

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLMWOOD SCHOOL

Middlesbrough

LEA area: Middlesbrough

Unique reference number: 111775

Headteacher: John Appleyard

Lead inspector: Noreen Buckingham

Dates of inspection: 7th - 9th March 2005

Inspection number: 268580

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Community special
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 86

School address: Saltersgill Avenue
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs M Palmer
governors:

Date of previous April 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holmwood is a Community Day Primary Special School situated in Middlesbrough that admits pupils with a wide range of special educational needs including emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, and a small number with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The school has gained Activemark Gold, Artsmark Silver, Investors in People and a Quality Assurance Award for Study Support. It has a range of links with local primary, secondary and special schools supporting Inclusion. Currently there are 86 pupils on roll of whom 65 are boys and 21 are girls. There are 12 pupils whose first language is not English and there is one Traveller pupil. 85 pupils have statements of special educational needs and one pupil is undergoing assessment. At 58.5 per cent, the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is high. This reflects the high social deprivation within the school's catchment area. Attainment on entry is well below that expected of pupils of this age. Since the last inspection the school's intake has changed significantly.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1672 2	Noreen Buckingham		Mathematics
			Religious education
			Art and design
			Music
			English as an additional language
1346 2	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
2354 9	Helen Eadington	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			English
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school with many very good features. Leadership and management are very good and the school has a very effective governing body. Teaching and learning are consistently good and sometimes very good which means that pupils achieve well. The school has a very positive ethos and places pupils at the heart of all it does. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership and management by the headteacher who is very well supported by a very effective governing body.
- Very good teamwork between all adults which results in very good relationships and a very positive ethos across the school.
- Pupils very good behaviour and attitudes towards work which means that they grasp every opportunity to learn.
- The very good care, guidance and support given to pupils making them feel secure which improves their self-esteem and confidence.
- Assessment procedures are very good and inform teachers' planning.
- Very good accommodation, which is used very well to give pupils a welcoming and lively place to learn.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator is underdeveloped in the area of monitoring teaching and learning.
- Unreliable and outdated information and communication technology (ICT) limits pupils' learning opportunities and consequently their achievement in this area.

Although the nature of the school has changed considerably since the last inspection it has made very good improvement because of what it has achieved in a number of areas. It also has successfully tackled the key issues identified in the last report. The school has achieved the Activemark Gold, Artsmark Silver and the Investors in People Award. It is working towards the Healthy Schools Award and has considerably increased its links with other schools especially mainstream primary schools to facilitate integration for some pupils. The new accommodation "Space for Sport and the Arts" has made a great improvement in what the school can now offer in these areas and also is beginning to increase links with the local community. It is managing the change in its population very well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	Good	Very good
Year 6	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

Achievement is good and sometimes very good because teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. All pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is very good in pupil's Year 6 assessment tests and all pupils achieve very well with their speaking and listening skills. Pupils' achievement in personal, social and health education is very good as a result of the very many opportunities across the school day used to reinforce them and this promotes their very positive attitudes and very good behaviour. The vibrant displays in every corner of the school is evidence of pupils' very

good achievements in art and design. In ICT achievement is only satisfactory mainly because of the outdated and unreliable computers, which limit learning. In religious education and physical education pupils achieve well. Pupils, for whom English is not their first language and pupils with ASD, achieve as well as their peers. There was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements about achievements in any other subject. Pupil's individual education plans have clear, challenging but realistic targets which promote pupils' good achievements.

Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. They enjoy coming to school and the emphasis on the development of these areas of their life means that they are very well behaved and have very good attitudes towards school. Assemblies make a very strong contribution to both pupils' spiritual and cultural development and their personal development. Attendance is satisfactory mainly due to the prolonged absences of a minority of pupils. Punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good because the curriculum is good and it is **consistently well taught** so that pupils learn well. Teachers plan their lessons in great detail and present pupils with activities well matched to their individual abilities and which interest them. When in the classroom they are very well supported and behaviour is usually very well managed so that pupils get on and achieve well. The information gained from the very good assessment systems helps teachers plan very effectively for individual needs. The curriculum is broad and balanced and well adapted to meet the different needs of pupils. It is enhanced by a good range of other activities during the school day, and visits and visitors further enrich the curriculum. The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good. They are offered very good support and advice and the school council is used well by pupils to have their views listened to. The school is very highly respected by associated professionals and local schools for the support it gives them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and he is totally committed to improving the school and moving it on. He is well supported by the leadership team who have clear roles and responsibilities and there is a commonly shared view about the future development of the school. Governance of the school is also very good and governors are both knowledgeable and involved in actively supporting the school. They question and challenge decisions so that they have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. All staff and governors work together as a team and continue to seek further inclusion opportunities. Statutory requirements are fully met. Whilst monitoring the curriculum through various means, co-ordinators do not monitor teaching and learning in their subjects to evaluate what is taught or how it is taught so that they have no means of knowing how they can be improved in order to improve pupils' achievements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' questionnaires indicate that they are very happy with the quality of education offered to their children by the school. A number of parents voluntarily work in school and they always feel very welcome. They like the arrangements the school has for settling pupils into school and feel very comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. Pupils say they like school very much and the activities they can take part in. They feel happy in school and say they know who they can talk to if they have any concerns or problems.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Ensure that subject co-ordinators are given the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning of their subjects in the classroom in order to improve achievement.

