

INSPECTION REPORT

STRANTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 111591

Headteacher: Mrs J Thomas

Lead inspector: Mrs J Randall

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 April 2005

Inspection number: 268002

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 313

School address: Southburn Terrace
Hartlepool
Postcode: TS25 1SQ

Telephone number: 01429 275595
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mr J Lauderdale
governors:

Date of previous 17 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This larger than average primary school is situated in the centre of Hartlepool and serves an area suffering very significant social and economic hardship. The school has 313 boys and girls, including 55 part-time children in the Nursery, and mobility is high. All pupils are of white British origin or other mixed or white background and no pupil speaks English as an additional language. No pupils are travellers, asylum seekers or refugees. Three pupils are in public care. Forty-eight per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals (well above average). Twenty-three per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (about average) and three of these pupils have statements of special educational needs at the highest level. Prior attainment on entry to the Nursery is significantly below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

The school is supported by a number of initiatives and projects relating to the area in which it is situated. These include Excellence in Cities, New Deal for Communities, Sure Start, The Children's Fund, and the Community Learning Centre on the school site includes community sports hall and arts facilities used by the school during the school day. Many activities are provided by the centre after school and in the holidays.

Since the previous inspection the school has a new senior management team comprising a deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers. The headteacher is a Primary Strategy consultant and an assistant headteacher is a leading mathematics teacher. The school is part of the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools. The school gained the Schools Achievement Award in 2003 for its success in improving standards, the Active Mark for physical education skills in 2001, the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002, a Quality Standard in Drug Education in 2005 and the Healthy Schools Award in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1471	J Randall	Lead inspector	Art and design Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language
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31175	A Allison	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs
20785	D Mason	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** and improving school with some very good features and giving very good value for money. The headteacher's and senior management's very high aspirations for all pupils are the focal point for all that happens in the school. The good teaching and learning and the commitment to rigorous self-evaluation and improvement give rise to very good achievement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in relation to similar schools nationally;
- the work of the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is very good;
- leadership and management are very good;
- provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good and pupils are confident, have good attitudes to school and behave well;
- the schools' efforts to meet the learning and social needs of all pupils are very good;
- the quality of teaching and learning is good overall but in some lessons it is only satisfactory because the range of strategies used and the match of work to pupils' prior attainment is not as strong as in the good and better lessons;
- the use, planning and resources for the new outdoor area for the Foundation Stage need further development.

The improvement since the previous inspection is **very good**. Despite a lowering of pupils' prior attainment on intake and the high mobility, the school manages to attain average standards overall by the end of Year 6. Provision and standards in information and communication technology have improved. Assessment, tracking of progress and marking have improved and so has the provision for special educational needs. Attendance is improved because the school now has very good procedures for this. The school has also improved the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the care and guidance for pupils. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is greatly improved. Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation and resources.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Overall achievement is **very good**. On entry to the Nursery children's prior attainment is significantly below average, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. By the end of Year 6 inspection evidence shows overall standards to be average in English and mathematics and below average in science. In the national tests in 2004, pupils in Year 6 attained average standards in mathematics and science and below average standards in English. When compared with

similar schools standards were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was above average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. In comparison with similar schools it was average in English, well above average in mathematics and in the highest five per cent in science. At the end of Year 2 inspection evidence shows standards to be average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing and science. This is a considerable improvement since the national test results in 2004 when standards were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools standards were average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Standards in information and communication technology are just below those expected nationally in Year 2 and similar to those expected nationally in Year 6. In religious education standards are similar to those found nationally in both Years 2 and 6. In the Foundation Stage most children attain the nationally expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. In communication, language and literacy about a quarter of children are likely to attain the early learning goals and in mathematical development about a third. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Overall assessment is good and it is excellent in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is good overall with very good opportunities for enrichment. The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good. The accommodation is very good and resources are good. The arrangements to ensure the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are excellent. Pupils receive very good support, guidance and advice from the staff. Involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views through class councils is good. The school maintains good links with parents. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Governance is **good** and governors meet all their legal responsibilities. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The very high ideals, commitment and very hard work of the head and assistant headteachers, set very good examples for all staff and pupils to follow. Management is **very good**. The actions taken are very effective in helping the school to raise standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents feel that the care and guidance in the school is a significant strength. Pupils like school and feel safe and secure. They particularly value the extra-curricular activities and say that the teachers are nice.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- strengthen the pace, the range of teaching strategies and the match of work to pupils' prior attainment in satisfactory lessons;
- improve the planning and resources for the new outdoor area in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement for all groups of pupils is **very high**. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average despite the very low prior attainment on entry and the high mobility. The school has high expectations and constantly seeks to improve learning and attainment for all.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall achievement for all groups of pupils is very high.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English in relation to similar schools in the national tests in 2004.
- The Foundation Stage makes a significant contribution to children's future learning and attainment.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and their needs because the school is very concerned to meet the needs of all pupils.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.2 (15.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.3 (13.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.7 (14.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 38 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	26.0 (27.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.1 (27.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.2 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Overall achievement is very good. Prior attainment levels on entry to the Nursery have fallen over the last few years. On entry to the Nursery children's prior attainment is significantly below average, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. By the end of Year 6 inspection evidence shows overall standards to be average in English and mathematics and below average in science. In the national tests in 2004 pupils in Year 6 attained average standards in mathematics and science and below average standards in English. When compared with similar schools standards were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was above average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. In comparison with similar schools standards were

average in English, well above average in mathematics and in the highest five per cent in science, showing very good achievement for this group. The differences in standards between the present Year 6 and that of 2004 are marginal and relate to the different balance of higher and lower-attainers. A high level of mobility particularly affects Years 3 to 6 and attainment in each year group varies, with some groups having a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs or who are lower-attainers, and attainment in tests fluctuates in relation to this. Analysis of the test results of 2004 shows that 46 per cent of pupils who joined the school after the Reception year attained lower than the average Level 4 whilst only four per cent of pupils who attended throughout were below the nationally expected standard. Only 68 per cent of pupils attended throughout. Local education authority data shows the school to be adding more value than expected when compared with local figures. The overall trend in improvement in the national tests in the last four years is above that nationally.

