICULUM

The school provides a good range of curricular opportunities resulting in high standards and achievement. It has been particularly effective in raising standards in English and mathematics. The school makes very good provision for learning outside of the school day, which enriches the curriculum very well. This, and the very well developed community focus in all that the school does, contributes very strongly to the high standards of pupils' personal, social and health education. The good quality accommodation and resources contribute to the school's strengths in the curriculum and facilitate pupils' learning.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The curriculum is particularly strong in English, mathematics, music and physical education.
- There is a very good range of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning beyond the school day, particularly in sport, music and the arts.
- By placing itself in the heart of the community, the school ensures that pupils develop very well in personal, social and health education.
- The curriculum succeeds in ensuring very good opportunity of access for all pupils.
- The good quality accommodation and resources facilitate good teaching and learning and enable the school to develop its curricular strengths.
- There is no outdoor learning area for children at the Foundation Stage.

COMMENTARY

19. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school ensures that the curriculum is of a high quality. It is well planned to ensure that pupils reach high standards and that they all achieve well. In particular, there have been very good developments in English and good improvements in mathematics since the last inspection. In these subjects, co-ordinators have set clear priorities, trained staff extensively and monitored the effect of this training to ensure that pupils attain very high standards by the time they are 11.
20. Provision for physical education and music is very good because the school effectively uses the resources of the community to provide motivation for pupils and to enhance their team and performing skills. There are very many opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting and artistic events as part of the wider community, for example, gymnastics displays at Harrogate, Morris and sword dancing to celebrate the return of the Endeavour to Whitby, and verse speaking at the Eskdale Festival of Arts. The very many after school clubs, including gymnastics, karate and football, provide a very good range of extension activities and are well supported by pupils. The school is justifiably proud of its provision of extended learning activities.
21. The school's very strong community links also very effectively enhance the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Local knowledge informs many discussions between teachers and pupils within subjects. This is enhanced by common experiences which help the pupils to study together, for instance, visits in geography to a local farm, residential visits to Cumbria and strong links with providers of essential services such as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Fire Rescue Service.

22. The positive ethos of the school very effectively promotes equality of opportunity, evident in the school's extensive charitable work with, for instance, adults with learning difficulties within the locality and its strong links with a school in South Africa. Pupils are taught well in mixed ability classes and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have very good access to the curriculum. Experienced learning teaching assistants are very well trained and are effective in supporting pupils' individual needs. Very good additional support for special educational needs is also provided by a teacher to small groups of pupils who are withdrawn from their lessons on a regular basis to improve their literacy skills. Pupils' work in these groups is regularly assessed, reviewed and recorded and shows that pupils are making very good progress. Extension activities are also very well developed to support the attainment of higher attaining pupils. The school also has good links with local secondary schools and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
23. There are a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Good specialist support is provided through the appointment of a teacher for special educational needs and of a specialist music teacher from the nearby secondary school. Teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils of all abilities. The school's accommodation is good and supports its curricular strengths well, especially in sport and the arts. The large school hall and the two large playing fields are well used within and beyond the school day and the school has very effectively developed a 'wildlife walk' through its school grounds. The outdoor swimming pool, used in the summer months to teach swimming at both key stages, promotes high standards by the end of Year 6. There is a good amount of space for small group work when this is required.
24. The range and quality of resources for the majority of subjects are good and have a positive impact on both teaching and learning. In addition to the new and well-resourced computer suite, there are additional computers in each classroom, which are in the process of being linked to the school network. The school is gradually building up resources in this area of the curriculum but has not yet fully audited its needs for all subject areas. The school has well stocked libraries in both key stages and a good range of musical instruments. There is as yet, however, no outdoor learning area for the Foundation Stage, although plans are in place to remedy this.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The school makes very good provision to ensure that pupils work and play in a safe, secure and healthy environment. It provides a high level of care for all its pupils. However, there are concerns about pupils' safety outside the gates when they arrive at and leave school. All pupils have a trusting relationship with at least one teacher or other adult. Pupils receive a very high quality of personal advice and support. Academic guidance is good. There are good arrangements for admitting children to the Reception class. Pupils are well involved in the life of their school, they are consulted informally and their views are taken into consideration.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils' welfare has a very high priority: the school ensures that all pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Despite a number of improvements, the safety of children as they enter and leave the site is not guaranteed.

- Support and guidance of very good quality are readily available to all pupils who have any worries or concerns.
- Teachers provide very good advice and support for learning in lessons but pupils do not always know how to improve their work in every subject.
- Arrangements for induction are good.
- Pupils are well involved in the life and development of their school.