- Improve the quality and quantity of ICT resources in order to improve pupils' achievements.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall pupils achieve well in relation to their learning difficulties and their prior attainment in most lessons and against the targets on their individual education plans. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls or for those pupils whose first language is not English mainly because of the good support they receive in school and the good support their parents receive at home from the bi-lingual service.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Across the school pupils achieve very well in improving their speaking and listening skills.
- Target setting, both individual and whole school systems, promote pupils' good achievements.
- Pupils achieve very well in their personal and social skills and progress is very well monitored.
- Achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in science is very good.
- Most pupils achieve well in English and mathematics but the unreliability of computers means that pupils' achievements in ICT is only satisfactory.

Commentary

1 Targets on pupils' individual education plans (IEP) are challenging yet realistic and have been set following the very good assessment procedures. In addition, personal and social targets coupled with individual behaviour targets combine to settle pupils down and promote their opportunities to learn and achieve well. Alongside these, the whole school targets are set following an analysis of pupils' assessment scores using PIVATS (Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting), which have been moderated, across the school to get an accurate picture as possible. Whilst the school currently has only one year of data their systems for analysing it effectively supports the target for raising achievement in the school improvement plan.

2 Pupils have many opportunities and encouragement to develop their speaking and listening skills and as a result they achieve very well. In lessons, pupils respond well to questions and are given time to answer, they take part in assemblies and "talk" is an important part of lunchtime when they can be seen talking to an adult, to each other or in a group. Performances, either with or without music, provide very good opportunities to listen as well as speaking in front of an audience. Pupils know that an adult will always have time to listen to them and this gives them confidence. Role-play in lessons is another way in which pupils are encouraged to speak up and voice their ideas and feelings, such as in a religious education lesson about how Jesus may have felt on entering Jerusalem.

3 Achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in science is very good as a result of very good teaching which is made exciting and the very good teamwork between adults who ensure that, with focused support, all pupils can participate at their own level. Pupils like the practical activities which enable them to see what is happening for themselves and as a result they remember what they have done. They like the investigative nature of tasks and the schools' Investigation Week is a particular favourite because they can use their skills across other areas of the curriculum. Very good use of scientific language develops their subject understanding and there is an expectation that pupils will use the correct terms

when describing what is going on in their investigations. Teachers questioning is effective in assessing what pupils have understood and this regular re-capping supports pupils achievements very effectively.

4 All pupils are helped to achieve as well as they can in developing their personal and social skills. All staff are very good role models in that they respect and value what pupils say and do. They treat pupils in a firm but friendly manner and don't raise their voices when dealing with disruptive behaviour, which results in a calm and supportive atmosphere throughout the school. Staff know the pupils very well consequently the targets they set are realistic but challenging and enable pupils to achieve very well. The strong community spirit observed in assemblies gives pupils a sense of belonging and they spontaneously applaud each other for the smallest contribution or achievement. Every opportunity throughout the school day, from the moment pupils are welcomed at reception, the friendly atmosphere at lunchtimes and again at home time is used to develop relationships, social skills and engender a feeling of trust.

5 Pupils achieve well and sometimes very well in English, mathematics and science because teaching is consistently good. This is coupled with a good curriculum, which is geared to giving pupils a wide range of interesting activities, which keeps them motivated. In ICT however, achievement is satisfactory mainly because of the irregular use of computers many of which are out of date and unreliable. Achievement is good in religious education and physical education because learning is often presented in active ways in which pupils can participate with enthusiasm.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' personal development, which includes the opportunities they have for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also very good. Their attendance is satisfactory but their punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are welcomed each morning and made to feel special giving them a very positive start to the day.
- Lessons start on time.
- Very good systems and procedures to ensure pupils are free from harassment and to promote very good behaviour.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to think about the world around them.