2. At the end of Year 2 inspection evidence shows standards to be average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing and science. This is a considerable improvement since the national test results in 2004 when standards were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However six pupils joined the school in Year 2 in 2004 and five of these attained test results below the nationally expected Level 2. When compared with similar schools standards were average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing.
3. Standards in information and communication technology are just below those expected nationally in Year 2 and similar to those expected nationally in Year 6. In religious education standards are similar to those found nationally in both Years 2 and 6. Standards in other subjects were not judged.
4. In the Foundation Stage most children attain the nationally expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. In communication, language and literacy about a quarter of children are likely to attain the early learning goals and in mathematical development about a third. The environment that promotes speaking and listening skills through all activities and aspects and specifically uses drama, story telling and role-play is helping to counteract the falling level of prior attainment. The work in this stage provides a very good foundation for learning in Years 1 to 6.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and their needs because the school is very concerned to meet the needs of all pupils and because of the teaching and other very good support that those with special educational needs receive. For example, three pupils who failed to attain the lower Level 1 in Year 2 attained the expected Level 4 in Year 6 in 2004. The school is very aware of the need to track the progress of mobile and 'looked after' pupils. Guidance for teachers is very clear that low prior attainment is not an indicator of what pupils can achieve. In 2004 a pupil attained the expected Level 4 after entering the school late with very low levels of prior attainment. Provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented is now in place. Extra challenge is offered through extra opportunities such as an after-school writing session for identified Year 6 pupils. Teachers are beginning to incorporate this extra challenge into classroom work. It is too early in the development of this work for its effects to show through in national test results. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls but the school is very aware of the need to motivate boys. For example, they responded very

well to a storyteller in Year 2, particularly in their understanding of the patterns of narrative.

6. The school is constantly evaluating its performance and looking for ways to improve achievement and attainment. Because of this high level of focus on improving teaching and learning it is maintaining its previous standards against a background of falling prior attainment and high mobility. High value is placed on all levels of achievement, and the changes in the assessment procedures to demonstrate and value small steps of learning reflect this. Celebrating these small steps raises pupils' self-esteem and confidence and pupils try hard with their learning. The current focus throughout the school on raising standards in writing through the creativity project and through speaking and listening development in all subjects is a very good example of this success.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is **satisfactory**. Punctuality is **good**. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are **good**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons and enjoy lunchtime and after-school activities.
- Behaviour in school and the playground is good and pupils get on well with each other.
- The social inclusion officer ensures that very good procedures are maintained to monitor and promote good attendance.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and contributes well to the very good achievement.

Commentary

7. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and respond well because of the very good relationships they share with the staff. They settle down swiftly to work, maintain interest and listen to advice from teachers. Most enjoy contributing to classroom discussions and talking to others about their work. They are confident, not embarrassed to express their views, and maintain concentration throughout most lessons. Teachers set good examples and promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem, which encourages them to enjoy learning. Pupils with special educational needs are happy in school. Their confidence and self-esteem is similar to that of other pupils because of the very good care and support and the use of praise and encouragement by all staff. Despite their very low levels on entry to school, most children in the Foundation Stage attain the nationally expected learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception year. They listen very well to adults and this supports their later learning and achievement considerably.
8. Pupils are well behaved. There have been no exclusions from the school in the last two years since the introduction of the school behaviour plan. Staff have very high expectations for good behaviour and pupils respond accordingly. The behaviour plan is consistently adhered to and pupils are fully aware of how they are expected to behave. An appropriate range of rewards is awarded at the weekly celebration assembly. Staged sanctions are enforced, with support from the social inclusion officer and the Behaviour and Education Support Team, who work hard to increase

pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils have confirmed that incidents of bullying, harassment and racism are rare and they know that they can turn to an adult for help and support if necessary.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	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. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are rarely late. Although the attendance rate was below the national average last year (shown in the above table), the social inclusion officer, with support from teaching staff, has worked very hard to monitor and promote good attendance. This has resulted in a higher rate of attendance this year and attendance is now broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence figures have also reduced as absences are followed up each day. The school does have a continual problem with a high number of mobile families who fail to inform the school when they leave the area. This leaves pupils on the school roll as absent until confirmation from a new school is received. The school considers good attendance to be a high priority and rewards individual pupils and classes with vouchers and prizes for good attendance.
10. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is significantly improved since the previous inspection. The promotion of school values has been an important development area for the school this year and the principle of 'values in action' is the basis of all their work. Thoughtful, well-planned assemblies, that meet legal requirements, enhance spiritual development. In lessons, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own values and beliefs and those of others. In a Year 2 science lesson pupils studied 'mini-beasts' from the school garden, promoting pupils' sense of wonder and care and concern for the natural world. Work in religious education promotes much reflection on faith and its meaning in the world today.
11. Pupils are given very clear guidance about the rights and responsibilities of living in a community. Teachers have very high expectations of how pupils should behave and respect each other, and pupils respond well. Through their work on the environment and re-cycling, pupils develop their responsibility to their surroundings. Class councils contribute to citizenship. Older pupils have opportunities to discuss moral dilemmas that they might encounter and exchange ideas about what is right and wrong.
12. Social development is well fostered in all school activities. Pupils exercise responsibility in a number of ways, for example, helping at lunchtime, helping to organise assemblies and escorting parents on parents' nights. Older pupils help with the supervision of younger pupils at break times. In lessons, pupils work well in pairs, in groups and as individuals and much discussion and sharing of ideas and opinions takes place. The school has a wide range of visitors and visits to promote pupils' social development as they learn how to relate to other people and about lives different from their own. Older pupils gain experience of living with others from the residential visit.

13. Since the previous inspection there have been very good improvements in provision for cultural development. Pupils have numerous opportunities to compare and contrast their own culture with others. Pupils are taught to respect and value differences and to understand that beneath surface differences we are all the same. The school has maintained an interest in Tanzania and a visit from a Tanzanian singing group led to work on the village concerned. A planned visit to a mosque is providing very good opportunities for understanding of another culture. Experiencing the 'call to prayer' provided another 'special moment' for thoughtful reflection. A very impressive session led by two visitors with Samba drums, in which pupils in a Year 5/6 class danced and sang in the Maori style, was described as 'a joy to watch'. A visiting sculptor developed pupils' interest in sculpture and they produced interesting work using clay and cardboard. History, geography, art and design and music provide many opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture. Foundation Stage children are enjoying a series of lessons based on traditional stories.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is good overall with very good opportunities for enrichment. The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good. The accommodation is **very good** and resources are good.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Overall assessment is **good** and it is excellent in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are particularly effective in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6, where a significant number of lessons were excellent.
- The development of speaking and listening and personal skills is a significant feature of all lessons, contributing very well to achievement and attainment.
- Not all lessons clearly match tasks to the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The recent provision for gifted and talented pupils is beginning to increase challenge and awareness of the needs of these pupils.
- Assessment is excellent in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (17)	12 (30)	14 (35)	7 (17)	0	0	0

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

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. It is particularly effective in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 where a significant number of lessons were excellent. This very high quality teaching and learning provides a very good start to learning and a boost to achievement and

attainment in Year 6. In all lessons teachers have very good relationships with pupils and insist on high standards of behaviour. Lessons are well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge. There have been improvements since the previous inspection in teachers' confidence in teaching information and communication technology. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are featured well in all lessons because the school understands that this is the foundation for writing of quality and for developing greater understanding of language and subject specific vocabulary, thus improving attainment. All opportunities are also taken to develop pupils' personal education and confidence in lessons. In most lessons there is a brisk pace to learning but in satisfactory lessons this is not as good and pupils sit and listen for too long, becoming restless and losing concentration. The best lessons incorporate a very high level of pace and challenge and interesting, exciting tasks. Pupils in Year 6 responded very well when they rose to the challenge of preparing meaningful questions for the visiting local Member of Parliament and this contributed very well to an understanding of citizenship. The creativity research project in which the school is taking part is improving teachers' understanding of different learning styles, extending and linking learning across many subjects and inspiring imagination.