COMMENTARY

25. Arrangements to ensure pupils' health, safety and wellbeing are very good and have a very high priority. Child protection procedures comply fully with requirements. First aid is very well organised and the arrangements when medicines are brought into school are very clear. Risk assessments are carried out effectively and staff pay very good attention to health and safety, both in lessons and around the school. Procedures for pupils' welfare have improved significantly since the previous inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory.
26. The school has worked closely with the county council over recent years to achieve a range of improvements to the safety of the road and pavement outside the gate. However, concerns remain about the safety of pupils as they enter and leave the site because of the danger of traffic.
27. Pupils know that teachers will take any concerns they have seriously so they feel safe and happy in school. There are high levels of trust between staff and pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well indeed and use their knowledge to provide an outstanding quality of sensitive support and guidance on personal issues. The ethos of the school is very caring and pupils know that there is always a trusted adult to turn to in times of need. The school is very successful in meeting the personal needs of each individual. It provides personal, social and health education (PSHE) that is well planned and taught. Pupils have the opportunity to talk about issues that affect their lives. The school involves a very good range of outside agencies well to support individual pupils and the PSHE programme.
28. The school provides good support advice and guidance to help pupils learn. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from individual education plans that support their learning well. Teachers provide very clear advice and help in lessons; pupils know that their questions will be answered in a way that will help them to understand their work. Teachers' marking in the core subjects is helpful and shows pupils how to improve. It is satisfactory in other subject areas. The school sets appropriate targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy and pupils are made aware of their progress in meeting these targets.
29. Pupils and their parents are well supported when they join the school. Whether children enter the Reception class or join the school at other times, the pupils have the opportunity to visit the school. Pupils arriving other than into the Reception class are given a 'buddy' to help them learn the routines and ensure they have someone to play with. Parents are very well informed about the school's expectations and routines so that they can help to prepare their child for school. This means that children start school confidently and happily. They settle quickly into the routines and are eager to learn.

30. The school listens well to pupils' views and their opinions are regularly sought. The pupils are confident to put their suggestions forward. The school has plans in hand to establish a school council so that pupils will be involved in a more formal, democratic way.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

The school is at the centre of its community and benefits from very strong partnerships with parents, other schools and the local community. Parents are well involved in their child's education and are well informed about school life and routines. Reports to parents are satisfactory overall. The opportunities parents have to discuss their child with teachers, both formally and informally, are very good. Links with the community and with other schools are very good and have a significant impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school benefits from a very strong, positive partnership with parents; parents are extremely supportive of all aspects of its work and are kept well informed about it.
- Links with the community are very well established and used in ways that enhance pupils' learning.
- The school has very good links with other schools and other institutions. This has a positive impact on the curriculum and on pupils' personal development.

COMMENTARY

31. The school has worked hard and has been very successful in developing very strong partnerships with parents, the community and other schools. These were strengths noted in the previous inspection report, which the school has maintained and further developed over the last six years.
32. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They value all aspects of its work very highly and have no significant concerns. Parents are confident to raise any concerns or ask for information because the headteacher and other staff are welcoming, approachable and always willing to make time to listen. A considerable number of parents volunteer to help the school, either on a regular basis or when pupils go on trips. The Airy Hill Home School Association supports the school well through a range of social and fund raising events. The money raised is used, amongst other things, to subsidise special events and trips so that all pupils are able to participate in all such activities.
33. The school provides all parents with a very wide range of useful information. The prospectus is very well presented and informs prospective parents fully about all aspects of the school's life and work. Regular newsletters keep parents fully informed of events and also celebrate pupils' achievements well. Parents receive very clear information and guidance so that they can help their child at home, especially with reading, spelling and number work. Reading records are well used as a means of communication between home and school. Those parents whose children have special educational needs are very well involved and informed at all stages so that they can be active partners in decisions that affect their child. Annual reports are of variable quality but are satisfactory overall. The best examples, which are very good, provide parents with a clear picture of their child's strengths, the progress made and the areas for improvement. English,

mathematics and science are generally well reported but there is not always sufficient detail about other subjects.

34. The school has a wide range of very well established links with the local community that have a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils raise funds for a large number of local, national and international charities. They host visits from disabled young people who attend a local day centre. A strong feature of the school is its wide-ranging involvement in sports activities. Some of these involve other local schools while others are organised in conjunction with local sports teams and clubs. Pupils compete successfully in speaking competitions and arts festivals. Visits to local places of interest and visitors from the community also enhance the learning opportunities. The school facilities are used by a number of local organisations, including a karate club, after school club and the residents' association.
35. Partnerships with other schools are very strong. Links with the local nursery include regular visits so that children are familiar with the school before they enter the Reception class. Links with the secondary school have a positive impact on the work in sport, music and ICT as well as ensuring that pupils transfer smoothly to secondary education. Many of the sporting activities include other schools. Students from local colleges are welcomed on work experience placements. The school is also linked to one in South Africa.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall the leadership and management of the school are good. The school is very well led by the headteacher, with very good support from the deputy headteacher and other key staff. It is effectively governed by a strong team of committed governors who meet all statutory requirements. Effective management structures and procedures underpin the everyday work of the school and subject co-ordinators carry out their role well.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The headteacher has provided very good leadership and a clear vision for the school. This has been specifically focused on improving the school's overall effectiveness since the last inspection, especially the raising of standards in English and mathematics.
- The governing body is effective in carrying out its statutory role and in holding the school to account.
- The subject leaders in English and mathematics are very effective in carrying out their roles.
- All staff contribute very effectively to the ethos of this inclusive school.

COMMENTARY

Leadership

36. The headteacher has very effectively established a successful school where staff are united in providing the very best for pupils' all round development. The key to the school's success has been the raising of standards and the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. The success in these areas has been combined with a very inclusive

approach to learning, a firm commitment to equality of opportunities and an emphasis on ensuring that the needs of all individual pupils are fully met.

37. The head and key staff have had a particular focus on standards in both key stages and especially in Years 1-2 where standards were below average at the time of the last inspection. The careful planning, the emphasis on training for staff and the involvement of parents in supporting pupils' learning have helped raise standards in this key stage to a high level. There is a very positive climate for learning within the school. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were very appreciative of this and spoke very highly of the leadership of the headteacher.

