

INSPECTION REPORT

BILLINGHAM SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees

LEA area: Stockton-on-Tees

Unique reference number: 111524

Headteacher: Mr K Robinson

Lead inspector: Mr R Gill

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th December 2004

Inspection number: 266423

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	382
School address:	Belasis Avenue Billingham Stockton-on-Tees
Postcode:	TS23 1BE
Telephone number:	01642 894003
Fax number:	01642 894004
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	The Rev. Canon Richard Smith
Date of previous inspection:	4 th November 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Billingham South Primary School is situated in an urban situation near to Stockton-on-Tees. It was identified, in 2002, as providing a satisfactory education overall, but having serious weaknesses in standards and teaching. Most of the 382 pupils come from the immediate locality but a few travel from further afield. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that found nationally overall, but the school provides an infant assessment class and support base for 28 pupils with significant special needs from the local area. There are seven pupils with a statement of special educational needs, which is above average. There are three pupils who are being looked after in public care. Virtually all the pupils are from families of white British heritage. There are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language. When they start school, children's attainment is generally below that of most children of their age. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were new to the school a few weeks before the last inspection. There has been a significant turnover in staff since 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4074	R Gill	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Music Art and design
8988	J Cross	Lay inspector	
32180	D Sleightholme	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology
32616	K Crowther	Team inspector	English English as an additional language History Geography Physical education
23698	R J Schaffer	Team inspector	Science Religious education Design and technology Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

3 Harrowby Road West Park
Leeds
LS16 5HN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very good features. Attainment is below the national expectation at the end of Year 6, but meets it elsewhere. Pupils' achievement has improved markedly since 2002. Very good leadership and management have radically revitalised the school in the last two years. Teaching is good overall. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- very effective leadership and management have improved the school greatly;
- pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is still below the national average, but most pupils are achieving well in Year 6 and throughout the school;
- the rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum have benefited pupils' academic and personal development;
- the school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- attendance is well below the national average; and
- unsatisfactory accommodation and the lack of resources in the nursery and reception classes (Foundation Stage) hamper progress in some aspects of their learning.

The school has improved very well since its last inspection in 2002; it no longer contains serious weaknesses as a result of the much improved leadership and management. Standards, pupils' achievement and teaching have all improved. The school's evaluation of its progress has improved enormously.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	E*	C	D	C
writing	E*	A	D	C
mathematics	E	B	C	B

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average, E - very well below average*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E	C	A
science	E	D	E	C

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' achievement is good. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were better than in recent years. In mathematics pupils reached the national average for the first time. In Year 2 and Year 6 pupils did as well in English and science as pupils in similar schools and even better than them in mathematics. The achievement of boys, in Year 6, remains a weakness, particularly in writing.

The judgements made during the inspection show that currently:

- children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and are on course to reach the nationally expected goals;
- standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average in Year 2 and pupils achieve well; and
- standards in Year 6 are below the national average in English, mathematics and science, but achievement is good. These pupils' progress was disrupted in the past and there is double the number of pupils with special educational needs, when compared to the national average.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good and pupils' behaviour around school is positive. Attendance is poor, but punctuality is good; pupils in Years 3 to 6 get to school early for extra classes in mental arithmetic.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good.

Teaching is good, with some very good features throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well because the school's support base is very effective in teaching pupils and assuring their inclusion in mainstream classes. The assessment of pupils' work is good, but pupils are not yet fully involved in the assessment process. The school provides very good support for pupils. It works very well with parents and the community to enhance pupils' achievements. The curriculum is generally good with very good opportunities for enrichment, for example, in sport. The accommodation has been improved, but outside facilities for children in the Foundation Stage limit learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have transformed the school. The headteacher is very good, but excellent at communicating the purposes behind improvements. Co-ordinators know what needs to be done and have improved pupils' achievements. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very well in playing a dynamic role in checking on the school's progress and challenging it to do better. Governors ensure that the school successfully includes all pupils and promotes racial equality well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the school and the improvements it has made. Many appreciate the improvement in their children's progress. Equally, pupils have a good opinion of the school and talk with confidence and maturity about their work and personal development.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 to reach or exceed the national average;
- continue and extend the measures to improve attendance; and
- improve the outside facilities and resources for children in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is currently below average, but their achievement is good particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with national expectations. Standards by the end of the reception class are on course to, at least, meet expected levels in all areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since 2002, but remain below average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well in most subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as a result of the extra provision received.
- The rate of pupils' progress has accelerated in line with advancements in teaching.
- Standards in writing have not improved as quickly as those in reading.

Commentary

1. In 2002, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average in eight of the eleven subjects. There has been a rapid improvement since then, which began to be apparent in the 2004 National Curriculum test results.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.9 (15.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.0 (16.0)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.2 (17.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (24.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.9 (25.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.3 (28.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Until 2004, pupils consistently scored well below the national average overall and well below schools with pupils who had similar scores in Year 2. In 2004, pupils in Year 6 reached the national average in mathematics for the first time ever and their scores, overall, were above those achieved in similar school. These major improvements were due, mainly, to the novel strategies for teaching mental arithmetic and general improvements to the quality of teaching.
3. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving well and have been since they were in Year 4 in 2002. Records show that before the school began to tackle its serious weaknesses, after the last inspection, these pupils were making very slow progress. Since then their progress in reading and

mathematics has raced ahead. Writing, by contrast, has developed more slowly, particularly that of boys who previously lacked interest and whose interest in lessons has had to be rekindled. This has been achieved for most pupils, but success has been jeopardised by the very slow progress made in earlier years. An additional and most important reason why pupils currently in Year 6 fall below the national expectation in English, mathematics and science is the fact that the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is double that normally found in primary schools. These pupils are often making very good progress, but they have an adverse statistical effect on the school's overall standards. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 4 are more typical in terms of special educational needs, which means that standards are already in line or above those expected for their age. The good achievement throughout the school includes the few pupils who are looked after in public care.

4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. The standard of work of the pupils in the special needs base is well below average and for some pupils it is very low. Their achievement is very good because skilful assessments identify their individual needs and tasks are set that give them the opportunity to take small steps forward. Even those pupils who start with very little understanding of how to form letters, or to count up to five, make progress much more quickly than is generally expected. The pupils who leave the base and are integrated part-time or full-time into classes make the same very good progress towards their individual targets. Although they move more slowly towards the targets of their group matched against National Curriculum levels, their achievement is very good when consideration is given to their previous learning and individual needs.
5. Pupils in Year 2 have made good progress since 2002. In 2003, standards were particularly good and pupils achieved well above the results achieved in similar schools. In 2004 results, owing to a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than normal, were not so good, but pupils still performed as well as pupils in similar schools; they were not underachieving. Currently, pupils in Year 2 are reaching expected levels and achieving well in English and mathematics. Their achievement is satisfactory in science, but could be better if higher attainers were consistently set more demanding work. Standards by the end of the reception year are on course to be in line with the expected level in all areas of learning and go beyond it in personal, social and emotional development. This represents good achievement in all aspects except physical development in which achievement is satisfactory. Children could do even better in this aspect of learning, but they are restricted, in particular, by the lack of suitable facilities for outside play.
6. There is no longer unsatisfactory achievement in any subject. Beyond English, mathematics and science, pupils achieve well in ICT in Year 2 and Year 6 owing, in particular, to the innovative links that exist with the local secondary schools. They also achieve well in geography and design and technology because pupils' learning is so well linked with other subjects such as mathematics, ICT and literacy. In physical education standards are above those expected for pupils' ages, and achievement is good throughout the school, largely because the curriculum is so broad and pupils make such good use of facilities and expertise provided by a local sports college. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for and make good progress, particularly in subjects such as physical education, design and technology and ICT.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Almost all aspects have been strengthened since the last inspection. Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and their learning and they generally behave well in lessons and around the school. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Punctuality is good but attendance is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Better provision for pupils' personal development has brought about improved attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- Staff successfully help pupils of all ages and abilities to feel good about themselves through praise, rewards and special responsibilities.
- Absence limits the achievement of some pupils because their learning is disjointed.
- Pupils have much more say in school life now that the school council is established.