15. Teaching assistants are used very efficiently, particularly for the lower-attainers and pupils with special educational needs, adding very well to learning. However, in some lessons, the school is aware that there is a need to provide tasks that are more closely matched to prior learning rather than relying too heavily on the very good help provided by the teaching assistants. To help with this the school is extending the use of a special assessment system. The improved system ensures that progress in learning is better defined in smaller steps than previously recorded. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is in its early stages. A special teacher, funded by a grant, is working with teachers to improve their skills in meeting the needs of these pupils more closely. Some specific sessions with identified pupils take place. In Year 6 a group of pupils tackled, with the special teacher's support, a research task related to the main theme of the religious education lesson. This provision is not as well developed in lessons that are only satisfactory.
16. In the Foundation Stage the teamwork, the very high quality of the planning and the very high level of knowledge and understanding that staff have about work in this stage of learning mean that learning is always very good. There is a very good balance between exploration and activity that children choose for themselves from the very good quality and range of activities provided and direct teaching by staff. All opportunities are taken for language and social development and this is a significant contribution to the very high achievement. The outdoor area is very new and, although this is used satisfactorily, there are not as many outdoor experiences as there should be. However the teachers have this development in hand. Assessment of the very small steps of learning and attainment is excellent, with on-going daily assessments for target groups and feedback to individual children, thus building their self-esteem and their good attitudes to school.
17. Overall assessment and tracking in Years 1-6 is good, particularly that based on tests. Tracking is very well used to identify the progress of groups of pupils and to set targets. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. It helps the school to identify priorities. There have been improvements in matching work to pupils' individual needs and the school is refining this further by the use of the new system of assessment and a closer understanding and use of day-to-day assessment. The new system of marking is expected to contribute towards this and give pupils more understanding of how to meet their own targets. Homework plays an effective part in

learning. The school has recently revised its procedures following consultation with parents. Children in the Foundation Stage take home 'chatter sacks' to involve parents in their learning.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**. Children in the Foundation Stage experience a very good curriculum. The accommodation is **very good** overall and excellent in the Foundation Stage. Resources are **good** overall and very good in the Foundation Stage and for information and communication technology.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth and richness of curricular opportunities, particularly through opportunities to participate in sport and the arts, are helping all pupils in Years 1 to 6 to achieve very well.
- The commitment to care and provide for all, including pupils with special educational needs, is a notable feature of the provision.
- Very good resources in information and communication technology and in the Foundation Stage contribute very well to pupils' learning.
- The spacious accommodation, including facilities provided by other agencies, enhances the educational opportunities very well.
- Limited resources for planned outdoor experiences for Foundation Stage children restrict some opportunities for learning.
- Curriculum planning that links learning across subjects is not yet fully in place.

Commentary

18. The school has successfully addressed the weaknesses identified in the previous report, particularly in relation to information and communication technology. There are good arrangements for fostering pupils' personal, social and health education through a structured programme. A very notable feature of the personal and social education is the way that this aspect pervades all teaching. Sex education and drugs awareness education are now an integral part of the personal, social and health education curriculum. The confidence and positive attitudes to school of all pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs, contribute to the very good achievement and prepares them very well for the next stage of their education.
19. All requirements of the National Curriculum and for religious education are fully met and enhanced very well by a wide range of educational opportunities. This results in a curriculum that has good breadth and balance and is enriched very well through visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. The opportunities to participate in a very wide range of sporting activities, because of the facilities on site and expertise that is brought in, are very good. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, in other subjects. The school focus on providing structured opportunities for speaking and listening in all lessons is proving effective. The creativity project with which the school is connected is raising awareness of the need to use different teaching styles and to foster thinking skills in order to provide a richer and more accessible curriculum. However, curriculum planning that links learning across subjects is not yet fully in place and this limits the opportunity to consolidate and enhance learning.

20. The accommodation is very good overall. The sports hall, the performing arts room and some of the accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage has been provided through the Space for Sport and the Arts and the New Deal for Communities initiatives. These facilities enhance significantly the quality of the provision throughout the school. Resources, previously judged to be unsatisfactory, are good overall, though very good for information and communication technology and for the Foundation Stage. However, the limited resources for planned outdoor experiences for Foundation Stage children restrict the opportunities for learning. The school is already addressing this. There is a sufficient number of teachers with good subject knowledge, backed up by very capable learning support assistants. One of the learning support assistants is funded through the New Deal for Communities initiative. The recently appointed co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils, funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative, is beginning to influence provision for these pupils. The deployment of teachers and learning support assistants is very responsive to the school's assessment of the needs of pupils.
21. The school is very committed to include and provide for all pupils. It identifies as early as possible those pupils who may have special educational needs or may be gifted and talented. Provision for those who have special educational needs, including those who have the highest level of special educational need, is good. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are structured well, although for a few pupils the steps in learning are too big so it is difficult to assess progress towards the targets. The school has already identified this as an area for development. Provision for those who have special educational needs is improved since the previous inspection. Provision for those who may be gifted or talented is at an early stage, so it is too soon to be able to assess the benefits to these pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements to ensure the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **excellent**. Pupils receive **very good** support, guidance and advice from the staff. Involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views through class councils is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes excellent care of all pupils in school.
- Staff know the pupils well and support their academic and personal development very successfully.
- Very good procedures are in place for induction into the school.
- Pupils' views on the school are listened to and valued.

Commentary

22. The school provides a very safe and caring environment in which pupils can enjoy learning. They are well supervised at all times and established routines ensure their welfare and safety. Potential hazards are swiftly identified and resolved. The school has established breakfast and after-school clubs that provide activities and care for pupils at the start and end of the school day. Arrangements for child protection and the care and progress of 'looked after' children are very good and staff receive regular training.