Management

38. Overall, the management of the school is good. There are effective procedures to ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The headteacher and governing body work very well as a team in ensuring that the school meets all statutory requirements and that decisions are fully discussed before they are acted on. Together, they provide well for the strategic direction of the school. The governors are well informed and some have particular expertise which is helpful to the school. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and monitor what goes on effectively. A number of the governors visit the school on an informal basis, sometimes joining with groups of pupils to support their learning. Staff new to the school or employed on a supply basis have responded positively to the support they have been given. Arrangements for the continuing professional development of members of staff are good.
39. Staff with subject co-ordination roles carry out their responsibilities well. This is especially the case for literacy and numeracy. Teachers plan effectively together, use resources efficiently and share a common belief that only the best will do for the pupils at their school. The school has satisfactory procedures for evaluating its success. The head, deputy headteacher and key staff regularly monitor the quality of teaching and analyse pupils' performance in the core subjects, both through internal testing and in national tests. Together, they provide a clear picture of standards and improvement for staff and governors. Subject co-ordinators report back to the headteacher on a regular basis and examples of pupils' moderated work are collected. This is not, however, systematically carried out in all subject areas. Procedures for monitoring other aspects of the school's work are well developed, including, for example, ensuring that resources are appropriately maintained, accommodation is used effectively and that learning support assistants are both well used and receive appropriate training.

Finances

40. The management of the school's finances is good. The headteacher, chair of governors and head of the finance committee meet regularly to ensure that spending is properly planned and that the principles of best value are carried out. The school secretaries are very efficient in carrying out their administrative tasks and the most recent auditor's report was very favourable. The financial information below shows that the school has had a large balance to move forward to the current financial year. This larger than average carry forward has resulted from the loss of a classroom teacher, the subsequent insurance gained as a result and a significant underestimation of pupils joining the school in September 2003. The carry forward into 2004 is, however, being effectively planned for

to employ additional support assistants to further extend provision for ICT and to provide an outdoor learning area for Foundation Stage children.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 627,394 |
| Total expenditure | 615,739 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,773 |

| Balances (£) | |
|--|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 75,460 |
| Balance carried forward to the next year | 87,115 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage of Learning is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve well because of the strong teamwork, positive relationships and clear focus on developing their personal and social skills.
- The consistently good quality support from adults gives an immediate sense of security and promotes independence.
- The co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage gives good leadership and has created a strong working partnership between the Reception class and local pre-school groups.
- The lack of a secure outdoor learning area restricts children's ability to play.

COMMENTARY

41. Children achieve well in the Reception class. Most children enter the Reception class with levels of attainment that meet those expected from most four-year-old children. By the end of their Reception Year, nearly all children already exceed the requirements of the early learning goals. This is good achievement and progress. Overall, the teaching is good. Both the achievement of children and the quality of teaching have shown an

improvement since the last inspection. The carefully planned provision and support for children with special educational needs enable them to learn and work alongside their classmates. There are, however, not enough opportunities for children to explore and investigate change outside the classroom because there is no secure outdoor learning area. The school has not yet been able to implement the exciting plans for this area. All children quickly become secure and confident with each other and adults because of the positive and calm relationships. This increases their confidence and self-esteem very well. Children develop well in all areas of their learning because of the consistently good teaching and close links with home. All members of the early years' staff take every opportunity to encourage parents and carers to take a full part in their children's development. This increases the sense of partnership between staff and parents. The leader for the Foundation Stage has created a strong and effective team. All members of staff work together to review and plan work that meets the children's emerging needs. This provision has a positive effect on children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve very well because the skilful teaching develops very positive attitudes and independence.
- Nearly all children exceed the requirements of the early learning goals in their ability to relate to each other and adults.

COMMENTARY

42. All adults who work in the Foundation Stage ensure the children have a very strong and secure foundation for their future development in personal and social skills. They work tirelessly to increase children's independence, self-awareness and patience in taking turns to answer questions. This teaches children to listen to each other as well as adults. Thorough and careful planning ensures that all children join in the full range of activities in the classroom. Children gain confidence and self-esteem as they increase their ability to work well with each other and adults. Patient and clear explanations ensure that children tackle their work with much enthusiasm and are keen to have a go at new experiences. For instance, the children responded very well to their first time in the swimming pool. Skilful and sensitive teaching gave the children confidence to get into the water and follow instructions. These very positive attitudes develop and increase throughout the Reception Year. The good teaching and careful organisation of group work ensure that children learn to work and co-operate with a range of adults. This makes a positive contribution to children's attitudes and relationships. All children leave their parents/carers happily and settle quickly to the expected routines. Calm and consistent teaching ensures they become confident and secure and develop trust in adults. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good because most children already exceed the early learning goals.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Consistently good quality teaching ensures that most children exceed the requirements of the early learning goals in their reading and writing skills.
- Limited teaching assistant support restricts learning for some children.
- Good expectations of achievement ensure that all children concentrate and work hard.

COMMENTARY

43. The teacher works hard to ensure that all children have ample opportunities to develop an interest in and love of books. Children enjoy listening to stories and share books happily. Many already recognise individual words and read simple sentences. This is good progress from the average standards on entry. Children's listening skills are less well-developed and some have difficulty in listening to each other. Achievement in this area is restricted because there is not always adult support for the class teacher. Insistence on children speaking clearly and audibly ensures that they quickly learn to speak out to an audience and develop the use of sentences when they answer questions. Most children achieve well in developing their speaking skills and talk happily with each other and adults. The good level of support throughout the Foundation Stage helps children who have special educational needs to join in with their classmates. Members of staff work closely with parents/carers to increase their understanding of their children's needs. Careful planning ensures that the Reception children have their Foundation Stage entitlement with provision to move on to work within the National Curriculum when they are ready. The teacher and teaching assistant ensure that children in the Reception class increase their early writing skills. This helps children to know that writing conveys meaning and the more able children are already beginning to write simple sentences. This is a result of the careful teaching and children's high levels of interest and enthusiasm. Most children in the Reception classes already exceed the expectations of the early learning goals. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. This is because the consistently good teaching ensures that children learn and achieve well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Consistently good teaching makes children want to learn and explore number and shape.
- Clear assessment procedures show good progress but they are not always used to build on and increase children's previous knowledge.