Commentary

6 From the moment a pupil steps into school, staff are waiting in the entrance to make them feel special and welcome. The "Meeting and Greeting" of pupils enables staff to make personal contact with each pupil, ensuring they get to their classroom without wasting anytime. They are also able to deal with any routine administrative details such as the handing over of medication, quickly and efficiently. Similarly discussions in each class during the early morning session go over what is planned for the day, which allays anxieties over what the day has in store. As a result, pupils start the day with a very good attitude to work. The school recognises the importance of personal responsibility and in each class pupils are allocated specific jobs. Additionally each class elects a member for the school council in order to provide a cross section of opinion from the whole school, although this year, none have chosen a girl. Pupils gain in maturity because they are expected to complete their task or role effectively, and are accountable to the rest of their class. For example the toast is buttered to everyone's liking, or to the school, when they bring suggestions to the school council. Lunchtime is an important session in the day for behaviour management and personal development. Staff eat with pupils in "Jenny's Bistro" and lunchtime staff cajole and persuade pupils to try different types of food and experience lunchtime as a relaxed, social occasion. A wide variety

of lunchtime clubs, and the opportunity to make use of facilities in classes such as the computers, or in the neighbouring sports hall where pupils play football, mean that lunchtimes pass very quickly, and are lively and happy times for pupils. Team games such as competitive football, or board games in the classroom develop pupils' social and moral values, and as pupils move through the school, these values are consolidated. Pupils return to their lessons in the afternoon both exhilarated and relaxed, but also ready to work and apply themselves.

7 Recognition that many of the pupils have identified behavioural problems has led the school to adopt a very detailed, but easy to follow, profile of each of its pupils. This identifies exactly when, for example, extra behaviour support is needed. Add to this the very consistent application of the school's expectations of behaviour; a range of risk reduction strategies and the wide range of rewards for good and improved behaviour and the result is a very positive atmosphere in the school. Pupils behave very well both in and out of the school, for example, when integrating with another school on an individual basis, or going out to a leisure centre for swimming lessons as a year group. There has been one fixed term exclusion in the last recorded school year, but that pupil has now left. Bullying is not tolerated and parents commented on the swiftness with which the school deals with anti-social behaviour. As a result, parents did not consider bullying an issue and were confident that the school would deal with it immediately and properly.

8 Assemblies and religious education lesson support pupils' spiritual development well and give pupils a chance to share in the achievement of their friends in school through Celebration and Raising Achievement and Special assemblies. Pupils enjoy their involvement in assemblies. They focus on the candle that is lit to indicate the start of the act of collective worship and reflect on assembly themes such as "Special Books", which encompass not only a focus on Christianity and the Bible, but also demonstrate the importance of, for example, the Torah and Qu'ran to other faiths. Displays around the school reflect the influence of historically famous artists such as Van Gogh, Escher and Salvador Dali and visiting musicians such as an African drum group. The school's bilingual support teacher supports the school in celebrating Eid and Sikh festivals and most recently for example, instigated a festival of ethnic food for pupils. As a result pupils have a very good understanding of the cultures that are represented in the school and in the wider community.

9 When judged in context of the wide range of learning differences of pupils attending the school, attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality is good. The school has a very productive relationship with its education social worker, constantly reminds parents of the importance of regular attendance for their children and has a good working relationship with bus drivers and escorts. Attendance issues are overseen by the headteacher as one of his performance management targets and as a result, attendance and punctuality are improving, although the school has identified that a number of pupils are taking extended holidays abroad in Pakistan and that this has had a significant impact on their attendance profile.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting Year (88.7%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	11%	School data	0.3%
National data	8.2%	National data	1.8%

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
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White – British	68	1	0
White-any other background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British-Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British-Pakistani	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British- any other Asian background	3	0	0
Total	86	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is good as is teaching and learning. The school manages pupils' behaviour very well which is vital to them being able to take advantage of all the curriculum offers. Pupils are very well cared for and learn in a safe and secure environment.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and sometimes it is very good. Assessment procedures are very good and the information gained is used very well to move pupils on.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very clear lesson planning, good interesting introductions and good recap of prior learning means that pupils build on their knowledge and skills well.
- Teamwork in the classroom is very good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Very good relationships and consistent management of behaviour combine to support pupils' good achievement.
- Some lessons lack pace and some pupils lose interest and don't learn as well as they could.

Commentary

10 Lesson planning is very thorough and detailed giving lessons a structured framework from which to work. Because of the very good assessment procedures teachers know pupils' individual abilities very well. This means that all pupils are included in learning at their own level with work that matches what they can do but which also adds sufficient challenge to enable them to move on. The effective use of the interactive whiteboards for introductory activities generally captures pupils' attention immediately giving a positive start to lessons. Very good relationships between staff and pupils means that the atmosphere in the classroom is warm and friendly encouraging pupils to listen and learn.