Commentary

7. Almost all pupils like school because the staff make them feel special and do all they can to make learning interesting and fun. Pupils respect the staff greatly, valuing their kindness and helpfulness. They justifiably feel that they work hard and say that they particularly enjoy lessons in ICT, the creative arts, trampoline and table tennis. They are keen to learn and want to succeed, exemplified by the large numbers in Years 3 to 6 who daily get to school early to do extra work in mental mathematics. Many also extend their learning by attending enjoyable extra-curricular clubs that help to raise standards. Staff successfully boost pupils' self-esteem with popular rewards for effort and success of all kinds that spur better performance.
8. Attendance remains well below the national average but there are encouraging signs that things are beginning to pick up. The sharp decline reported at the last inspection has been halted and attendance has started to rise due to the considerable efforts of the staff to bring about improvement through, for example, class rewards. There is still some way to go, however, to reach the national average. Much of the absence results from family holidays taken in term time, despite the school's strong stance against this.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/4 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

9. Parents and pupils rightly believe that behaviour has improved greatly over the past couple of years. Some, understandably, still have a few qualms. Staff have adopted a consistent approach to disciplining the pupils, which is firm yet fair. They try to catch the pupils being good, praising and rewarding positive conduct to set the expected standard. This approach works well for almost all pupils but there are a few boys in Year 6 whose immature behaviour sometimes lets them and the school down. They occasionally mar learning and achievement suffers. These few pupils have been most affected by the serious weaknesses in quality of education that existed in the past. Five pupils were excluded from the school for short periods last year. Any bullying is dealt with effectively by the staff who resolutely seek underlying causes and support those concerned.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
356	8	0
5	0	0
8	0	0

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

10. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is good in almost all instances. Pupils who work in the special needs base enjoy coming to school immensely and are excited about their work. During lessons in the mainstream classes, when the teacher is talking to the whole class, pupils who find it hard to maintain concentration occasionally need a reminder on how to behave, or the opportunity to go out of the session for a moment. This is always dealt with exceptionally well by both staff and learning support assistants. During activities pupils receive very good support and their attitude to work is very good.
11. Pupils' personal development is good. They are friendly, well mannered and affable, staff being very good role models for them. Right from outset in the nursery and reception classes, children are taught to give eye contact, have social graces and exchange pleasantries. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Particularly special is the way that peers embrace pupils from the support base who have profound learning difficulties into mainstream lessons and friendship groups.
12. Pupils relish responsibility, taking their duties as school council representatives, monitors and newspaper editors very seriously. The school councillors are tremendous ambassadors for the school, and they thrive on being entrusted with influencing its future development. A weakness in pupils' personal development that remains to be tackled is the heightening of their multicultural awareness. Not enough is being done to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society and this is very important in this virtually all white British community.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education that includes good teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' work is good and this has helped to raise standards and improve teaching. There is a sound curriculum which is very well enhanced by activities beyond the classroom. Pupils receive very good care, support and guidance and the school has a very good partnership with parents and the community. Pupils greatly appreciate what the school does for them, particularly in the way that their views are taken into account.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good with some very good and occasionally excellent features. A range of good assessment methods has been introduced and these methods are working well to help teaching to improve pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has been radically improved in the last two years.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good.

- ICT teaching has improved learning very well and enhanced pupils' personal development.
- Methods of assessment are often good, but pupils are not yet fully involved in assessing their own work.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching is much improved on that found at the time of the last inspection. There is now very little unsatisfactory teaching and the proportion of good and better teaching has grown enormously. There have been many changes in staff since the last inspection and new staff have been inducted very well in methods designed to raise standards. Parents and pupils are very positive about the way in teaching has improved since 2002.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	11 (20%)	30 (54%)	11 (20%)	2 (4%)	0	0

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

14. The much improved teaching has several common themes running through it, but the central feature is the way in which lessons have a clear purpose that is communicated well to pupils. Furthermore, learning is managed well: classrooms are properly equipped and displayed with visual prompts designed to stimulate thought and action. Strong leadership and management have ensured that all classrooms and lessons have this atmosphere of purposeful teaching and learning. There is a variation in the speed at which innovations have been implemented since 2002, but the general effect is good. Some unsatisfactory teaching remains in Year 3 in which, despite the lessons being organised in the school's accepted way, too little is expected of pupils and learning is sluggish. Nevertheless, the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has diminished dramatically over the last two years. In 2002, one in eight lessons was unsatisfactory and now this kind of teaching has almost been eliminated.
15. Learning is good and pupils are achieving well, partly as a result of the helpful assessment methods that have been introduced in English and mathematics. Teachers know exactly where pupils are up to in their learning and what they need to do next. Pupils are informed of their next steps and, where teaching is good or better, know how they need to improve. A useful system has been introduced to get pupils to assess how well they have done in a lesson. This is a good idea but it is not working effectively yet. The involvement of pupils in talking about their learning – how good it is or how it needs to be improved – is, by comparison, the weakest aspect of the school's methods of assessment. Work is well marked. Teachers provide useful comments and clear guidance about what needs to be improved. Pupils nearly always respond to these ideas about improvement, but occasionally teachers' advice is ignored and on these occasions pupils fail to make the required progress.
16. Pupils are generally very proud of their achievements in learning. There are ample rewards for success or just trying hard, but the most potent source of motivation is in the teaching of ICT. The Digital Excellence Award system is working superbly across the school. As pupils learn new skills on the computer, for example, the badges they receive are proudly worn on their sweatshirts. They speak in glowing terms about their successes and can be very specific about what they can do and how this relates to other aspects of their learning. The award system has also had a very positive effect on teaching. Work in ICT has a clarity and structure that did not exist before and this has caused the very good improvements in pupils' achievements since 2002.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. This is because the teaching, including that provided by support assistants, is very knowledgeable about the best methods

to advance pupils' learning. Moreover, pupils flourish because of the excellent relationships between themselves and the adults who work with them. In the support base, activities are very carefully planned to match the next step of each pupils' learning. Exciting resources and tasks keep their interest and maintain their desire to learn. Pupils from the support base are often integrated into mainstream classes. Their progress in each lesson is carefully checked so that work can be planned to move them quickly on to the next stage of their learning. Joint planning between teachers and classroom assistants ensures that all adults are working effectively to achieve the same objectives.