COMMENTARY

44. The Foundation Stage team provide an exciting and stimulating range of mathematical opportunities in the Reception class. These ensure children become interested and motivates them to increase their skills in recognising and using numbers. By the time they leave the Reception class, nearly all children already exceed the requirements of the early learning goals. All adults ensure that children work well together and become independent in choosing and using resources. This increases their confidence and self-esteem and enables them to achieve well. Children enjoy counting sessions and the Reception class team works hard to increase children's ability to use suitable mathematical language. For example, children use everyday objects to reinforce their understanding of addition. They were very enthusiastic about this activity and quickly learned to add on; "there's 4 in (teddy bears). 1 more, that's 5, makes it (a plastic boat) sink". All children support their learning effectively by using computers. This increases their mathematical understanding as well as their computer skills as they identify and move shapes on the screen. Adults keep detailed notes of children's attainment but do not always use this information to give them work that meets their identified needs. This does not ensure that all children consolidate their understanding and knowledge before moving on to new learning. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good because of the improved teaching, the good achievement and the improved assessment procedures.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The good quality teaching gives children confidence to ask questions and investigate different situations.
- The lack of an outdoor learning area limits children's ability to explore natural change.

COMMENTARY

45. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the good quality teaching increases children's confidence in investigating natural and man-made objects. This effective teaching develops their knowledge of living creatures and of the need to care for them and each other. All adults encourage children to look closely and to ask questions about their surroundings. This increases children's awareness of the wider world, local geography and history. Staff also take the children out into the local area and make effective use of

the school grounds. Children's achievement is restricted, however, because they do not have immediate access to a secure outdoor learning area. This does not give them the opportunity to observe change and carry out independent investigations. By the time they leave the Reception class, most children are confident in using scissors and other cutting tools. They experiment with materials and join them together to make cardboard models. This increases their ability to make choices and decide which joining methods work best. The teacher ensures children develop a keen interest in computers. They have secure skills in using the mouse and keyboard effectively to control movement on the screen. For instance, by the time they leave the Reception class, children create pictures and know how to click and drag to change paint colours. They use the dedicated computer room to increase their techniques and understanding of what a computer can do. The school ensures that the religious education element of knowledge and understanding is covered effectively. Nearly all children already meet the early learning goal requirements. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Good teaching ensures children achieve well in their use and awareness of space.
- The use of the school pool develops children's understanding of water safety from an early age.
- The lack of an outdoor learning area limits children's opportunities for play.

COMMENTARY

46. All adults work very hard to increase children's skills in using and controlling their bodies. This results in skilful sequences of movement and well developed ability to use pencils, scissors and other tools. All children in the foundation stage have access to the school hall, the school grounds and the school swimming pool. The current swimming programme, very well supported by parents and carers, is having a positive effect on children's enjoyment, skills and understanding of water safety. All adults use these areas very effectively to develop independent learning and the ability to work safely with large equipment. Throughout their Reception Year, children have plenty of chances to increase their skills in using tools such as pencils, scissors and brushes and in shaping and joining materials. The lack of an outdoor play area, however, limits children's opportunities to explore, play and use large apparatus. Nearly all children's skills, however, already exceed the expectations of the early learning goals in the Reception class. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve well in using a range of media to create pictures and pattern.

- Adults give children interesting opportunities to develop their imagination but there are not enough chances for them to use their imagination outside the classroom.

COMMENTARY

47. Consistently good quality teaching ensures that children begin to develop their imagination effectively from entry to the Reception class. The good provision of imaginative areas that interest and involve boys and girls increases thinking, speaking and co-operative skills. For example, children enjoy using the Three Bears' House; one boy explained carefully how to make porridge and went on to share it out equally. Children do not, however, have enough opportunities to use their imagination outside the classroom. This limits their awareness of working in natural situations. All children learn to mix and use paint to create pictures and patterns and use materials to make collages. Adults teach children how to use computers to make pictures. All children practise their singing skills in a range of nursery rhymes and jingles in lessons and have specific music sessions. This increases their interest in music. All adults promote children's creative skills well and nearly all of the children are likely to exceed the requirements of the early learning goals by the end of their Reception Year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good** at both key stages.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are well above national averages at both key stages, a good improvement since the last inspection.
- Standards of writing are particularly high as a result of very effective teaching.
- Whatever their starting points, pupils achieve well because of very good teaching and very good leadership and management of the subject.
- Teachers are expert in teaching literacy and ensuring that pupils learn very well.
- The literacy coordinator has put into place very effective strategies to improve literacy throughout the school.
- The use of ICT in teaching and learning in English is underdeveloped.