11 The best lessons are those which have a range of relevant activities using resources, which interest pupils and have an element of fun which excites pupils who then want to be actively involved. An example of this was a science lesson about changing materials in which pupils made a number of different foods. Making cakes, jelly and custard were very visual and interesting ways to demonstrate this concept. Plenaries are very well used in the best lessons to celebrate pupils' achievements and give teachers a very good understanding of what they have learned. Lessons are less effective when the pace is slow and too much time is taken to settle pupils to the task and time is wasted by some pupils when they are not productively occupied and so learning opportunities are lost. Occasionally opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills are missed because too much guidance and support is given. On a few occasions the focus on learning is diverted by low level disruptive behaviour which takes too long to smooth over. However, during the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed which is an improvement since the last inspection.

12 The teamwork in the classroom between teachers and teaching assistants is very good and is significant in supporting pupils in their learning. Occasionally pupils are distressed, frustrated or angry, showing their emotional and behavioural difficulties, and all staff manage this very well in accordance with pupils' individual behaviour plans. Lesson

planning usually shows how teaching assistants are deployed and, because of this and their very positive relationships with pupils, they are able to guide and support them very well without doing the work for them although there are a few occasions when they step in too early to help.

13 Assessment procedures are very good and the outcomes are used very effectively in producing clear targets for pupils' IEPs and in organising groups especially in literacy and numeracy lessons. Assessment scores using PIVATS are now being analysed and any trends identified are looked at more closely so that action can be taken. All staff keep examples of levelled work in English, mathematics and science and these are moderated across the school so there is a consistent approach to assessment enabling staff to monitor pupils' progress accurately and consistently. The annual programme for looking at pupils' workbooks means the leadership team have a good overview of how well pupils are doing in every subject and this enables them to pinpoint any areas for improvement. Pupils also have personal and social targets and a behaviour profile and this means that these, in tandem with academic targets, ensure that pupils are given the most appropriate support to enable them to get the most out of the learning opportunities offered.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (34%)	16 (46%)	7 (20%)	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and focuses well on the needs of the pupils. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The accommodation is very good and resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils follow a good range of subjects and activities during their time in school.
- Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good.
- Personal, social and health education is promoted very well.
- The very good arrangements to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to extend their learning beyond the school day.
- The curriculum is enhanced well by links with the local community.

Commentary

14 The curriculum is well planned to provide the required subjects, religious education and collective worship. The broad range of worthwhile activities meets the needs of all pupils well. Staff are skilled at linking subjects across the curriculum so that, for instance, literacy and numeracy are reinforced in all curricular areas.

15 The provision to ensure that the full range of pupils' needs are met is good. Units of work are well matched to pupils' learning needs because teachers modify planning and teaching strategies and set tasks at different levels. This enables all pupils to achieve well. Since the previous inspection the curriculum has been well adapted to take account of the significant increase in the proportion of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Consequently, very effective strategies for managing challenging behaviour are embedded

in all aspects of the school's provision so that these pupils make the same good progress as others.

16 The school provides a very good personal, social and health education programme. Staff take every opportunity to encourage pupils to recognise how they can improve their own behaviour and performance. The daily session of Child Initiated Learning (ChIL) aimed at promoting pupils' personal and social development and self-esteem, is implemented through a wide variety of activities. Pupils are taught sensitively about appropriate elements of sex, drugs and relationships and about how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Personal development and responsibility are further promoted through the school council, which enables pupils to express their views on many matters concerned with the running of the school.

17 There are very good arrangements to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. Staff from the local high schools visit Holmwood and meet class teachers and Year 6 pupils. Parents are encouraged to visit the relevant high school, and a well organised programme of visits enables pupils to become familiar with their next school before they begin. A 'buddy' system with Year 10 and 11 students provides additional support for pupils moving to the local special secondary school.

18 Although there are a number of lunchtime clubs and activities and holiday clubs, opportunities for pupils to extend their learning beyond the school day are currently limited. However, the school makes very good use of the local community to widen and enrich pupils' experiences. Throughout the year, learning in many subject areas is supported by well-planned visits to, for example, places of worship, museums and historical sites, the dock and harbour areas, the Town Hall and the local RSPCA centre. The contribution of the community to the curriculum is varied and very good. Successful partnerships with a wide range of sporting clubs and organisations, performing arts groups, the police and local business people provide additional perspectives on, and support for, pupils' needs. Links with the community enrich pupils' understanding of the world and create opportunities for them to learn to behave in different situations.