18. The good, and sometimes very good, teaching in the Foundation Stage contains all of the successful elements found elsewhere in the school. Children are engaged well, encouraged in skilful ways and challenged to be independent and resourceful learners. They respond well to these challenges, but their learning is sometimes restricted by the accommodation, which is too cramped, particularly in the nursery class. Moreover, the outside area for learning is not suitable and restricts what can be achieved in physical development. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, teaching attempts to overcome them with a good degree of success.
19. The rapid improvements in pupils' learning, since the last inspection, have been made possible by the school's policy of keeping teachers with the same pupils for two years. This has only just been introduced, but long enough for children in the reception class and pupils in Year 6 to have benefited. In the context of a significant turnover of staff, some pupils have had a stable two years. This has helped pupils in Year 6, in particular, because they had suffered the most from unsatisfactory teaching in the past. One lesson in Year 6 was excellent. It was a religious education lesson, in which pupils were learning about the Bible and what makes it a special book. The level of thinking and discussion was superbly orchestrated by the teacher who was ably supported by the local vicar.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum that meets pupils' needs well in most respects. There are very good opportunities for curriculum enrichment, including a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, overall, but they are unsatisfactory in some aspects of the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of activities, including very good opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities.
- There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and this enables them to achieve well.
- Provision for outside play in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.
- There has been very good improvement in provision of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and, as a result, pupils are achieving well.

Commentary

20. All subjects and areas of learning are now taught in a way that ensures good achievement by the majority of pupils. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is generally good, but there are restrictions in the area of physical development. The outside space for play is poorly surfaced and resources, for use outside, are limited. Indoors, the nursery accommodation is a little cramped, and whilst staff use this as creatively as possible, opportunities for whole-class sessions to consolidate and develop children's learning further, are sometimes hampered by a lack of space.

21. The curriculum focuses well on the needs of individuals, including very effective provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The school has improved immensely the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into the life of the school and their access to all areas of the curriculum since the previous inspection. The integration of pupils is very good. Staff from the base and in mainstream classes plan closely together. Individual education plans are put together well and include specific targets for improvement. The very effective teaching assistants support pupils' progress and development very well by closely following teachers' well-planned activities. For example, in a satisfactory numeracy lesson in Year 3 where most pupils achieved satisfactorily, pupils with special educational needs achieved very well because of the close and well-targeted support they received in a small group, enabling them to complete work on data handling with a high degree of accuracy.
22. The school is committed to ensuring as many pupils as possible have opportunities to take part in activities that provide enrichment. For example, there is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities including dance, table tennis, trampolining, football, netball, computing, science and board games. Some of these activities develop pupils' skills to a very high standard, particularly table tennis and trampolining where the school has competed very successfully against others. The very good links with the local community provide opportunities for pupils to benefit from activities, such as; gardening skills through a link with a chemical company, healthy lifestyles through a visit to Middlesbrough Football Club and literacy appreciation through the local library, which supports poetry week and children's book of the year. The very good links with local schools and colleges promote sport, computer skills and the effective transition of pupils.
23. The school is keen to promote the national guidance on 'Excellence and Enjoyment' in the curriculum. Pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in the interesting activities teachers plan for them, and, as a result, they achieve well. This was exemplified in a very good Year 2 numeracy lesson, where pupils used tally charts to record the proportions of differently coloured sweets in a packet of pastilles. They thoroughly enjoyed the activity because it was relevant to their experience, and once they had succeeded in representing the data very effectively in a pictogram, they ate the evidence!
24. There has been good improvement, overall, since the previous inspection because the curriculum now allows pupils to achieve well in English, mathematics and ICT, in particular. There has been considerable improvement in the effectiveness of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with good provision now, whereas it was unsatisfactory previously. There has been a significant improvement in the resources to support ICT and the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is developing well. The outside buildings, housing the kitchens and dining areas, have deteriorated since the previous inspection and this diminishes pupils' sense of pride in their school. The school spends more time teaching pupils than nationally recommended amounts, and this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Staff take very good care of the pupils and work tirelessly to support and guide their personal and academic development effectively. Pupils are very actively involved in the life and work of the school now that the school council is well established.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All aspects of pupils' care, support and guidance have strengthened since the last inspection due to the commitment and hard work of the staff.
- Pupils with special educational needs blossom in the very caring, supportive environment that staff create.

- The trusting relationships that are established throughout the school community enable openness about problems that arise.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own learning and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils very keenly participate in making their school even better.

Commentary

25. Parents are full of praise for what they describe as a complete turn around in the level of care, advice and support for their children since the headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed two years ago. All staff are pulling in the same direction now for the benefit of the pupils, and expectations of them are consistent and clear.
26. Every pupil is valued and cherished by the staff who protect them from harm and strive to ensure achievement is good. Praise and rewards form an important part of this process by boosting pupils' self-esteem. Effort and success, however small, are celebrated in ways that capture pupils' enthusiasm and sometimes even enchant them. In the support base, for instance, pupils earn 'sparkles' to adorn a fibre optic tree that reveals their brilliance. Pupils proudly sport badges for personal achievement in ICT and love earning recognition as 'smarty pants' for their endeavours in mental mathematics.
27. Pupils appreciate having an adult in school that they can turn to if they have any troubles. Parents feel equally comfortable about approaching the staff with queries or problems and find them very helpful, likening them to friends rather than teachers. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good listeners, skilled in counselling pupils and parents when difficulties arise. They are experienced in dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour and hence the necessity to exclude pupils is rare. Vulnerable pupils are well supported through initiatives such as the 'buddy' system.
28. Parents are rightly pleased with arrangements for their children to settle in and with provision for those with special educational needs, including gifted and talented pupils. The support base caters very well for pupils of all ages with profound learning and socialisation difficulties. They receive very good support and guidance that enable them to cope in mainstream lessons and other activities appropriate to meet their needs. Well-briefed and well-deployed teaching assistants play a large role in these and in other pupils' personal and academic support. Parents also appreciate the well-liked 'catch up' programmes for children who fall behind.
29. Assessment procedures have improved greatly since the last inspection. Pupils are involved to some extent through target setting and the piloting of a simple 'traffic light' self-assessment system that is yet to be fully embedded.
30. Staff give school councillors their head to find out what peers really think about the school. Their discussions maturely focus upon what can realistically be changed for the better and staff suitably take their views on board.
31. Some parents expressed concerns about the far from ideal canteen facilities. The rather dilapidated buildings are made as child-friendly, bright and cheerful as possible but lengthy queuing is unavoidable to get the efficient throughput of pupils required. Positive attitudes are promoted by a super initiative whereby chosen pupils are honoured with a seat on the 'top table' bedecked with party tablecloth, candelabra and serviettes.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are very well cared for and the relationships they have with adults in the base are excellent. Adults know the pupils exceptionally well. Their needs, including their social and emotional difficulties, are very well understood because of the very

good relationship with parents and the close monitoring of pupils' progress. In mainstream classes, this care is continued and monitored effectively both by the co-ordinator for special educational needs and by the deputy headteacher.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys very good partnerships with parents, other schools and the community that contribute very effectively to pupils' learning and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with parents are very much stronger now that communication and consultation are better.
- Very good use of visitors and community facilities enriches pupils' learning and makes it enjoyable.
- Very good links with other local schools benefit pupils and staff greatly.
- Parents need to be made more aware that attendance is not good enough.