COMMENTARY

48. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at well above average levels. Standards have improved very much in both key stages since the last inspection. When compared to results in schools in similar circumstances, pupils in Year 2 attain standards above average in reading and very highly in writing. By the time they are 11, pupils attain standards that are well above average. These attainments result from good planning and carefully focused teaching to ensure that pupils know what they have to do to improve. The school has successfully met its targets for literacy. Writing has been a key target for development and the result has been a significant improvement in achievement. A very good variety of stimulating tasks are set for pupils such as, in Year 2, reporting on events when, for example, Grandpa took his rat to school, and in Year 6, advertising a local karate club. The literacy co-ordinator has helped teachers become more confident in

assessing pupils' work and giving them focused help to improve, making available examples of pupils' work and discussing pupils' current attainment levels with them. Regular assessment of pupils' work enables their progress to be tracked. As a result, particularly in Years 1-2, some high quality marking shows pupils their strengths and indicates very clearly what they have to do to improve their writing. This has resulted in some very good writing in history by pupils in Year 2.

49. Pupils of all ability levels in both key stages achieve well. Teachers' planning effectively includes all pupils by the successful deployment of teaching assistants to ensure that they take full part in lessons and make gains in learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs attain well. Higher attaining pupils also achieve very well and well above what may be expected nationally. This was particularly evident within a Year 4 class where a very high level of discussion took place on why particular punctuation was needed within some parts of the 'Killer Cat.' It was also apparent in a very good Year 5 lesson where a particularly stimulating lesson took place on how to move a story on. Here, pupils took it in turns to extend the story using imaginative and interesting twists and turns. The result was a highly entertaining and effective lesson. Boys' achievements are in line with those of girls'.
50. The overall quality of both teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have a very good understanding of the English curriculum and know how to teach it well. Pupils achieve very well because teachers consistently and skillfully challenge them to extend their understanding. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to think and learn from each other, at the same time maintaining a good pace both within and between activities. Pupils can speak and listen very well. They are not afraid to express their views and communicate with each other in a mature way. Pupils have developed very good reading skills and are taught to write imaginatively and interestingly. In a Year 6 class, for example, they wrote well-crafted and subtle letters of complaint from Mrs Bear to Mrs Locks about the mishaps caused by her daughter Goldie. Pupils respond very well to the way they are taught and appreciate the opportunities they have to discuss their ideas. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to this subject and always try their best.
51. The literacy co-ordinator leads the subject very well and has planned very effectively for English across the curriculum. She transmits a joy for the subject evident, for instance, in her justified pride in the achievements of pupils in verse speaking at the Eskdale Festival of Arts. Her leadership is founded on a very good knowledge of literacy. The strong development of the subject has been achieved by putting into place highly effective strategies to develop literacy. These include extensive training for all teachers, improving resources, deploying support staff to very good effect to improve guided reading, moderating assessments of pupils' work and the monitoring of pupils' work using commercial testing. This has resulted in substantial improvements since the previous inspection in all aspects of the subject.
52. The recently developed ICT suite has not yet been used to enhance teaching and learning in English other than in basic word processing skills.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

53. The school has effectively identified this aspect of the curriculum as an area for development and there is good evidence that improvements have taken place. Good

examples of pupils' use of written and language skills were evident in e.g., science, geography and history lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are improving at both key stages and are above the national average.
- All pupils achieve well in the subject.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school as a result of very good knowledge and planning by the teachers.
- The subject is very well led.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to enable pupils to learn about data handling.

COMMENTARY

54. Standards have improved in both key stages since the last inspection and are above average. When compared to similar schools, pupils in national tests at the age of seven attain average standards. At age 11, pupils attain well above average standards. Pupils improve in mathematical knowledge as they move through the school.
55. Evidence gained during the inspection showed that younger pupils in Years 1-2 are achieving well.
56. By the age of seven, pupils in Year 2 have gained a good grasp of basic mathematics, for example, partitioning numbers to 20, using standard units of time, estimating lengths using standard measures and identifying the names and some properties of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils at age 11, can reduce fractions to their lowest terms, calculate percentages of areas and construct pie charts. They know the rotations of two-dimensional shapes and their symmetries and recognise representations of three-dimensional objects and shapes. These standards result from the positive development of the subject by the co-ordinator, using the guidance of the National Strategy, and from teaching that is always good and often, very good.
57. All pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. The brisk and lively pace in lessons engages all pupils and challenges them to explain their thinking. This was particularly evident in a Year 2 class where pupils were effectively counting in metres to measure the school playground. This lively approach was further evident in a Year 5 class where the teacher very effectively led a mental mathematics session using both numbers and letters to represent numbers. The positive atmosphere in classes encourages contributions from pupils. This enables pupils with special educational needs to achieve well during whole class lessons and to make progress when support assistants work with them on carefully planned work. Higher attaining pupils improve significantly as they move through the school and by the age of 11 are achieving very highly. This is an improvement since the last inspection. An example of this higher level of achievement was evident within a Year 6 class where good extension work was provided for pupils to calculate degrees within an angle using a series of graded questions. Boys' achievements in mathematics are in line with those of girls'.