19 The school is well staffed. Teachers and teaching assistants are well deployed. Resources for learning are good overall and in mathematics, history, physical education and the Foundation Stage they are very good. Resources for ICT are satisfactory overall. The interactive whiteboards are used well and are very effective in motivating pupils to learn. However, the slow speed and unreliability of many computers is limiting what is taught. The accommodation is very good and all areas of the school are well-planned and organised and used very effectively to support pupils' learning. The school is bright, colourful and spotlessly clean. In particular pupils benefit from the exceptionally good facilities in the new Space for Sports and the Arts, from the multi-sensory and 'colourful' rooms where they can calm down if they have become angry or distressed, and from the ongoing development of the outdoor learning environment. The organisation and ambience of their dining area, 'Jenny's Kitchen', makes a significant contribution to their social, cultural and personal development. Pupils are proud of their school and treat the accommodation and resources with respect.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is very good. The school provides pupils with very good support advice and guidance and involves and listens to their views very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school nurtures pupils very well and makes very good arrangements to support all their needs.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good.
- The school listens carefully to pupils' views and takes them into account when making decisions that concern them.

Commentary

20 The care of pupils is central to the school. Health and safety procedures are the responsibility of a dedicated team of staff and governors, but the school also has external advisers who ensure that all assessments of risks and day-to-day procedures are fulfilled. A wide range of health professionals visit pupils whilst they are in school in addition to members of the police and fire services to emphasise the caring side of public services. Child protection procedures are designated to a trained named person, and follow area child protection guidelines, which are currently under review as the documentation is several years old. Medication procedures are very well organised and a parent commented that because of the support her child received in the school, the medication he is prescribed to manage his behaviour has been reduced. All staff have had training in speaking and listening to children who have undergone emotional distress. The school is involved with the Healthy School Award and the school's kitchens provide healthy and well-presented

food and pupils have access to drinking water in their classrooms throughout the school day. All staff know and care for all of the pupils very well and the opportunities for pupils to talk to an adult they trust, for example over lunchtime, in the child initiated learning session at the end of the day or the welcoming session in class each morning, are excellent. Because of the school's insistence on this high quality environment for pupils, parents are very happy about the care given to their children and the pupils are very well looked after.

21 New pupils of all ages respond very well to the welcoming environment, exceptional care procedures and warmth of relationships in the school. Parents are especially pleased with the relationship that the school has with the Cleveland child development unit for the very youngest pupils coming into school. As a result, pupils settle in very happily and are soon confident members of the school community.

22 A strength of the school is the way that it promotes fairness and equality between different groups of pupils. Although pupils have a wide range of abilities and needs, careful planning and well directed support ensure that all have equal opportunities to benefit from everything that the school offers. Consequently, there are no significant variations between the progress of girls and boys or by other different groups of pupils. Pupils who are ready to benefit from inclusion have regular opportunities of working and playing alongside their peers in mainstream schools. Pupils with additional needs also benefit from support from speech and language therapists, from other professionals in the health and educational services and from the support of the bi-lingual assistant.

23 The School Council meets regularly and, apart from the current lack of girls on the present council, represents the views of pupils across the school very well. The school places great importance on keeping pupils informed and involving them, as appropriately as possible, in making decisions. For example, pupils renamed the "Calming" room as the "Colourful" room because of the rainbow shades and they are also consulted on menus, playtime activities and are currently considering how to spend a £100 sum that has been allocated for new play equipment. Pupils are regularly consulted on their targets and older pupils are invited into their Annual Review meetings. A salutary occasion for many as they realise the reality of the dialogue between their parents and school, and that, for example, their parents are regularly updated on what they are doing in school. As a result, the academic achievements of pupils, which are supported by very good assessment procedures, are also supported by very good procedures for the day-to-day support and guidance of pupils on a personal basis.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents. Links with the community are very good. Very good links exist with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very hard to get to know parents and keep them well informed.
- The school provides a very good service to the local community and has close links with it.
- The school has a very close working partnership with many schools in the area and is held in great esteem by them.

Commentary

24 The school values parents' views and makes every effort to make sure that they come to annual reviews and performances. Day-to-day contact is mainly by telephone and a small number of pupils have home/school diaries, usually at the request of parents. Information to parents is very good and parents commented that they enjoyed the newsletters and found the prospectus a very easy way to find information. Where possible the headteacher and senior staff prefer to talk to parents face-to-face if there is a matter of concern, and if there is a problem with transport, the school will arrange for parents to be brought into school or will make home visits. As a result parents feel very comfortable in the school.

25 Parent helpers are well represented in the school and a number have made the transition to becoming trained support assistants in class. Parents of children who do not have English as their first language are very well supported by the bilingual support

assistant who has a very positive impact on home/school communications and makes sure that these parents are fully involved in decisions on their children's education, for example in annual reviews. The school is keen to give ethnic minority parents more opportunities to help with their children's learning. At the instigation of one of these parents, a group, supported by the bilingual support assistant and an outside tutor, is in place to give parents specific language and academic skills to support their children's learning out of school. Parents attending this family learning group are delighted to take advantage of being in school to visit their child's classroom and see the work they are doing.