Commentary

33. Staff have worked very hard over the past two years to strengthen the partnership with parents and have initiated almost all of the links with the wider community that now bring learning alive for the pupils and help to raise standards.
34. Parents rightly feel much better informed about school life than at the time of the last inspection. They appreciate the informal style and friendly tone of newsletters and other communications. More detailed annual written reports and greater opportunity for discussions with class teachers better inform them about their child's progress and targets for development. Parents now receive helpful half-termly curriculum outlines. Family learning programmes and adult education courses on site are available for those who want to extend their own learning, involvement and interests. Parents are fully involved in the processes of assessment and review of pupils with special educational needs. These parents are very happy to approach the school whenever they have concerns and their views are taken fully into account. The Home School Association is highly active now in organising fund-raising events that are well supported by parents and the wider community.
35. Very good brochures for parents of children about to start school in the nursery and reception classes clearly explain the areas of learning, early learning goals and the importance of play. Effective links with the Fischer Trust enable parents to help with the development of their children's early skills through borrowing resources such as family games.
36. The headteacher has won the trust and support of parents who value being able to chat to him and the staff about any anxieties that arise. Complaints have decreased in number as a result. Now that this trust and mutual respect are established, more could be done to raise parental awareness about attendance issues. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were unaware that attendance is well below average.
37. An excellent *PowerPoint* presentation for parents has shown pupils enjoying the very wide range of curriculum-enriching activities that have taken place in recent months. The local vicar who is chair of governors plays an active role in enlivening school worship and religious education lessons through his motivating exuberance. Personnel from a nearby chemical plant help staff to run a delightful gardening club for Year 2 that teaches them much about the environment. Other recent visitors have included Russian cosmonauts, an author, the Mayor, theatre groups and musicians. Year 5 pupils were 'wowed' by Shakespeare during a visit to

the theatre and Year 6 pupils have been to Middlesbrough FC to learn about keeping healthy. Pupils make good use of the local library and participate in the local show and sporting events.

38. Very strong links with the City Learning Centre and local secondary schools help to raise standards, particularly in ICT and physical education. An innovative 'virtual classroom' established at Billingham Campus provides useful opportunity for Year 6 pupils to chat on line with former pupils who have transferred there. This is particularly important for the more vulnerable and anxious to gain reassurance about transition. Northfield School and Sports College provides expert skills in the teaching of sports and gymnastics. Staff and pupils benefit from links with this and other local schools that enable sharing of expertise, smooth transfer to secondary school and curriculum continuity.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Leadership, management and the way that the school is governed are all very good. All statutory requirements are fulfilled and governors play a very active role in supporting the school, checking progress and challenging it to do better.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have improved teaching and raised achievement across the school.
- The school's educational direction is excellently promoted and guided by the headteacher who is most ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff.
- Governors play a strong role in assuring the school's development.

Commentary

39. The very good improvement since the school's last inspection in 2002 has eliminated the serious weaknesses that existed. Pupils were underachieving as a result of the unsatisfactory teaching in most classes. The school has undergone a massive shake-up in staffing. New members have worked very hard with established staff, who have gained a new lease of life, under the expert leadership of the head and deputy headteacher. The school has been transformed into a good school with some very good features. The processes of self-evaluation are strong enough to ensure that virtually everyone is working towards the same ends: they know what is working well and what still needs to be improved. The action plans for development are apt, well written and concentrate well on raising standards of achievement even further. Many parents and pupils rightly speak in most positive terms of the school's successful regeneration and its truly inclusive character.
40. The easy, warm and inclusive atmosphere, which exists throughout the school, is underpinned by a determined and relentless drive for improvement. The headteacher's capacity for realising the vision of achievement through quality and partnership is demonstrated by the radical improvements made in the links with parents and the local community, the way in which the staff manage the curriculum and the harmonious and productive links between the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governing body. The entire staff and governing body work as a team in a steadfast, open and collaborative way to maintain and improve the school's current rate of improvement. Moreover, the work in the base for special needs is very well woven into the fabric of the whole school as a result of the expertise and dogged commitment shown by the co-ordinator and all staff concerned. Pupils, some of whom have marked difficulties, are closely monitored in their learning to ensure that the effectiveness of strategies and the support of outside agencies contributes fully to provision.
41. The priority for development has correctly been about raising standards and improving achievement in English, mathematics, science and ICT. This has been achieved as demonstrated by the advances made in pupils' achievement since 2002. The curriculum, in

general, has been managed very well, on a wider scale, to produce a rich blend of interesting additional activities, for example trampolining, table tennis and the 'virtual' links, via computer, to a local secondary school. Pupils' achievements and the revitalised curriculum have been brought about by the good leadership and management of co-ordinators who have worked very hard to put in place systems and to inspire colleagues to teach to greater effect. They have been instrumental in training staff and ensuring the most appropriate resources are available, sometimes from a very weak starting point in 2002, as was the case in science for example. The Foundation Stage is led very well by a most knowledgeable co-ordinator. The provision for nursery and reception children has been managed well in difficult circumstances. The accommodation and many resources are unsatisfactory. For example, children do not have access to a suitable outside play area. Nevertheless, the team of staff works hard to provide the most suitable curriculum possible to ensure that children achieve well.

42. The developments in teaching have been brought about by vigorous monitoring and unflinching evaluation. The rapid turnover in staff has worked to the school's advantage and new staff have been quickly assimilated, inducted and trained. The headteacher and deputy headteacher orchestrate the work of the co-ordinators skilfully and readily acknowledge where teaching, accommodation and resources are still unsatisfactory and what needs to be done to improve them. Governors are very closely involved in all developments. Their very good work, steered by the very effective chair of governors, in securing a good team of teachers has paid off and now learning can flourish. Governors employ effective systems with which to get to know how the school is performing, including meeting co-ordinators regularly for detailed discussions about pupils' achievements. Statutory duties are implemented in full including the provision of a race equality policy that is monitored regularly. Governors consult well and have an outward looking approach that compares the school with others in a similar position.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1316945
Total expenditure	1326919
Expenditure per pupil	2910

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	65752
Balance carried forward to the next	55778

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children are admitted into the nursery class when they are three. They transfer to the reception class when they are four. The lively and interesting curriculum content is well planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to the children's needs. These are carefully balanced between activities that children choose for themselves and those that are directed by adults. It is not possible to provide the full curriculum in physical development because the outside play area is not suitable. Teaching is generally good and, on occasions, very good. The classrooms are full of exciting areas in which the children can learn through educational play that is fun and purposeful. A consistency in lesson planning, teaching methods and the assessment of children's learning has been achieved through very good leadership. Children's progress is monitored closely; staff, including teaching assistants, know the children well. Work is assessed well and annotated with useful comments to help parents see what progress has been made. A good photographic record of children's achievements is kept that helps teachers to assess overall performance at the end of the year. An effective partnership with parents has been created. Parents speak well of the provision. Children from the special educational needs base often make very good progress when integrated into the Foundation Stage.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults set high expectations for children's work and behaviour and children achieve well as a result.
- Children flourish because the atmosphere in lessons boosts their confidence.
- Cramped accommodation in the nursery class can spoil children's concentration.