23. Staff have a very high level of concern for pupils' well-being. Pupils who are in need of additional support are quickly identified and carefully monitored. The social inclusion officer and a number of teaching assistants are available to talk with pupils about their work or emotions and they provide much support. The 'Friendship Group' is a weekly opportunity for any pupil to speak to a member of staff about worries or concerns at lunchtime and pupils value this. Opportunities for pupils to share concerns are available in classroom discussion periods called 'circle time'. The Behaviour and Education Support Team are regular visitors to the school, supporting pupils and working with other agencies to identify and meet the needs of each pupil. The Foster Care Associate also keeps in close contact with pupils that attend the school and provides additional sessions and learning support within the school as necessary. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is reviewed regularly and very carefully. Teachers and teaching assistants, including a teaching assistant funded through an award made by the New Deal for Communities initiative, provide very good support in classrooms. All pupils know what their targets are and the progress they are making towards these targets. The requirements of the statement of special educational need for pupils with the highest level of special educational needs are fully met. Gifted and talented pupils now have the benefit of a newly appointed teacher to provide additional support through after-school and lunchtime activities, homework clubs and on educational visits. The Sure Start initiative has a base within the school that enables them to make contact with and support pupils and their families with the assistance of health visitors, midwives, speech therapists, nursery nurses and other health professionals. The school has received the Healthy Schools Award.
24. Very good induction procedures help pupils to settle swiftly into school. Induction guidance is given to all staff and home visits are arranged for mobile families who are new to the area. Welcome booklets are distributed, providing pupils with an opportunity to tell the school about themselves. New entrants are provided with a 'buddy tour' that provides them with the friendship and support of an older pupil. At the end of the pupil's first week parents are welcomed to the school to discuss how their child is progressing.
25. Class councils meet regularly to discuss issues and ideas of interest to the pupils. Notices around the school encourage pupils to express their views to council members for discussion at the next meeting. The school has collected the views of the pupils via questionnaires and pupils know that they are listened to and valued.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains **good** links with parents. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive good information about their children's progress.
- There is a good degree of mutual support between parents and the school.
- Very good links with the community enrich the curriculum and contribute well to pupils' personal and academic development.
- There are very good links in place with local schools and colleges.

Commentary

26. Partnership between parents and the school is good because the headteacher and staff are accessible and very supportive. Activities and parents' meetings are well attended. The school provides parents with good quality information. Booklets welcome parents and pupils into the school. The home/school book then provides the opportunity for daily communication. Regular newsletters are sent home and topic and curriculum information is available by letter or workshop. Workshops have been held to explain the National Primary Strategy for literacy, numeracy and National Curriculum tests, although these were not well attended. The pupils' progress reports are good. They contain all the required information and targets to inform parents how their children can improve their work.
27. The school listens to the views of parents and questionnaires are sent out annually. This has resulted in a review of the homework policy, a homework timetable for each year group and the purchase of homework bags. Some parents attend classes at the on-site learning centre in subjects such as information communication technology that have the potential to assist them in helping their children to learn. Younger children take home 'chatter sacks' containing books and games to share with parents. The school ensures that parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and contacted as soon as the school identifies possible needs. Parents are invited to meetings when the individual education plans are reviewed so that they know what progress has been made, discuss what the next targets are and how they may help pupils at home. To foster this, parents have their own copy of the individual education plans. Parents appreciate the help provided by the school.
28. The school has very good links with the local community, particularly through the new learning centre. Parents and pupils attend regular classes. Links with industry, local churches, the emergency services, the local field centre and educational visits to places such as the Hartlepool Historic Quay enrich pupils' learning. Strong links with local schools and colleges have been established. Students from the local sixth form college have assisted the pupils on 'Dinosaur Day' and with activities such as craft, cooking, music and story time. Joint sporting activities are held. Staff links are in place with the local secondary and special school and Sunderland and Teesside Universities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Governance is **good** and governors meet all their legal responsibilities. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The very high ideals, commitment and very hard work of the head and assistant headteachers, set very good examples for all staff and pupils to follow. Management is **very good**. The actions taken are very effective in helping the school to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very high ideals and determined leadership of the headteacher has ensured that all staff work very well as a team to raise standards.
- The school's rigorous self-evaluation enables it to identify where pupils are doing well and what must be done to improve.
- The school's very strong commitment to including all pupils in curricular and other opportunities helps them all to achieve very well.

- The sharply focused leadership of the curriculum and teaching by the headteacher and other key staff is closely tied to the school's aims to foster self-esteem and confidence.
- The governing body has a good knowledge of the school that is applied effectively in the best interests of the pupils.

Commentary

29. The very good leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by the assistant headteachers and other key staff, is at the forefront of the school's improvement. Central to this is the ability to analyse what needs to be done in order to raise standards and to plan accordingly. The headteacher's very high aspirations for all pupils are the focal point for all that happens. This sense of purpose and commitment is very evident. She is supported very well by all staff in her determination to interest, motivate and foster the confidence and self-esteem of every pupil. The sharply focused leadership and the development of a whole school team, with similar high aspirations and sense of purpose, have led to pupils' very good achievement in a locality with many challenges.
30. The school's policies, planning and teaching indicate a clear intention to provide for all pupils and in this the school succeeds very well. It is reflected in the classrooms by the good provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is also reflected in the way all teachers promote the 'I can' philosophy in pupils, working very hard to raise their confidence and self-esteem. The provision has helped all pupils to achieve very well.
31. The main points for action from the previous inspection report have been tackled very successfully. The actions taken to rectify the shortcomings in information and communication technology have led to higher standards. The school now has very good resources for information and communication technology. Teaching and learning are good because of the steps taken to raise teachers' confidence and expertise. There is better use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects and by pupils with special educational needs. Assessment and tracking procedures are rigorous and closely linked to the setting of targets for pupils and to raising standards. This is true both of the analysis of national and other test results and of the day-to-day procedures for checking on learning during and at the end of lessons. As a result, the school is placing a high priority on speaking and listening and sentence structure. The school is also involved in an innovative creativity research project to foster thinking skills and provide for different styles of learning. The issue relating to the management of special educational needs has been addressed successfully. The acting co-ordinators have high aspirations and a very clear view of what is needed to ensure that pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as possible. Individual education plans have improved. Targets are concise, measurable and reviewed regularly. The co-ordinators have identified the need to improve target setting further for some pupils by using a system that will enable small steps of progress to be more easily measured. All of these improvements make a significant contribution to the quality of learning in the classrooms and so enable all pupils to achieve very well. The minor point from the previous inspection has also been tackled successfully. The appointment of a social inclusion assistant, funded through the New Deal for Communities initiative, has led to better monitoring of attendance and higher attendance as a result.
32. The school has managed its finances in a falling roll situation very well. The school is aware of the need to improve resources for planned outdoor activities in the

Foundation Stage and is acting on this. It has also sought funding from other sources to enhance the quality of educational provision. In particular the funding through the New Deal for Communities and SPACE for sport and the arts initiatives has resulted in very significant improvement to the accommodation. The learning opportunities provided - the performing arts facilities, the sports hall and the Foundation Stage accommodation, together with access to other facilities in the Stranton Centre, enrich the curriculum very significantly. This puts the school in a good position to raise standards and achievement further. The school is very active in seeking funding from other sources to the benefit of the pupils. The funding of a co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils through the Excellence in Cities initiative and the provision in performing arts through the Wider Opportunities scheme are other very good examples of seeking to ensure the very best provision for all pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are already benefiting from these opportunities, very strikingly in the Foundation Stage.