58. Pupils learn well as a result of teachers' very good knowledge of the subject and of the best methods to help pupils improve their understanding. Very well planned teaching and rapid warm-up questioning ensure that all pupils are stretched in their thinking about mathematics. A particular strength is the organisation of pupils into pairs and groups so that they can help one another with their learning. They listen well and explain carefully to help each other understand. Very good end of lesson sessions ensure that pupils' understanding is clear. One good example was when pupils in a Year 3 lesson were able to discuss successfully the pictogram they had made using symbols instead of words to describe food, shoes etc. These end sessions are conducted supportively so that pupils are confident to ask for additional help where they need it and enable pupils to pose their own questions to the class. As a result of the positive way pupils are involved in these lessons, their attitudes and response are very good.
59. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well, making extensive use of training materials to ensure that teaching is effective and that effective systems are in place for the teaching of mathematics across the curriculum. Well-managed visits to other schools are arranged to help teachers to learn from best practice elsewhere. In particular, a strong commitment on the part of all staff to the importance of mental mathematics has been developed under his leadership. Annual testing of pupils helps to ensure that weaknesses in their learning are addressed quickly. Pupils in Year 1 are interviewed by the co-ordinator so that their understanding can be assessed, a strategy that appropriately supplements his lesson monitoring and analysis of pupils' books. Improved and highly focused teaching now results in pupils learning well in lessons.
60. There is some satisfactory use of ICT to help pupils learn to handle data but generally the use of ICT in mathematics is underdeveloped.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

61. Pupils use mathematics in other subjects effectively and develop their skills well. Pupils were able, for example, to complete graphs when recording the loss of heat during a science experiment test. They were also able to explore symmetry to good effect within art and effectively discussed how they would measure the movement of vehicles within a design and technology lesson. The co-ordinator has planned effectively to ensure mathematics is an integral part of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils achieve well as a result of the good teaching in this subject.
- There is a good emphasis on investigation and the use of correct scientific vocabulary.
- Teachers plan well for science and have good expectations of what they should achieve.
- There is a lack of teaching assistants to support teachers in practical science lessons.
- There is an insufficient use of ICT.

COMMENTARY

62. Standards in science are above average at both key stages. Since the last inspection, and in comparison with similar schools, the percentage of pupils achieving average standards in Years 1-2 in science has improved and on the basis of teacher assessments is now very high. In Years 3-6, most pupils achieve standards in line with what is expected nationally, though many achieve above this level. Results at this key stage are similar to those found at the last inspection. Boys' achievements are in line with those of girls'. The concentration over the past year on improving experimental and investigative science is proving positive in helping all pupils to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well as a result of both good teaching and the effective support given to them by learning support assistants.
63. Pupils are well taught throughout the school and achieve well. There is a strong emphasis on the learning of investigative skills and pupils understand the importance of a fair test. Pupils in Year 2, for example, used trial and error to effectively solve the problem of how to make an electrical circuit and so light up a bulb. There is also an insistence on the correct use of scientific vocabulary, ensuring that pupils fully understand scientific terms. Experiments are successfully carried out in the classroom and very good use is made of the school grounds to extend this work, with, for example, pupils in Year 4 following a 'wildlife trail' within the school grounds, both to identify plants and to observe changes in the colour of grass that had been previously covered by the teacher. However, the lack of support within some classes during practical work means that teacher time is often spent on maintaining equipment rather than on supporting pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of the science curriculum and are able to talk confidently with pupils when discussing complicated issues. This was particularly the case in discussions held between teachers and pupils in Year 5 about changing solids to liquids and the need to ensure that all aspects of the investigation had to be properly controlled.
64. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is currently acting as co-ordinator and works well with other teachers in ensuring that planning covers all the areas of the National Curriculum. Pupils' work is regularly collected, moderated and assessed by teachers to see how far the pupils have progressed. The co-ordinator ensures that resources are well-maintained and kept up to date. Teachers in the school have also attended a number of local courses about managing the science curriculum and have passed on their knowledge to other teachers to good effect. However, increased opportunities to use ICT as part of the science curriculum would further extend pupils' skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Where ICT is taught as a separate subject, teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory and sometimes, good.
- The standard of pupils' work is broadly average by Years 2 and 6.
- Links with other subjects are underdeveloped.
- Systems for assessing pupils' progress in ICT need to be improved.

COMMENTARY

65. Standards achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are judged to be average. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when standards were below average. The school has effectively addressed the issues identified then and in particular has invested in developing a very well resourced computer suite for the teaching of information and communication technology. This now provides very good opportunities for all children to be taught regularly, with first class facilities, and is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and attainment. Whilst the concentration on providing pupils with sound basic skills has had a positive effect, teachers do not yet provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to attain at a high level as the subject is not well planned for across the curriculum.
66. The teaching of pupils is satisfactory. Teachers have concentrated on providing pupils with basic computer skills and have succeeded in this task. In Year 1, for example, pupils were effectively supported when 'painting' a picture using the correct controls. In Year 2, the teacher was also able to ensure that pupils could use the keyboard effectively, could load and save work and could highlight, change the size and shape of letters, and correct their work when necessary. The concentration on basic computer skills is maintained in Years 3-6, where, for example, in a good lesson in Year 5, pupils successfully planned the setting out of chairs and desks in a classroom to accommodate a large group of pupils. Within the classroom, ICT is less well used and too often its use is limited to word processing. An exception was when pupils in a Year 6 class were introduced to a mathematics program that allowed them to calculate the degrees of an angle. Year 6 pupils also link effectively with a local secondary school where they achieve well in, for example, using Power Point presentations and using the Internet to research topics in history and geography.
67. Pupils' attitudes are positive and they approach their work with real enthusiasm. They share resources well and are willing to discuss and refine their work following discussion. When available, good use is made of teaching assistants to support pupils, though timetable arrangements often mean that learning assistants are employed elsewhere when this subject is being taught. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and every effort is made to ensure that they are fully included in classroom activities.
68. The school has identified that assessment opportunities in ICT need to be identified and related to teachers' planning. This process is currently underway and staff are beginning

to assess how well pupils are attaining. Currently, however, not all teachers have a good understanding of pupils' capabilities and in particular of the skills they bring to school. The school recognises that teachers' skills need improving if standards are to be raised further.

69. Leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has a well-defined action plan, which clearly links staff training needs and the development of resources to improve provision. An important feature of the action plan is the intention to release the co-ordinator to observe lessons and to advise and support colleagues.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

70. Whilst ICT is used within other areas of the curriculum, most notably in science, teachers' planning does not yet consistently cover its use in these areas. As a result, opportunities are missed to develop and apply pupils' skills.

HUMANITIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils across the school achieve well because of the well-informed teaching.
- The range of visits and visitors deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding of major world religions.
- Assessment and marking are not used consistently to help pupils improve their work.

COMMENTARY

71. Standards in religious education are above average and fully meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils by the ages of seven and 11. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Improvement, however, is good because the teaching is consistently good, pupils respond well and there has been an improvement to the range of resources. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because teachers have a clear understanding of the subject and are confident in their teaching.
72. Pupils in the infant part of the school achieve well in learning about Christianity and Judaism. For example, pupils in Year 1 have a clear knowledge of artifacts that are special to Jews and know the Torah is a holy book. Careful questioning helped pupils understand the importance of the Bible to Christians and that Jews and Christians believe in one God. The pupils respond well to this work and show an increasing interest in the differences and similarities between the two religions. They have a good understanding of the significance of the seven candles in the Hanukkah and know that light plays an important part in many religions.
73. Teachers build effectively on pupils' earlier experiences as they move through the school. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson where the pupils explored the meaning of the Hindu Morning Prayer. Careful questioning enabled pupils to understand and explain the

meaning of reflection: “It’s when you think carefully about something”. The teacher kept a clear focus on the purpose of the lesson and this helped pupils to think carefully about how to put their thoughts positively. The analysis of pupils’ work shows that, by Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the reasons behind Jesus’ crucifixion. Discussion with pupils indicates secure knowledge of different places of worship and the fact that all religions have rules for acceptable behaviour.

74. The school uses assemblies effectively to develop pupils’ awareness of different beliefs and to give opportunities for personal reflection. For instance, the headteacher of the receiving high school led one assembly and asked pupils to think about the family relationships. Effective use of visiting ministers increases pupils’ understanding of different forms of religion. For example, an evangelical minister and the local Anglican vicar visit to speak to the pupils. The school takes every opportunity to bring members of non-Christian faiths into school. This increases pupils’ understanding of a range of major world religions.
75. There is no structured system for keeping records of pupils’ achievement and progress across the school, although individual teachers do keep appropriate records of the progress made by pupils. The subject leader maintains an effective development plan and ensures that the curriculum is regularly updated. There is a good range of good quality resources and these are well maintained.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Provision in history and geography is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils have a good knowledge of local history.
- Learning in geography is enriched by the school’s links with the local community, allied to its emphasis on global issues.

COMMENTARY

76. It was not possible to see any lessons in history during the course of the inspection and only one lesson was observed in geography. This means it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in either subject. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils’ work in books and around the school, discussions with pupils and the subject leader, however, indicate that standards in history and geography are above average.
77. Pupils’ work in their books and on walls around the school shows that they have interesting and stimulating work in **history**. Their knowledge and understanding of the history of Whitby is particularly impressive and is considerably enhanced by visits to local places of historical interest and museums. The use of computers for individual research enhances pupils’ understanding of why things change and the impact on people’s lives indicates that pupils are developing good skills in this subject. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Discussions with pupils confirmed their interest and enthusiasm for history. They talked eagerly about their visits, saying that “history is important because you learn what happened in the past”, and explained how to identify

past settlers by place names. There has been an improvement to the range, number and quality of resources since the previous inspection but there is still a need for more artifacts to support learning. Staff know their pupils well and have satisfactory systems in place to assess how well they are learning. However, they do not always use these systems to track pupils' progress.

78. Pupils in **geography** lessons have good opportunities to learn about the local area, including well planned visits to other places of interest, including Sneaton Village and East Barnby. On the basis of such experiences, by the time they are seven, pupils can identify countries in the United Kingdom, the position of Whitby in the North East of England and identify some similarities and differences between places in Britain and Norway. By the time they are 11, pupils can understand maps relating to places visited in other locations such as Humphrey Head in Cumbria, and learn to see how processes such as flooding affect land use in different places. Pupils take a sensible part in discussions, making good points and appreciating that others may have contrasting views about environmental changes.
79. Geography links well with other subjects such as mathematics, where grid references are taught, and literacy, when pupils write about geographical topics. These links are planned in the well-written policy that sets out clearly and concisely how the subject is to be taught. The school's strong community focus enhances pupils' understanding of the world in which they live through assemblies and displays that develop knowledge, for instance, of the local town and its significant features, the relation of Normandy to England and the contrasts between their own school and their link school in South Africa. Teachers understand the progress made by pupils in geography and have appropriate systems to assess their progress. Such systems, however, are not consistently used across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No art lessons, one design and technology lesson, one music lesson, and two lessons in physical education were observed during the inspection. Therefore, it is not possible to make a firm judgment about the quality of teaching or provision although evidence from pupils' work indicates that standards are at least satisfactory and often better in these four areas.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils produce work of a high standard in art and design.
- Pupils develop very good musical skills as they move through the school.
- The music teacher from the nearby secondary school provides very good support for music within the school.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills using a range of materials in design and technology.
- Pupils achieve very well in a wide range of sporting activities and receive high quality coaching in lessons.
- Pupils take part in many local competitions and have received acclaim nationally for their work in sport.