Commentary

43. As a result of the good teaching in this area, children achieve well and most are on course to go beyond the expected goals by the time they leave reception. When children start in the nursery class, many are beginning to concentrate hard and take their turn. They quickly learn to relate well to adults in school and by the time they are in reception children show confidence in the way that they act socially; most listen very well, relate very well to adults and other children and wait while others speak. Many show fascination for things that they are learning. For example, in one lesson, children in reception were playing with a parachute outside and whooped with delight when they were called to run underneath it. Boys, in particular, were very energised by the activity and children from the special needs support base made very good progress in socialising from the sheer joy of taking part. Teaching in both classes establishes high expectations for children's behaviour and attitudes to learning. Children respond very well to these expectations. They are particularly good at collecting and looking after their own resources for an activity such as when children in the nursery worked well together in the class 'Station Road Post Office'. The good teaching encourages children to take responsibility and show confidence when looking after the class rabbit or singing a solo in a musical version of the Christmas story.
44. Sometimes, children's powers of concentration are diminished by being too close to a slightly noisy activity, such as the Igloo in the nursery class, when they need to think quietly about a problem, for example. This is unavoidable and the school has drawn up plans to radically improve the accommodation for the Foundation Stage.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make rapid progress in speaking and listening, as a result of the well-planned teaching they receive.
- The teaching of early reading and writing skills is good and children learn well.

Commentary

45. Teaching is good and, as a result, most children achieve well and will reach the nationally expected level by the end of reception. Children get off to a good start because most learn to listen well. Teaching uses effective devices to promote close attention and concentration. In the nursery, for example, children enjoyed sitting on the 'hot seat' and pretending to be a character from the Christmas story to whom others could ask questions; the 'donkey' was particularly good. Children's powers of oral communication are quite weak when they start school. They make swift progress in this aspect as a result of teaching that encourages spontaneous talk in drama and role-play such as when the puppet theatre was used in reception to get children to play out the Christmas story. Reading advances well because letter sounds are taught systematically and in an enjoyable fashion. Consequently, most children, already in the reception class, for example, can readily spot sounds at the beginning and end of words and some can read key words in a text. Teaching produces in children a familiarity with books and most can talk well about pictures and text. Occasionally, some boys in the nursery lose interest in a task or play activity because they are not given specific enough instructions about what to do or how their play might develop. Consequently, their speech does not develop as fast in these circumstances compared to the times when teaching directs the proceedings.
46. Children make good progress in writing. Very few have much knowledge of words when they start school. By the end of their first term in the reception class, average attainers can spot full stops and know where they go. They can hear sounds in words and have made a good start at transferring them to paper. Higher attainers can even write a string of nearly recognisable words with the correct space in between them. This is because plans for their learning, in both classes, contain a detailed breakdown of what they need to do to make best progress and the breadth of opportunities for writing is good.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because mathematics is so well planned for and integrated into many activities.
- There are occasional missed opportunities for children to talk about their learning.
- Educational play is used well to reinforce learning.

Commentary

47. Children achieve well in response to the good quality of teaching they receive; most are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Older children in the nursery can count to ten and relish the chance of using this knowledge. For example, they

played at posting Christmas cards in numbered letter boxes to show that they could identify the numbers correctly. Good teaching by a support assistant guaranteed that older and younger children got the most out of the activity. By the time children are in the reception class they can talk well about mathematics. For example, they were very keen to discuss the relative position of cards that had been stuck on a grid. Very good teaching capitalised on children's growing confidence; one child said unprompted, "I know what a grid is" and then went on to give a perfect explanation. The lesson then proceeded to improve children's use of positional language in a very effective manner.

48. Children have good opportunities to use computers for mathematical games, which help to develop confidence and mental agility. Education play is used well to reinforce what is learnt about mathematics. For example, counting is a regular feature of songs and other activities. However, there are some missed opportunities for consolidating their learning. For example, in some lessons, children learn about the mathematical idea well, but lack an immediate opportunity to judge how well they have done or talk with another child about how successful they have been. Furthermore, on occasions, some children remain relatively passive in class discussions and need greater prompting to join in.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A practical and interesting curriculum ensures that children achieve well.
- Good learning is developed well through valuable conversation.
- There are not enough computers in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

49. An interesting and wide-ranging curriculum, which is taught well, ensures that children's achievement is good. Most children will reach the nationally expected levels by the end of their reception year. A good range of practical tasks helps to compensate for children's general lack of experience and knowledge when they start school. The use of computers is limited in the classrooms and there are no electronic whiteboards to enliven teaching and learning. This is compensated for by the timetabled use of the school's computer room, but this hampers spontaneous use and sometimes children need more individual help than is possible in a class lesson.
50. Children in the nursery thoroughly enjoyed collaborating over making a huge picture depicting their thoughts about winter. The lesson involved much discussion about clothes, materials, the seasons and the natural world in general. This kind of well-orchestrated discussion about matters of practical, historical and geographical interest is a key note of the provision in Foundation Stage. Furthermore, learning has a spiritual dimension when teaching requires children to discuss how they feel about issues. For example, in the reception class the atmosphere was electric as children were encouraged to think how their behaviour, such as smiling, affects others. The lesson culminated in each child hanging a leaf on the 'Thinking Tree' to show that they were thinking about others.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children generally make good progress in the school hall and when handling small equipment, but they do not get enough opportunities to play outside with the full range of equipment.

Commentary

51. Most children are on course to meet the expected goals by the end of the year. They achieve soundly as a result of the satisfactory teaching they receive. This represents an improvement in standards from the time of the last inspection, but children could achieve even more despite the fact that children's manipulative skills are developed well through regular opportunities to cut, colour and thread objects and make things. They have frequent and well-organised opportunities to develop muscle power and co-ordination when using the school hall. For example, nursery children showed imagination when creating movements about a journey taken on a snowy day. There are not frequent enough opportunities to develop skills, in general, and for children to use large apparatus outside. Moreover, the range of activity provided outside is not as broad as that inside because the staff lack resources and a suitable space in which children can learn. However, the school has good plans to resolve these gaps in provision.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement in painting, drawing and singing is good.
- Teaching gives very good direct help to children to act out make-believe situations, but sometimes the cramped accommodation in the nursery restricts what can be done.

Commentary

52. Most children are on course to reach the expected goals for their age by the end of the year. This represents good achievement as a result of good teaching. Children get plenty of opportunities to use a range of materials and tools. The good progress they make is also a result of the timely advice and encouragement they receive from teachers and their assistants. For example, children have produced some successful portraits of themselves and their friends using paint, pastels and crayon. They have also used fabric well to create tie-dyed and collage pieces. Singing is frequently developed during lesson time, in mathematics for example. Children also sing well in preparation for productions such as the Christmas musical. A strength of creative development is the well-organised role-play facilities in which children enjoy dressing up and pretending. Despite the best efforts of the nursery staff to provide areas in which children can play without disturbing others, they sometimes distract others because the shape of the room means that they are too close to different types of activity.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led and managed in a way that has led to swift improvement.
- Good teaching is having a positive impact on the raising of standards, particularly with opportunities for speaking and listening.
- Able and well-deployed teaching assistants are delivering effective catch-up programmes.
- Pupils, especially boys, could do better in writing.
- Pupils do not speak with enough insight about their targets and how well they are doing; this affects the progress of higher attaining pupils in particular.