33. The governing body fulfils its role well. It works very closely with the headteacher. Members have received training on how to be a 'critical friend' and they look at the school in depth. They are well informed about the school because they receive regular reports from the headteacher and subject leaders, visit the school, sit in on lessons and sometimes attend staff training days. This enables governors to take a strategic lead and ask challenging questions. They understand the principles of 'best value' in the widest sense, for example, by consulting parents about changes that they might wish to see. The final budget figures for the year 2004-5 were not available at the time of the inspection. When spending, attainment on entry and the achievement of pupils are considered the school gives very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	766,014
Total expenditure	787,538
Expenditure per pupil	2423.19

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	63,865
Balance carried forward to the next	42,341

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school has a new and very spacious integrated unit (using some funding from the New Deal initiative) for the Nursery and the Reception classes. Teachers and support staff work together as a highly effective team. This team work and the grouping of children for direct teaching sessions based on their learning needs and not age is supporting the raising of standards very well. Also supporting this work are the excellent procedures for assessment and recording of learning that provide a very strong foundation for all that takes place. A significant feature of these procedures is the targeting of groups of children in every session and activity and the recording of their progress against previous attainment. These assessments are shared with children, mainly in the form of praise, and children are very aware and proud of their success. This means that children develop very good attitudes to learning and begin to develop the self-confidence that many lack on entry to the Nursery. The new outdoor area is used satisfactorily. Planning and development are in the early stages following the excellent development of the inside space. Staff are enthusiastic and recognise the need for further planning for the use of the outdoor area. They have many very good ideas and plans but are still in the process of funding and developing resources. The work of the Foundation Unit is a significant strength of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff take all opportunities to develop children's confidence and independence.
- Achievement is very high.

Commentary

34. Despite significantly low overall prior attainment on entry to the Nursery most children attain the nationally expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Teaching and learning are excellent. All staff take every opportunity to extend learning in everything that happens in the Foundation Unit. Children learn to work with others and with adults from the many, very good independent activities provided. These are set out in such a way that children can take full responsibility for their own learning in choosing what to try and getting and replacing their own equipment. The making of sandwiches provided an opportunity to learn about hygiene, food and good manners. Children learn about other cultures and religions from books, pictures, the dolls in the home area and from the Internet. By the end of the Reception year children listen very well indeed in large group sessions. They manage their own physical needs and behave very well. They are co-operative and interested in learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Development of language and communication skills permeates every activity throughout the whole day.
- Children achieve very well compared with their significantly low skills on entry because the teaching is excellent.

Commentary

35. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are significantly below average. A fifth of the Reception children are receiving speech therapy. The school is able to access funding from the Sure Start initiative for this and there are significant benefits to learning and achievement as a result. All staff are skilled in developing these skills in every activity that takes place and teaching and learning are excellent. All staff, including nursery nurses and other teaching assistants, interact very well with children who are engaged in exploring and imagining in the many independent activities such as the role-play areas, using the 'small world activities' such as the farm and dolls' house, or exploring the book corner. Here, children learn to handle books sensibly and that print has meaning. The 'office' provides opportunities for children to use early mark making skills and they enjoy using telephones to talk and 'send messages'. In an excellent lesson with a mixture of older Nursery children and Reception children, traditional fairy tales were used as a focus to develop language skills. Children remembered the names and content of many stories and were able to suggest how stories often begin, giving 'Once upon a time' and 'Long, long ago', for example. They 'guessed the story' from clues from a 'magic box' and questioned the teacher who played the role of 'Daddy Bear'. Throughout the session, listening skills and attention were very good. The teacher constantly developed speaking skills by insisting on answers in 'a confident voice', whole sentences, and by sensitively modelling correct pronunciation. Vocabulary was developed by, for example, the teacher introducing 'enormous' as an alternative to 'big'. By the end of the Reception year listening skills are in line with the learning goals for the age group but, despite significant progress, speaking skills are still below average. Writing skills develop well from early mark making through to some children writing recognisable phrases and sentences where words are spelled well according to their sounds. All opportunities are taken to introduce early reading skills. An excellent session where children were making sandwiches gave rise to much vocabulary learning and the list of ingredients and equipment was 'read' by looking at the initial sounds of the words, building up the sounds and 'guessing' by looking at the table to see what the word might say. Overall, about a quarter of children can be expected to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year but all have made significant gains.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take every opportunity to foster mathematical development.
- Teaching and learning are excellent.
- Children achieve very well because of the very high quality range of experiences provided.

Commentary

36. All the activities in the Foundation Unit develop mathematical understanding and both teaching and learning are excellent. Staff work together with children in the role-play 'restaurant' for example to count the plates and match one to one. Many displays raise awareness of number and invite children to count and match. An older Nursery child was very keen to explain the display of the snakes that children had made to demonstrate long and short. Water and sand provide opportunities to develop the language and understanding of capacity and volume. In an excellent lesson average-attaining Reception children were challenged to count to 20 starting from various numbers. They counted back from 9 to 0. The teacher carefully taught the word 'double' and its meaning by various strategies involving physical and fun activities. Children in this group confidently name various shapes. Another very good lesson showed the same group of children throwing dice and adding one more. Some recognised the pattern of the spots; others counted each time. The teacher skilfully developed the activity into a demonstration of a number sentence or sum. Correct mathematical vocabulary was very carefully taught. By the end of the Reception year about a third of children are likely to reach the nationally recognised early learning goals.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All indoor resources are plentiful and of very high quality.
- The use of information and communication technology is a significant feature of learning.
- The use of the outdoor area does not yet play its full part in the curriculum.

Commentary

37. Opportunities for children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them are numerous and of very high quality. The new outdoor area is not yet used to full capacity to support this work. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Children explore and imagine using 'small world' equipment such as small people or a farm, many construction kits, and a wide range of information and communication technology including listening centres, digital camera, an interactive whiteboard and computers. The unit is equipped with many computers that children use freely to choose games and activities, and sessions in the school information and communication technology suite where they learn skills together. In an excellent lesson both Nursery and Reception children used a draw and paint program to produce a picture and then followed this by 'writing'. Almost all children could log onto the Internet and manage their own work. Children use scientific equipment such as magnifiers to explore the fascinating natural history displays. The curriculum is enhanced by the number of visitors such as medical and health professionals, theatre and music groups, the police, fire service and local supermarket liaison workers. Most children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Full use is not yet made of the new outdoor area and there is need for some further resources.