COMMENTARY

80. Evidence in **art and design** from pupils' sketchbooks, work around the school and discussion with the co-ordinator indicates that standards in two-dimensional artwork exceed expectations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of work planned show that there is an improvement in the use of three-dimensional artwork. It is clear that teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to increase their observation skills and to develop their techniques. For example, pupils in Years 1-2 use a good range of materials to create three-dimensional effects. They look closely at natural objects and show a good awareness of how to use pencils to reproduce shape and pattern. By Year 6, pupils are confident in their use of a range of media and produce carefully crafted landscapes using their knowledge of perspective. Their work gives clear evidence of effective building on previously learned skills and techniques as they move through the school. This is apparent in the well-developed watercolour skills and pencil sketches of Whitby. Work on Islamic pattern links effectively with work in religious education and increases pupils' understanding of non-western cultures.
81. The use of information and communication technology is developing satisfactorily in art and design. For example, some younger pupils use computer programs to create pictures in the style of Jackson Pollock. Pupils talked very enthusiastically about their work in art and agreed wholeheartedly with one pupil who said: "It's one of the best subjects". The school encourages individual talents and further enriches pupils' experiences through art exhibitions. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The co-ordinator manages this aspect of the curriculum well and has a satisfactory understanding of the progress that pupils are making. An appropriate assessment system is in place and examples of pupils' work are regularly collected and moderated.
82. In the one lesson seen in **design and technology** in Year 5, the standard of teaching was satisfactory and standards were average. Here, pupils were able to discuss effectively the making of a moveable vehicle and knew what electrical parts it would need to make it move. No additional support was provided for this lesson and the teacher had some difficulty supporting the various groups. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with staff and displays around the school show, however, that pupils get satisfactory opportunities to develop their skills in design and technology in both key stages. In Year 1, for example, there is good evidence of pupils successfully making wind up toys from card, plastic and wire. In Year 2, they have made finger puppets from felt and have sewn the materials together. In Year 4, pupils have made story books with moveable parts to good effect and in Year 6 they have produced glider planes, using balsa wood and have constructed moving mechanical parts using commercial products.
83. Pupils, however, do not have enough opportunity to make choices about the designs and materials they can use and there is insufficient use made of ICT to support pupils' learning. Resources in design and technology are satisfactory. The co-ordinator manages design and technology satisfactorily and has a sound understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Pupils' work is appropriately collected and assessed, though the lack of opportunities pupils have in this subject means that there is only a limited understanding of how well they are progressing.
84. In addition to the two lessons observed in **physical education**, a number of after school clubs were seen, including those for gymnastics and Morris dancing. A scrutiny of pupils' work, including displays around the school, was undertaken. Discussions with pupils also

took place. Evidence gathered from these indicates that standards are above those expected by the end of both key stages.

85. In both lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Pupils achieve very well in a wide range of sporting activities and receive high quality coaching in lessons. They take part in many local competitions and have received acclaim nationally for their work in sport. All pupils have swimming lessons, beginning with children in the Foundation Stage, and make very effective use of the school pool. Parents give a very good level of support to these lessons and value the work done. The headteacher takes these sessions and deals very sensitively with pupils who are reluctant to enter the pool. This increases pupils' confidence and accustoms them to water. Swimming standards are very high. This is evidenced by the number of Year 6 pupils who can swim a mile or more. The school offers a very wide range of clubs including, for example, gymnastics, Yorkshire long sword and Morris Dancing. There are simple systems in place to check pupils' achievement. Staff know their pupils well and carefully monitor their progress. Records of pupils' progress are not, however, systematically maintained. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that high quality provision in physical education is maintained. The school has a national reputation in providing the very best across a range of sporting activities and is very keen for this to be maintained. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.
86. In **music**, evidence from pupils' work, teacher records, discussions with pupils and their performance during assemblies indicates that the provision to develop pupils' musical skills is of a high quality. All pupils have good opportunities to take part in concerts and productions and to play musical instruments. As they move through the school, there are clear improvements in pupils' singing skills, their ability to listen carefully and appraise music and in the playing of a wide range of musical instruments. The teaching seen was very good and gave pupils an immediate enthusiasm for music. A significant strength is the use of a specialist music teacher from the neighbouring high school. This, and the high quality instrumental teaching, ensures that pupils reach above average standards in performing skills by Year 6. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils sing sweetly, melodically and rhythmically, with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They read music accurately and their musical skills are considerably enhanced by out of school activities. For example, the choir, recorder groups and band participate in a range of charitable events and music festivals such as the Eskdale Festival. At the time of the inspection, pupils were practising hard to improve their performance for a forthcoming schools' concert. They did this with considerable enthusiasm and close attention to detail, ensuring the correct use of pitch and diction. Discussion with pupils confirmed their high levels of motivation and enthusiasm as well as their appreciation for the lessons with the high school teacher. There is no formal assessment of achievement, but teachers know their pupils well. This enables them to give pupils work that meets and increases their musical skills and abilities. The good quality and range of resources makes a positive contribution to pupils' interest and achievements.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were observed in this subject and so no overall judgments are made about provision and standards.

COMMENTARY

87. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. There is a good programme of activities, including circle time, work on diet, health, sex education, drug awareness and personal safety. This programme, mainly taught through science, religious education and during assemblies, supports pupils in developing a safe and healthy life style, gaining in confidence and working with others. In those lessons in other subjects where aspects of personal, social and health education were taught, they were delivered well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

| | |
|--|----------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 2 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 3 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| 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 | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 2 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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).