Commentary

53. The 2004 results in English were well below the national average at the end of Year 6 and below the national average at the end of Year 2. However, the achievement of these pupils was good largely owing to the very good improvements the school has made in the period since the last inspection.
54. Current standards are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. All pupils are achieving well but those in Year 6, in particular, are making good progress because energetic teaching has helped them recover from the serious weaknesses that existed in 2002. Pupils with special educational needs consistently achieve very well due to the extra attention they receive.
55. Speaking and listening are the strongest aspects of pupils' performance in English, and this is having an impact on their reading and writing and the progress they are making. The use of talk partners, small whiteboards and 'hot seating' throughout school is enabling pupils to answer questions and show interest in elaborating on their ideas or commenting on what other pupils have said. Opportunities for structured role-play as with Year 6's Victorian Day are making pupils' learning more relevant and engaging. Class discussions during and at the end of lessons, focusing on the objective for learning, are giving pupils the opportunity to consolidate and build on their learning. Some good and very good teaching, for example in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6, gives extremely clear guidance mixed with the fun of drama sessions that help to make the learning more productive. Pupils in these classes are using different types of writing, and work benefits from detailed comments from teachers. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils mastered the art of instructional writing very quickly because teaching was so well organised.
56. Pupils reach average standards in reading and make good progress. Teachers teach pupils, in groups, how to reach deeper levels of understanding about a text. Teachers are confident in guiding pupils in how to read with full understanding. New resources have been purchased and pupils enjoy the new books and speak well about using new resources.
57. Writing is the weakest aspect, especially in Year 6 and for boys. The current Year 6 pupils attained low results in writing at the end of Year 2 and since then advances have been the weakest aspect of their progress. However, Year 6 pupils are now receiving very effective targeted support, especially boys. Texts are used that boys find stimulating. Good electronic whiteboard use is a regular feature in lessons and the school is involved in an exciting project in design and technology that promotes good writing about the work in progress. Pupils' writing is a focus throughout the school. In Years 4 and 5, pupils make very good progress due to consistently stimulating, enthusiastic and challenging teaching. Writing is benefiting

from good planning which is meeting the needs of different learning styles. A common shortcoming throughout the school is the lack of understanding shown by pupils in talking about how well they think they have done in their work. Strengthening this element of self-review would particularly assist higher attaining pupils with their achievement. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but this skill of self-evaluation is only just being developed as a theme in teaching throughout the school.

58. The talented co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management, knowing exactly what needs improving and how to do it, including the occasionally unsatisfactory teaching in Year 3. The newly introduced Curriculum Team Support group system is proving effective. A useful system of personal targets for pupils' reading and writing has been introduced. The school writing portfolio pinpoints exactly what constitutes good writing at the school and has a positive effect on teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities. Pupils' achievement is being recorded and analysed very closely to ensure that good progress is made throughout the school. Teaching assistants and support staff such as the 'Raising Achievement in Primary Teaching' staff are deployed very effectively, use intervention programmes very well and are making a very positive impact on pupils' progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. This area is much improved since the last inspection. Pupils use their skills in English well across the curriculum. They practise reading while engaged on researching for information in history and geography, for example. ICT is incorporated well for research and word processing and includes stimulating *PowerPoint* presentations by the pupils, as they did during the Year 6 Victorian Day. Pupils' written work is good overall. There are examples of good work in history and geography where pupils write with conviction about issues such as life in Ancient Egypt.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Very good leadership and management are making a significant contribution to subject development.
- There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and, as a result, they achieve very well.
- The school is working hard to improve pupils' skills in mental mathematics.
- There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress, but pupils are not sure what they need to do to improve.
- There are not enough planned opportunities to use, and develop, mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

60. Standards are average at the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6 standards are below average. This is because a significant number of pupils in the current Year 6 have special educational needs and work below nationally expected levels. Pupils in Year 6 also work at a lower level because a good proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, including the way the National Strategy for Numeracy was taught. Although the quality of teaching and learning has improved since then, and this has resulted in good achievement, a significant number of pupils particularly in Year 6 continue to work below national expectations.

61. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection because standards are higher, overall; the quality of teaching and learning is now consistently good, whereas it was satisfactory before, and the subject is very well led and managed, whereas this was satisfactory before. As a result, standards throughout school are improving and pupils are achieving well. For example, in the 2004 national tests, attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was above average, compared to the performance of pupils in similar schools. Based on their competence in mathematics four years earlier, pupils in Year 6 made very good progress, compared to pupils in similar schools. Over the last few years the school has monitored pupils' progress closely, and girls' attainment has been slightly better than boys'. In order to ensure boys achieve at least as well as girls, classroom materials and teaching styles are selected carefully to ensure they appeal to all. The school has good procedures for identifying those who are particularly able at mathematics, but lesson planning does not consistently provide for their needs with suitably challenging activities, except in two Year 5 classes where the higher attaining pupils were effectively catered for when they worked with teaching assistants. However, pupils make good progress in the lunchtime club organised for very capable mathematicians when they tackle challenging questions on a specially designed website.
62. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good and, as a result, they make progress at a greater rate than their classmates, in relation to their prior attainment. This includes in-class support, where pupils' needs are met very effectively through teachers' good lesson planning, and very effective teaching assistants who ensure pupils work towards specific targets on individual education plans. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2 the teacher's planning catered very well for the individual needs of pupils because it was well matched to their needs. As a result, pupils succeeded in adding up amounts totalling 10p, and finding the change when they visited the class fruit and vegetable shop. There is also very effective provision for pupils with special educational needs in the resourced support base because it is very well organised to cater for pupils of all ages, working at their own level alongside very effective staff.
63. The very effective co-ordinator has checked on the quality of teaching, and pupils' performance in national and practice tests, and has looked very carefully at work in pupils' books to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning. As a result she has identified weaknesses in pupils' understanding of mental mathematics methods. The school has taken very good action to address this issue by organising daily mental mathematics sessions before school starts. A large proportion of pupils turn up voluntarily for these sessions each day, and weekly assessment of progress ensures that future teaching is effective in meeting specific needs. Pupils' improving confidence and accuracy in mental mathematics were evident in a good Year 6 lesson when the teacher worked at pace, expecting pupils to stand up and sit down appropriately as he pointed to different parts of his counting stick, representing multiples of five and seven. Pupils enjoyed this activity, which developed mental agility well, ready for the next part of the lesson.
64. As part of the improving provision in mathematics, the co-ordinator has introduced a good assessment system that enables teachers to check if pupils are making the expected rate of progress. The school is also implementing a system of self-assessment during lessons that helps pupils understand what they have achieved, and what they need to do next. This is at an early stage of implementation. Discussions with pupils indicate that group and individual targets for improvement are not as effective as they might be because, in some classes, they have not been discussed with them, nor are they recorded in all exercise books, enabling pupils to refer to them regularly. Consequently, this aspect of assessment is weaker than others at present.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Pupils use and develop skills across the curriculum satisfactorily. Following a training day earlier in the year, teachers' planning explores ways of using mathematical skills in other subjects. In a very good session at the North Stockton City Learning Centre, pupils' mathematical skills were developed very well as they completed calculations related to Grand Prix racing. This enabled them to program a computer to test their expertise in preparing Formula 1 cars for racing. This was an enjoyable and effective activity that was followed up in Year 6 lessons back at school. However, the teachers' planning for mathematics across the curriculum is still at an early stage in some classes.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide exciting opportunities for pupils to learn through investigation and this is speeding up pupils' learning.
- Pupils of higher attainment are challenged well in their thinking in Years 3 to 6, and those with special educational needs are supported very well.
- Some pupils, particularly those of average attainment, do not acquire a good enough working vocabulary of scientific terms.
- Co-ordinators spearhead the development of the subject by promoting interest and enthusiasm with both staff and pupils.
- Assessment is not yet fully effective in providing information about what pupils know and can do so that teachers can plan work to rectify misunderstandings.