Commentary

38. Children achieve well in physical development and the quality of teaching and learning is very good. The school makes full use of the opportunities to use the hall and the drama room. The outdoor area is used for children to experience and develop skills of running, jumping, crawling and using small apparatus such as bats, balls and quoits. There are a few large wooden vehicles such as a wooden aeroplane and carts where children can co-operate in giving rides but there is a lack of large blocks for children to build their own structures to climb and imagine. Outdoor experiences are not yet available to children throughout the day and are restricted to whole class sessions. In the dance lesson observed, children understood well the reason for a 'warm-up' and a 'cool-down'. They showed awareness of their own personal space and that of others and used body parts creatively. They linked several series of movements together to form a sequence. The excellent teaching ensured a very high level of activity and children enjoyed evaluating their own performance and that of others. Children use small tool such as pencils, spreaders and the computer mouse with increasing skill and confidence and are taught the correct way to hold tools. By the end of the Reception year most children are likely to have attained the early learning goals in physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities are very varied, very well structured and of a very high quality.
- The outdoor area is not yet used, resourced and planned well enough to promote creative development.

Commentary

39. There are many very high quality opportunities for children to develop creative skills in the indoor area. During the inspection children enjoyed creating and gluing patterns on paper plates using feathers, coloured paper and other materials. They paint large pictures, mixing their own colours and exploring the effects. They use role-play areas such as the home area, the 'restaurant' and the 'office' to imagine and act out their ideas. In an excellent dance lesson they showed above average skills in their ability to count eight beats in time to the music and match actions to these. They extend this learning into a sequence of eight beat actions. The new outdoor area is not yet used well enough to promote creative development, particularly for imaginative play, but the teachers have many plans and know that this is an area for action in the very near future. By the end of the Reception year most children are likely to attain the nationally expect goals for this area of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well and this enables pupils to attain standards that are just below average in Year 2 and average standards in Year 6.
- The good quality of teaching enables all pupils to achieve very well.
- The school makes good use of its thorough assessment systems in order to guide planning and to set targets but in some lessons work is insufficiently well linked to pupils' prior learning.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- The use of information and communication technology and other resources to promote learning is good.

Commentary

40. Achievement in English is very good. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in reading is average in Year 2. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection and better than results in the national tests in 2004, despite the falling levels of attainment on entry to the school. Standards in writing in Year 2 are below average. This is lower than the findings of the previous inspection although slightly better than the 2004 national test results. Standards in Year 6 are average, similar to the findings of the previous inspection and higher than in the 2004 national tests. This is because of the strategies implemented by the school to improve the teaching of English. Despite pupils' mobility, the results in the national tests in Year 6 in 2004 were better than for similar schools.
41. Many pupils have significantly low speaking and listening skills on entry to the school. The school provides abundant opportunities for pupils to improve their listening skills and to extend their range of vocabulary in order to raise standards. In all lessons teachers insist on pupils listening carefully to the teacher and to each other, and this ensures that listening skills are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The focus on using technical vocabulary correctly, using interesting words and giving explanations means that pupils' speaking skills, whilst below average in Year 2, are average in Year 6. The standards in Year 6 were very clearly demonstrated in a very good lesson in which they confidently interviewed the visiting local Member of Parliament.
42. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and teach basic skills well. As a result, attainment in reading in Year 2 and Year 6 is similar to that expected nationally. The success of the school's strategies for teaching reading was illustrated well in reading interviews. All pupils had books that were well matched to their prior attainment. As a result, they approached the text with confidence and showed that they understood what they were reading. The challenge that the school faces was made evident by the fact that one third of those heard to read rarely read at home.

43. The main reason that the standard of writing is below average in Year 2 is because of the below average speaking skills. Many pupils still have a restricted vocabulary and lack the ability to express themselves using well-constructed sentences. Teachers work hard throughout the school to extend the vocabulary of pupils. Standards in Year 6 are average. Good use of the National Literacy Strategy provides opportunities for speaking, listening and writing in a range of styles and leads pupils to write in a way that will appeal to a wider audience. Work is generally presented well. Handwriting, particularly of the average and higher-attaining pupils, is consistently fluent, legible and joined.
44. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are several features of good teaching that enable all pupils to achieve very well. Detailed planning reflects the very high expectations that all teachers have of work and behaviour. Challenging tasks are usually, but not always, well matched to prior attainment. The effective use of questions enables teachers to check on the gains in learning made by all pupils. Where teaching is very good, in lessons in Years 1, 2 and 6, the pace is even brisker; tasks not only challenge but also motivate pupils highly so that they settle instantly to the task and work with a very high level of concentration. All teachers make good use of well-chosen and sometimes imaginative resources. Information and communication technology, including the interactive whiteboards, is used very effectively to improve learning. Learning support assistants and additional teacher support make a very good contribution to learning, particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils have specific individual targets for improvement. Older pupils write what they are expected to know or be able to do by the end of the lesson at the beginning of each piece of work. This is why most pupils have a good understanding of their own learning. This is enhanced by the constructive comments teachers write when they mark pupils' work.
45. The subject is led and managed very well. The subject leader has a strong sense of purpose with a clear determination to raise standards further. Her participation in projects linked to provision for gifted and talented pupils and in the creativity project, for example, exemplifies this well. She is well aware of what needs to be done because of the opportunities taken to check on teaching and learning and sampling the work of pupils. The annual review of the subject leads to very good strategies to raise standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. The school's focus on speaking and listening is evident in all lessons observed in other subjects. The school provides many good opportunities for pupils to use writing as a vehicle for learning in other subjects. This helps to extend pupils' literacy skills and to deepen their understanding of other subjects. Pupils used their speaking and listening very well in a religious education lesson in the Year 6 class where they were preparing 'guided tours' of a mosque. In geography, pupils in the Year 2 class write interestingly about the island of Struay. Pupils in a Year 4 class write in conjunction with storybooks with flaps, sliders and pop-ups as part of their work in design and technology.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Despite very low levels of attainment on entry, pupils achieve very well.
- Very good relationships and pupil attitudes facilitate learning.
- Teacher subject knowledge is very good.
- Teaching and learning in Year 6 are excellent.
- In some lessons, teachers talk to the whole class for too long, causing some pupils to lose concentration.
- Sometimes work is not sufficiently well matched to the needs of the lower and higher-attainers.