26 The school is a prominent member of the Pathfinder Project, linking it with other local schools to provide community education and out of school support, for example, through "Space for Sports and Art" and a regional dance group, Tees Valley Dance. The police education officer is a regular visitor to the school and supports the school's citizenship curriculum and makes a very good contribution to raising awareness of safety issues amongst pupils and presenting a positive image of the police force. Close links exist with the community through the local church and Lions and Rotary club. The distinction of having the community sports hall on the school site establishes the profile of the very good links that the school has with the community.

27 Local schools value the skills that the school offers in the training and support of staff that are working with challenging, disaffected or emotionally troubled pupils. They are reassured by the access they have to the school's advice, for example, by way of a telephone call for a suggested course of action for de-escalation or behaviour management ideas for a pupil who may be at risk of exclusion. A meeting with headteachers of a number of these schools was overwhelmingly positive regarding the expertise and benefits that Holmwood School shares with them. In return many of these schools are willing to consider making places available for re-integration opportunities. For example, a pupil whose parents had requested social inclusion opportunities in a mainstream school where his siblings attended, now accesses an assembly and breaktime, and participates, with support, in a numeracy lesson with his peers. The school has been able to tell parents of his increased self-esteem as a result of this inclusion opportunity.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the leadership of the other key staff is good. The governance and management of the school are very good. The school provides very good value for money. The school very effectively manages aids and barriers to learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very high aspirations for continual development.
- The governing body support and challenge the senior managers very well.
- The very good provision for staff development.
- There are weaknesses in the formal monitoring of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators.

Commentary

28 The headteacher places the needs of the pupils at the very centre of his work and therefore he very effectively contributes to the school's very good ethos. He has a very clear vision for future development and promotes open and honest communication with all involved in the school. The good senior management team is becoming increasingly effective, and coupled with very effective systems to seek and act on the views of pupils

and parents, the school is very well placed to improve further and continue to promote its very positive and inclusive ethos. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and the very good school improvement plan provides a very clear direction for the future development of the school. The school is very committed to fully meeting the special educational needs of the pupils providing them all with equal access to the curriculum and appropriate activities.

29 The governing body has a very good range of skills and make a very valuable contribution to the development of the school. It is led by a very able and perceptive chair of governors who has a particularly good understanding of the way the school works. Each governor is attached to a specific class and this helps them to get to know the staff and pupils very well and consequently they are very aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their very good insight into the school ensures that the governing body provides a very good balance between support and challenge to the senior managers. The governing body has a very good focus on achieving very good value for money and the administrative staff, very well supported by the Local Education Authority, ensure that financial management in the school is very good. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met including the very effective promotion of racial equality in the school.

30 The school leaders are very good role models and this, for example, has helped to establish the very good systems for the performance management of the staff. The targets agreed for staff development are clearly linked to the school improvement plan and staff's continuing professional development. This very well managed process ensures that members of staff are very well trained to meet the full range of pupils' special educational needs in the school. The school has the confidence to appoint newly qualified teachers and is also providing the opportunity for support staff to enhance their skills and qualifications. This approach has been facilitated by a very effective induction programme and boosted by the very good team ethos in the school. Workforce Reforms are being introduced very effectively into the school and this helps to motivate the staff and promotes a very positive staff morale.

31 The formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the subject co-ordinators is under developed. For example, in science this contributes to lower expectations by a small number of staff and pupils' achievement is satisfactory in these lessons rather than their good achievement, overall. Co-ordinators are not aware of how their subject is taught, how well resources are used or how teaching be improved so that pupils' learning can be improved.

32 The excellent care and very good teamwork in the school are major aids to pupils' achievement. The headteacher and governing body have a very proactive approach to resolving potential barriers and their contribution is a significant boost to pupils' very good personal development and good achievement. The school has a changing pupil population and is meeting the demands of an increasing number of pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties with confidence. The very good leadership and management of the school has ensured that this potential barrier to achievement has been very effectively managed.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	782,870
Total expenditure	722,981
Expenditure per pupil	8,407

Balance from previous Year	-5,504
Balance carried forward to the next	59889 *

* This figure includes late reimbursements from the LEA.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are encouraged to take a full part in their children's learning.
- Children's personal development and communication skills are well promoted throughout the day.
- Relationships between children and adults are very positive.
- Assessment is used very well to inform planning.
- Resources are used well to promote children's attention and understanding.

Commentary

33 The Foundation Stage class includes five children in the Reception Year and five in Year 1. Taking into account the children's special educational needs and after discussion with parents, all these children are taught the Foundation Stage curriculum. It is not possible to compare children's achievement with that at the time of the previous inspection as Foundation Stage was not reported on at that time. There are good links with parents who are encouraged to feel they are partners in their children's education. This is one of the reasons why children achieve well and make good progress in all areas of their learning. In addition teaching is good and all adults work well together ensuring that no opportunities for learning are lost. Children's needs are very carefully assessed and lessons are well planned to ensure that work matches their varying levels of ability.