Commentary

66. At the time of the previous inspection, teaching, learning and pupils' achievement were unsatisfactory. A determined approach by the co-ordinators, allied to a very well-constructed plan for development, has led to speedy improvements in all these areas and overall improvement has been very good. In Year 2, pupils' achievement is sound and current standards are average overall. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall because opportunities to move higher attaining pupils on to more demanding work are sometimes missed. In Year 6, there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, standards are below average. Pupils of higher attainment achieve well and those with special educational needs achieve very well. However, those of average attainment, whose achievement is satisfactory, could achieve more with a better working vocabulary of scientific terms. They do not, for instance, use terms such as 'evaporation' and 'condensation' knowledgeably. The school's results in national tests in 2004 were well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Both year groups had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs but the results also reflected the fact that teaching and learning in previous years had not been good enough, as stated in the previous inspection report.
67. The co-ordinators have developed teachers' skill and their enthusiasm for providing hands-on investigations so that pupils' interest and learning are increased. Pupils have, for example, found out about air resistance by running in the playground with large carrier bags to experience the drag effect of a parachute and have observed, measured and tested plants to find out factors involved in growth. Pupils enjoy these experiments, work hard in lesson of this type and develop their skills and knowledge quickly. Pupils of higher attainment in Years 3 to 6 are challenged well. Teachers' expectations of them are generally high and they are asked to find answers to questions for themselves. Those with special educational needs receive very good support because the recording of findings is adapted well for them and classroom

assistants support them very effectively with extra explanations. However, despite these good features, teaching is generally satisfactory rather than good, mainly because teachers are not yet using assessments, both during lessons and when marking, well enough to pick up on pupils' misconceptions and to provide work that would help clarify misunderstandings. This is apparent from both teachers' marking and the way that lessons are planned to follow on one after the other. In Year 3 in particular, the work done in one lesson does not build on the skills and knowledge of the previous lesson. In Year 6 during a topic on materials, pupils with average attainment, who did not fully understand the difference between the filtration process and dissolving substances, described the mixing of sand in water as 'dissolving' sand. This needed further work focused closely on rectifying this misconception and developing pupils' use of correct terminology.

68. The leadership of the subject is very good because the co-ordinators have effectively tackled all of the unsatisfactory aspects of the provision noted at the last inspection. The well-stocked and well-organised science room contributes effectively to investigative work and the science club for pupils in Year 4 is popular. The management of the subject is good because the co-ordinators are knowledgeable and provide good advice and guidance. However, whole-school assessment procedures were only introduced nine months ago and so have not yet been monitored to check on their effectiveness. Monitoring of teaching and teachers' planning is good but has not yet identified aspects within each unit of work where teachers' subject knowledge could be developed further to help teachers focus on ways to improve the pupils' use and understanding of scientific terms.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a very good amount of improvement in provision since the previous inspection.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and, as a result they achieve very well.
- 'Digital Excellence Awards' are motivating pupils to succeed and are contributing to rising standards.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers in classrooms to reinforce learning.

Commentary

69. The standard of pupils' work is average by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has put a lot of effort into improving provision since the previous inspection when standards were unsatisfactory at the end of Year 6. Pupils work in a very well equipped computer suite where there are sufficient computers for whole-class use, with a fast broadband connection to the Internet that supports learning well because pupils are able to search for, and access, information swiftly. The school has purchased very good quality computers and software for the ICT suite, and nine electronic whiteboards that enhance the quality of classroom teaching. Staff confidence in using ICT has grown since the previous inspection and this has enabled teachers to improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good, and to make greater use of ICT to support their work, for example when they plan lessons, analyse pupils' performance in tests or prepare documents to support meetings and training. These significant improvements since the previous inspection have contributed to very good improvement, overall.

70. As a result of good teaching and learning, pupils' confidence is growing and this enables them to achieve well in lessons. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. This is because teachers' lesson planning takes account of individual needs, and teaching assistants provide very effective support. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, where pupils were inputting information to create a graph, a teaching assistant worked intensively with a group of pupils, supporting their progress towards a Digital Excellence Award. Similarly, the teacher's grouping of pupils placed higher attaining ones with those who were less confident. This form of 'peer mentoring' worked well and contributed to good class achievement, overall. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys, or of pupils of different ethnicity.
71. Leadership and management are very effective and make a significant contribution to subject development. For example, the co-ordinator has ensured that gaps in the scheme of work at the time of the previous inspection have been filled. This is enabling pupils to succeed in all aspects of ICT, and leading to rising standards, especially in Year 6 where a number of pupils are beginning to complete work at a higher level than expected for their age group. The co-ordinator has also supported the implementation of Digital Excellence Awards, which pupils earn as they acquire, and build on, new skills in ICT. They are thrilled to receive badges recognising their achievements, and wear these with pride on the sleeves of school sweatshirts. The Digital Excellence Awards support assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses well by making clear to pupils what they need to do to improve and informing teachers' planning of the next steps in learning. The co-ordinator is a very competent user of ICT and has worked closely with senior staff in the school and a local authority ICT consultant to observe lessons and analyse the strengths and weaknesses of ICT provision. As a result training opportunities have targeted those areas where staff need the greatest support.
72. There are a number of additional opportunities that enrich the ICT experiences of those taking part. For example, a number of pupils produce a school newspaper called *The Billingham South Express*. Other pupils work towards Digital Excellence Awards or select a program to work on from the extensive range of software. A very good link has developed with the Campus Comprehensive School through 'The Virtual Classroom'. This enables Year 6 pupils to talk directly to Year 7 pupils and staff to help them find out more about their new school, prior to transferring in the following September. These extra-curricular activities are very well supported by staff and give ICT a high profile in school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Although pupils' ICT skills are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum, this is improving well since a staff training day earlier in the year. The impact of this training is seen in some lessons. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher successfully combined ICT and music when pupils used computers to compose short pieces of music. Pupils made good progress, and achieved well because their good ICT skills supported learning in music. In those classrooms with electronic whiteboards, teachers are using these effectively to support teaching, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons, but pupils have limited opportunities to use them individually, or in groups, to further support their learning in different subjects. There are computers in a number of classrooms around school, but these were not used during the inspection. Some of these computers are too old to support learning effectively.

HUMANITIES

One lesson was observed in geography and two in history; therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about provision in these subjects. However, pupils' work was evaluated and discussions were held with the co-ordinator and pupils.

74. Pupils attain average standards in **geography**, which represents good achievement. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge and understanding of points of the compass and bearings, which is partly due to the good collaborative work undertaken with the local sports college.

Moreover, pupils have a good appreciation of how well mathematics, ICT and English are developed through geography, thereby demonstrating that the school's drive to ensure cross-curricular links are taking place. In Year 2 good literacy links are used with comparisons being made between Struay (from the Katie Morag stories) and Billingham. Local field trips, such as Year 5's work on surveying parking in the vicinity of school, give pupils a wider perspective on local geography. The subject is well led and managed, with a useful school portfolio exemplifying standards. Pupils achieve well because their learning is woven in well with other subjects and teachers know where pupils are up to in their learning and can therefore plan the next steps.