Commentary

47. Standards at the end of Year 2, at the time of the previous inspection, were above those expected nationally and now they are broadly average. This apparent decline is due to the increasingly very low levels of prior attainment of pupils entering the school in recent years. Despite this, pupils make good progress because of the good teaching, well-planned support and careful checking of their learning. At the end of Year 6 standards remain average despite the improvements that have taken place. This is because of the high number of pupils who arrive at and leave the school each year. In Years 3 to 6 teachers build well on the good progress made in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 6, due to a combination of very skilful teaching and a generous allocation of support staff, achievement is very good. Since the previous inspection, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has led to improved teacher subject knowledge, more focused planning and a greater range of teaching methods. The aspect of the subject called 'using and applying mathematics' has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. In the best lessons this aspect is built into the daily lesson plans. In other lessons it is less well established. The subject leader recognises that this aspect needs to be improved further.
48. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are well planned and teachers discuss the aims of the lesson with pupils. Relationships are good and pupils behave and respond well. In the best lessons, very high teacher expectations and lively teaching lead to very good achievement. Teaching and learning in Year 6 are excellent. Pupils are constantly asked to explain their thinking and to try alternative ways of solving a problem. The very good pace keeps pupils alert and highly motivated. In satisfactory lessons, teachers sometimes talk to the whole class for too long so that pupils lose concentration, grow restless and sometimes troublesome. Teaching assistants are well used to support pupils with special educational needs and lower-attainers so that they can keep up with the main focus of the lesson. However some teachers provide too little work that is matched to the specific needs of these pupils, relying instead on the extra support to bolster up the main activity.
49. Across the school resources are well used and teachers use a mixture of teaching styles so that pupils work independently, with a partner or in groups. Assessment is good with long-term records kept and used to track pupils' progress. The effectiveness of day-to-day assessment is more varied and a new planning format has recently been introduced to improve this aspect. One particularly good example of daily assessment was seen in Year 6 when, at the end of a lesson on co-ordinates, the teacher asked pupils to work on their own to 'crack a code found in their treasure chest'. From their ability to do this he was able to record that the whole class had achieved the learning aim of the lesson. The quality of marking is varied but satisfactory overall. In the best examples pupils are told what they have achieved and a new challenge is set.

50. The subject is led and managed well. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and evaluated. Recent lesson observations have identified areas for improvement in the subject. A number of initiatives have been introduced recently with the aim of building on the improvements made since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. There are growing opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, particularly in information and communication technology in representing and interpreting data. In art and design pupils explore 'exploding' quadrilaterals and tessellations. In geography, when looking at their local environment, pupils use graphs and tables successfully to record information. In a recent 'creative day' on dinosaurs pupils throughout the school undertook a range of mathematical activities related to the huge model dinosaur in the hall.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall achievement is very good.
- Good quality teaching helps pupils to learn well.
- More work is needed to ensure that the arrangements for checking how well pupils learn are fully effective.
- Leadership and management are good overall, but not all aspects of provision are checked and evaluated by the science team.

Commentary

52. Good teaching and the very good personal support that the school provides have, over the last three years, resulted in pupils moving from very low attainment when they join the school to attaining average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, as shown in the national tests results in 2004. These results were well above average when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence and the information held by the school indicate that pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well but, because of poor language skills on entry, attain standards that are below average compared with schools nationally. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well. The present Year 6 pupils are likely to attain standards that are just below average. Standards are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection because there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils joining the school part way through their primary education and many of these pupils are lower-attainers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils in Year 6 remembered their work on the organs of the body well. Pupils in Year 2 were enthusiastic and excited when observing 'mini-beasts' with magnifying glasses and answering the question 'Why is your mini-beast suited to its habitat?'. Speaking and listening skills were developed well through this activity.
53. Improvements have been made to the procedures for assessing how well pupils are learning and the inconsistencies in practice noted in the previous report have been addressed successfully. However, the school has identified the need to embed and evaluate the new arrangements and to extend them to include the checking of the

development of skills of investigation. In Year 5 a very successful lesson took pupils through the small steps of how to plan and carry out an investigation.

54. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The skilful control and management of classes ensures that all pupils get on well with their work and concentrate hard. The good methods used by teachers, including the latest technology, make learning easier. The school's work to improve the teaching of skills of investigation is beginning to bring success, with a higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 being likely to achieve the higher Level 3 in the national assessments this year. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to give pupils responsibility for suggesting how experiments might be carried out.
55. The work of the team of teachers who lead and manage the subject is good. Their activities, including the checking of pupils' books to see how effectively pupils are gaining investigation skills, have a positive effect on achievement and attainment. However, their role in checking the planning and quality of teaching and learning is not yet developed enough to allow them to gain a full understanding of provision and its development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning enable all pupils to achieve very well.
- The confidence and enthusiasm of pupils helps them to achieve very well.
- Learning is promoted by the effective use of the very good resources and accommodation.
- The good leadership and management of the subject contribute well to pupils' achievement.
- Good use of information and communication technology promotes learning well in other subjects.
- In some lessons not enough attention is given to matching tasks to prior learning.

Commentary

56. Standards in information and communication technology are just below those expected nationally in Year 2 and similar to those expected nationally in Year 6, with about a quarter of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning and achieve very well by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. This is because the skills and confidence of the teachers have grown and whole school planning now takes account of prior attainment. Resources and accommodation are now very good, contributing very well to teaching and learning both in information and communication technology and in other subjects.
57. Teaching and learning are good overall. Key features of the good teaching are the confidence of the teachers and the sharing with pupils at the beginning of the lesson what they should know or be able to do by the end. The effective use of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms and in the information and communication technology suite exemplifies the improved confidence and skill of teachers well. Other strengths that enable all pupils to make good gains in their learning are the high expectations that teachers have of pupils' work and behaviour, the brisk pace, the effective use of questions to check on learning and the effective use of learning

support assistants and the technician. Where teaching is only satisfactory the pace is slower because pupils are not managed as well as in the better lessons. At times teachers rely too much on the support given by the learning support assistants and themselves for lower-attaining pupils rather than matching tasks more closely to prior learning. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well.