34 The teacher and teaching assistants work closely together to help the children develop good **personal, social and emotional skills**, such as taking turns and sharing. Children are warmly welcomed when they arrive at school each day. Consequently they are secure and happy and pleased to meet the staff and each other. Action rhymes and songs and a wide variety of activities are used to encourage positive interaction between the children. Relationships are very good, and staff are consistently patient and calm and give clear guidance about how children are expected to behave. Because staff frequently draw attention to the structure of the day, children become familiar with the class routines and usually follow them as well as they are able. They are given many opportunities to make choices and are learning to select activities with minimal help.

35 During the day staff provide many occasions for children to express themselves and consequently they make good progress in developing their **language and communication skills**. They enjoy contributing to discussions and taking part in role-play situations such as shopping. During literacy sessions children begin to develop early reading skills so that, for instance, they learn to associate objects such as puppets and pictures with the stories they hear and enjoy. Phonic awareness is effectively promoted by the appropriately strong emphasis the teacher places on rhyming activities. Children begin to recognise their own photographs and names and those of others. They have many opportunities to improve their fine motor skills with construction and tracking activities, jigsaws and colouring. Consequently, they begin to develop the control needed for early writing activities and learn to overwrite their own initials and names. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at reinforcing language and in encouraging children to repeat relevant words and phrases so that their language skills are developed very well. The fun, humour and activities mean that children are happy to learn in a positive atmosphere.

36 Children benefit from many well planned opportunities to promote their **mathematical development** skills and concepts, language, skills and knowledge. For instance, in the lesson observed, they joined enthusiastically in number rhymes and songs, counted objects up to 10, matched number shapes, identified coins up to 5p and 10p and used money to 'buy' items at the class shop. The staff make good use of the key words of colour, shape, size and position and use well chosen resources that hold the children's interest and promote their understanding.

37 Children make good progress in developing their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. They start to understand the passing of time as they learn the days of the week and discuss birthdays, and become increasingly aware of classroom routines. They explore the world about them by moving around the school to use different facilities and they go out into the local area. During the inspection children were intrigued when they used an interactive whiteboard to build up and name the parts of a plant, and by experimental work involving planting, growing and observing seeds in varying conditions. Very detailed planning and good focused questioning enables pupils to learn well and most can remember what plants need to grow.

38 Children are introduced to a wide variety of media in order to develop **creative activities**. They experiment with colour and textures when painting with fingers or brushes. They enjoy making collages and using play dough, and making models such as the very hungry caterpillar. The opportunities they are given for role play and dressing up help them to develop their ideas and imagination. They benefit from music lessons where they enjoy clapping, singing and performing actions to songs and rhymes. They are all intrigued and delighted by the sounds they find they can make with a range of percussion instruments. The well chosen instruments keep them well focused and teaching is well paced and lively which enables children to learn well.

39 There is a good, very well equipped outdoor play area that contributes well to children's **physical development** and spatial awareness. They frequently use and play with construction toys, tracking games, jigsaws and colouring materials, all of which help to increase their control of small pieces of equipment. The staff make the most of every opportunity to promote children's independence in activities such as eating and dressing.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening and achieve well in developing their reading and writing skills.
- Assessment procedures are very good and the information gained is used very well to plan the next stage of pupils' learning.
- Work is well matched to the range of pupils' abilities.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to promoting pupils' achievement and progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed very well and relationships are very positive.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Sometimes staff offer help too quickly.

Commentary

40 Pupils achieve very well in developing their speaking and listening skills. This is due to the school's emphasis on promoting pupils' speaking and listening in all areas of the curriculum. Good questioning, matched to pupils' understanding, ensures that everyone is included and challenged to think through and explain their ideas. New vocabulary is explained clearly and repeated in context so that pupils begin to use it when discussing their work. Role-play and drama encourage pupils of all ages and abilities to become more confident to express their ideas and feelings to an audience.

41 Pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading. They learn the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent. By the end of Year 2 the majority of pupils recognise their own names and those of others and have a growing bank of words they recognise on sight. Because teachers put an appropriately strong emphasis on rhyming, most pupils develop a good understanding of the phonic elements of reading. By the end of Year 6 the majority recognise many common words and make effective use of phonics, their grammatical knowledge and the context to make sense of unfamiliar texts. Pupils benefit from experiencing a wide range of stories, poetry, drama and non-fiction texts. Regular guided reading sessions play a valuable part in enabling pupils to explore and discuss texts in greater depth. Teachers read clearly and expressively and provide many opportunities for pupils to read aloud. This results in good improvements in their confidence, fluency and articulation.