75. Pupils attain average standards in **history**, which represents satisfactory achievement. For example, pupils in Year 6 have an understanding of the effects of Roman and Viking settlement in Britain. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the way the school develops opportunities to involve 'expert visitors' to the school such as a Roman legionary and a Viking. They can talk about their work with nearly perfect recall, demonstrating successful learning in lessons, particularly about the Viking raid in Year 4, the Victorian Day in Year 6 and the recent simulated evacuation in Years 3 and 4. Moreover, older pupils have a good appreciation of how well English is developed through history and its relevance to other subjects such as religious education and design and technology. Good ICT opportunities have been taken in Year 4, for example, to allow pupils to find out more about King Henry VIII. Pupils achieve only satisfactorily because the assessment of their work is not as advanced as in some other subjects, and therefore their learning is not so well rooted in past experiences.

Religious education

Provision for pupils in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching provides pupils with a good understanding of the spiritual and moral aspects of religion.
- Pupils' interest is increased through the effective use of visits, visitors, artefacts and resources such as ICT.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity, but lack a sound understanding of some aspects of other religions.
- Assessment is not used sufficiently to check on pupils' progress and understanding in different units of work.

Commentary

76. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. For instance, those of average and lower attainment identify the main symbols and festivals of Christianity. Pupils of all levels of attainment talk well about spiritual and moral aspects of religious education, such as the purpose of prayer and respect for others' needs and achievements. Older pupils do not have such a secure understanding of other religions because, until two years ago, the subject was managed unsatisfactorily and these aspects were underdeveloped. Nevertheless, pupils have gained a reasonable understanding of other faiths despite being uncertain about some aspects that should have been learnt earlier on. Pupils in Year 2 attain the standards expected for their age because their knowledge is built up progressively in each lesson. Pupils' achievement, throughout the school, is satisfactory and this is good improvement since the previous inspection.
77. Overall teaching is good, particularly in Christianity, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory, by comparison, because the monitoring of the subject has not fully identified the gaps in pupils' learning. The school has plans to introduce assessment in the current academic year, but

currently there are no whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and this is an unsatisfactory element of provision. Teachers promote religious education well because they focus on developing pupils' thinking. For instance, in a good lesson in Year 5, pupils discussed the difference between religious and secular Christmas cards. This was topical and thought-provoking at the same time. An excellent lesson in Year 6 was the culmination of a project researching into the Bible. It was characterised by opportunities to help pupils look beyond the literal and to understand the Bible in the context of their own lives. This was most notable in their questions to the guest speaker, the local vicar. The questions were insightful and clearly prompted by a very good level of discussion in previous lessons. Their own work and research of recent weeks were celebrated by two multi-media presentations displayed on the class electronic whiteboard. This is a good example of how the use of ICT effectively promotes pupils' interest and good attitudes to religion.

78. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and have focused on sensible areas to improve. In most classes, with the exception of Year 2, pupils do little recording of their thoughts and this is also a drawback to a higher level of attainment as pupils do not have a record of their work, their thinking and acquired knowledge to look back on as they move up the school. The portfolio of examples of pupils' work is helpful in providing good examples of tasks but, because it is not assessed using the locally agreed syllabus as guidance, it does not provide teachers with a yardstick for judging levels of attainment.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were observed in art and design, two in physical education, one in design and technology and one in music. Therefore, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the provision in these subjects. However, pupils' work and teachers' assessments were evaluated. In addition, discussions were held with the co-ordinator and pupils.

Commentary

79. Standards in **art and design** are average by the end of Year 6 and this represents satisfactory achievement. Some very good work throughout the school is balanced by some marked gaps in provision. Some good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well in painting and printing. For example, in Year 6 pupils have produced successful work such as finely painted versions of peacock feathers. However, there is a lack of three-dimensional work throughout the school and sketchbooks are little used in Years 3 to 6. The school has recently made use of a local organisation offering teaching in art for primary pupils. This link has lifted pupils' achievements to new heights. Pupils in Year 2 have produced some magnificent hand-made felt faces and in Year 4 pupils have printed some carefully drawn designs onto cotton hangings.
80. Standards in **design and technology** are average and this represents good achievement in a subject that has been radically revitalised since 2002. The co-ordinator has high expectations for the work throughout the school and this ambition, coupled with good managerial acumen, is already raising standards and improving pupils' achievement. The school has recently introduced a new scheme of work which is currently being used in several year groups, though not all. It is an innovative and exciting scheme which the co-ordinator rightly feels is raising standards not only in design and technology but also in literacy. Pupils, in Year 2 and Year 4 in particular, enjoy using the scheme and work hard to record their plans, designs and evaluations using the attractive resource materials. In Year 2, the reading and writing done by all pupils, but especially boys, using the scheme's materials have been particularly successful.
81. Standards in **music** are average at the end of Year 2 and 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' standards in singing go beyond the other aspects of the curriculum, such as musical composition. They get plenty of opportunity to sing, particularly in the school's popular productions. The co-ordinator has improved provision by opening a music room in which classes can use instruments without disturbing others in their normal semi-open plan classrooms. This is a recent innovation and it has not had much of an impact on pupils' skills

in composition. ICT is used as a tool for composition in Year 2 to good effect. The co-ordinator has not yet devised a system of assessment and this limits the scope of pupils' learning, particularly those with a capacity for more advanced work. This was the case in an otherwise good lesson in Year 2.

82. Pupils attain standards that are above average in **physical education**, which represents good achievement. The pupils value the subject, with many pupils saying, "Physical education at Billingham is brilliant." Pupils have, the opportunity to take part in the regular and well-attended trampoline and table tennis clubs, run by enthusiastic and committed staff and Year 6 pupils. This assists the cohesive, inclusive feeling in school. Very good links with the local sports college have led to good standards in a variety of disciplines for all pupils, including gifted and talented pupils. Year 2 pupils take part in orienteering and the girls' table tennis team has been involved in the national finals. Sporting events, organised around the local cluster of primary schools which include football, netball and athletics, adds successfully an extra dimension to the curriculum. Specialist visitors to school include karate demonstrators and dance specialists. The subject is well led and managed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

Few lessons were sampled in this area of the school's work so a judgement on overall provision is not possible.

Commentary

83. The school places great importance upon promoting pupils' personal and social development, healthy lifestyles and good citizenship. Discussion times in lessons successfully enable pupils to express their feelings and emotions, the caring, supportive ethos and trusting relationships established being vital for openness and honesty. Stories and poems are used well to fuel discussions, and this was seen when Year 2 thought about how to keep safe when lost. Bullying is tackled effectively in PSHCE lessons through empathising with victims and perpetrators.
84. A visiting speaker from the Justice Support Project has successfully encouraged Year 5 pupils to consider how to make the right choices in life through discussing various scenarios. Citizenship is also actively promoted through the school council that gives elected representatives in Years 2 to 6 a real taste of democracy. These pupils demonstrate a high level of responsibilities at their council meetings. Older councillors proudly and maturely officiate at these meetings and representatives make notes of the proceedings to feed back to their peers.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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