58. The subject is led and managed well. The enthusiastic subject leader's knowledge and understanding of the subject is good. He makes good use of the time allocated for checking and evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' work. He helps staff to extend their expertise to improve teaching and learning. He is also very clear about what the school needs to do to raise standards further. For example, the school recognises that improved keyboard skills will enable the pupils to work more quickly and so improve learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. This has improved since the previous inspection. Evidence indicates good use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. For example work in Year 6 about the solar system incorporated graphics, word-processed writing and research using the Internet. Pupils in Year 2 use information and communication technology to produce graphs to support learning in mathematics. The starting point is the confident use of the interactive whiteboards by teachers as shown in a religious education lesson in Year 6 that also drew on the Internet to give pupils a 'guided tour' of a mosque.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

60. No judgements have been made about standards or teaching and learning as these subjects were only lightly sampled. Only one lesson was observed in history and none in geography. National Curriculum requirements are met and teachers' weekly notes show detailed planning and clear learning aims for each lesson. In the history lesson observed, Year 3 pupils studied the Nile and the building of the pyramids. An Internet site was used to look at the Nile and good links with geography were made. Landscape features, the flooding of the Nile and seasons were discussed. Pupils were fascinated to learn that the pyramids were built only in the drought season. In Year 6, pupils study 'Britain since 1948' and 'The Swinging Sixties'. Here, the emphasis is on learning about the past from the memories of people who lived through those times. In geography, pupils in Year 2 study a Scottish island and compare it with their own environment. They draw maps of the island with very good keys showing the geographical features. They also visit the seaside and undertake a good range of activities matched to the needs of pupils with different levels of attainment. In Year 4 pupils study their local environment with an emphasis on recycling and improving their environment. They make good use of tables and graphs in information and communication technology to record the information that they have discovered. In Years 5 and 6 pupils compare and contrast locations in London and in an Indian village.

61. There is now a good range of resources to support work in both subjects. Information and communication technology is used extensively. Both subjects contribute well to pupils' development in all aspects of English, especially speaking and listening, and history provides opportunities for extended writing. Teachers make good use of their school and local environment as well as visits further afield. Visitors, such as the 'Victorian Teacher', also bring the topics to life. The subjects make a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good contribution is made to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education because of the strong emphasis on reflection on life today.
- Visits and visitors make an important contribution to learning.
- Very good leadership and management have ensured that teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Assessment procedures are still being developed.

Commentary

62. Standards in religious education are similar to those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. The subject is now planned in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Year 2 understand symbolism, giving examples of water in Christian baptism, the sign of the cross and Hindu friendship bracelets. One pupil described symbols as 'a sign of respect'. They relate their learning well to their own lives, giving examples of to whom they would give their friendship bracelet when made and the reasons why. Most remember facts about Hindu festivals, and higher-attainers compare and contrast these with Christianity. Pupils in Year 6 have good recall of facts about the Muslim faith. They showed reverence in their listening to the 'call to prayer' and in their discussion in preparation for a forthcoming visit to a mosque. They used speaking and listening and writing skills very well in the very well matched tasks to prepare for this. Work in books demonstrates a range of knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and a good reflection of the meaning for life today. For example, the reflective work on 'why people see God as a parent' showed sensitivity and thought. In Year 5 words that pupils wrote to reflect God as 'safe' included 'anchor', 'protector' and 'authority'.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In an excellent lesson in Year 6 the Internet was used to very good effect to provide a virtual tour of a mosque. Pupils gained much from this and asked and answered very good questions. Behaviour was very good, even in the group sessions where pupils worked together well, because the teacher had very high expectations of effort and participation. In Year 2 the teacher used a 'big book' very well for whole class discussion and research, adding well to reading skills. Pupils in Year 4 were made to think for themselves when sorting pictures and captions into Old and New Testament. The reflective nature of the work across the school is a significant strength of pupils' learning.

64. The subject is very well led and managed as a shared responsibility between two teachers. They have a very good and close understanding of the needs of the subject and its development. They have successfully produced and steered the school through new subject planning to gain a better overall progression of skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the school. Advice and help for teachers is very good. There have been many improvements since the time of the previous inspection, the most significant of these being the extension of teachers' subject knowledge, the first-hand experiences provided by visits and visitors, the provision of new resources and the links with other subjects. The school is currently developing its assessment procedures in line with its new planning. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

65. No judgements have been made on provision in art and design as the subject was not inspected in depth. Displays included good links with mathematics when pupils explored 'exploding quadrilaterals' and produced monochrome hidden shapes in an investigation of line and shape. The school has worked with a local college of art and design to improve skills of both teachers and pupils. Creative days provide opportunities for extended learning. Recent visitors to enrich the curriculum have included an animator and a sculptor.

Design and technology

66. There is not enough evidence to judge the quality of provision in design and technology, since only one lesson was seen. Although the school makes proper provision for teaching this subject, not enough products made by pupils were available at the time of the inspection to evaluate standards. The lesson observed was good. Year 1 pupils attained average standards in making a simple winding mechanism.

Music

67. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of provision because no teaching was seen. All requirements of the National Curriculum are met. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the composing element of the curriculum was not in place. Resources have also been strengthened and are now good. The very good accommodation in the performing arts room is an asset to both teaching and learning. The subject is led and managed well. The outcome of monitoring has led the school to buy in expertise to teach music in order to ensure better provision. The curriculum is enriched very well by opportunities provided by visiting musicians. All pupils enjoy performances, for example from a Tanzanian choir. Pupils in Year 6 participated in workshops that explored music, dance and drama from the Sikh religion and culture, culminating in a performance by the pupils. The 'samba drumming' sessions, funded through the Wider Opportunities initiative, provide very exciting and worthwhile learning experiences for pupils. Some pupils learn the violin and others learn the recorder. There are good opportunities for the choir and the recorder players to perform for their peers, parents and for the community, for example performing for the elderly. They also participate in town-wide productions

organised by the Tees Valley Music Service. As a result music makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal education.

Physical education

68. In physical education, not enough lessons were seen to evaluate provision. In the single lesson observed, pupils in Year 5 attained above average standards in games skills. The good teaching enabled pupils to achieve well in developing changes of speed when attacking. Pupils achieve well in swimming, with more than 85 per cent able to swim twenty-five metres by the time they leave. Community provision for physical education is very strong. The school takes full advantage of support provided by local professional and amateur sports clubs. Pupils benefit greatly from the very good facilities available on site as a result of New Deal for Communities funding. Access during the school day to the excellent sports hall and to activities after school and at weekends has increased the range of sports in which they can participate. This is helping to raise standards. The school is strongly committed to improving provision and employs badminton, tennis and gymnastics coaches. Pupils respond very well to the extra opportunities and many take part in the additional classes. Very good links with a nearby sports college enhance what is offered. For example, pupils in Year 2 took part in a 'Fun Fit' afternoon. A residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6 helps them to gain valuable experience of outdoor and adventurous pursuits.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

69. Overall provision was not judged because too few lessons were observed. Personal, social and health education is fostered well through a structured programme and a very notable feature is the way this aspect is part of all subjects. Sex education and drugs awareness education are an integral part of the curriculum. Pupils learn citizenship through the operation of the class councils. In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 5 satisfactorily learned about substance abuse and were aware of the danger and when to say, 'No'.

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	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).