42 Pupils achieve well in writing. Boys and girls of all abilities make good progress. Teachers plan work that is suitably challenging and there is good support from teaching assistants. However, occasionally, staff offer help too quickly instead of encouraging pupils to 'have a go'. When this happens it restricts the development of pupils' independent learning. Younger pupils overwrite or copy letters, words and their own sentences, scribed by the teacher or teaching assistant. As they move up through the school pupils learn to write in a range of styles and make good use of computers for word processing and developing their spelling skills. The recently introduced interactive whiteboards are motivating them to contribute with increasing confidence to discussions about grammatical features, spelling patterns and co-operative writing. Most teachers are insistent on work being set out properly and as a result many pupils take pride in presenting their work well. Marking is always positive and usually gives clear guidance on how pupils can improve

further. Since the previous inspection there has been a welcome reduction in the use of work sheets. Consequently, by the time they reach Year 6, a significant proportion of pupils are extending their writing in English and other subjects such as geography, history and science.

43 Pupils achieve well and make good progress because teaching is good overall and frequently very good. It is never less than satisfactory. Lessons are very well planned and usually briskly paced and there is a consistent approach to the teaching of all aspects of literacy. Teachers take very good account of pupils' IEP targets and tasks are very well matched to the full range of abilities. Relationships are very positive and the support offered by the teaching assistants makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievement and progress. Behaviour management is calm, firm and effective so that pupils usually remain well focussed on their work.

44 Assessment and recording procedures are very good and assessment information is very well used in planning lessons. English is very well led because the subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable, experienced and enthusiastic. Monitoring is effective and good practice is shared with colleagues and priorities for development are clearly identified in the subject action plan. The curriculum is enhanced by book days and by visits from drama groups. English has improved well since the previous inspection, particularly in the areas of speaking and writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45 Literacy skills are systematically promoted in all subjects. Teachers consistently use correct subject vocabulary. They question pupils well to extend the way in which those of all ages and abilities contribute to discussions. An instance of the good use of literacy to support other subjects was evident in a Year 4 history lesson when pupils compiled a glossary for their book on World War II.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently good with some very good features and consequently pupils' achievement is good.
- ICT is currently not used sufficiently to support individual learning although the use of interactive whiteboards is developing well.
- Assessment is used well to inform lesson planning.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

46 Pupils achieve well in mathematics as a result of the consistently good teaching. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together because everybody knows the pupils very well, they know the format of lessons and their individual roles in supporting pupils. Starter activities motivate pupils and catch their interest often because they have a practical element as well as making them think. Teachers are confident in using the interactive whiteboards, as are the pupils, and this is a very effective means of gaining their attention and involving them practically in lessons from the very beginning. There is little use however, of any ICT to support individual learning and this has been identified in the subject development plan.

47 Praise and encouragement are used well when pupils are trying hard and this gives them the confidence to continue and achieve well. The youngest pupils use computers to show how well they recognise coins and count small amounts; others match coins of equivalent value and work with amounts to 20p. They enjoy earning coins and spending them at the “breakfast bar”. As they move through the school pupils build on this and handle larger amounts of money working out simple problems. Older pupils practice estimating using standard measures, others consolidate their understanding of place value and the oldest pupils identify and classify a range of two dimensional and three dimensional shapes by their properties learning the correct language, such as, vertices, edges and faces etc. Workbooks show that the curriculum consistently builds on what pupils know and, combined with the very good assessment systems, pupils consistently achieve well.

48 The subject co-ordinator manages the subject well giving good support to staff. She is a leading mathematics teacher and works hard to maintain the current high standards in mathematics. The curriculum is well organised and an action plan clearly identifies the most important areas for future development. Assessment follows the school system and the information gained is analysed to identify trends. An example of this was the identification of a drop in progress in shape, space and measures so this was targeted as an area for improvement with additional staff training. Examples of levelled work are kept which is ensuring a consistency in assessing pupils’ progress, optional Standard Assessment Tests (SAT) in Years 4 and 5 are used as pointers for special emphasis and booster classes for Year 6 pupils gives them better chances to do as well as they can.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49 Mathematics is used well in other subjects of the curriculum. Displays of work show how shape is used in art and design to create patterns and similarly abstract designs using art and design packages on the computer. In science pupils weigh ingredients when looking at changing materials, they beat a rhythm in music and learn about direction and shape in physical education. Young pupils use their counting skills when listening to the story of “The Very Hungry Caterpillar”. Mathematical language is reinforced in many situations throughout the school day, for example, more/less than, bigger/smaller than, tallest/shortest.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good provision for pupils to learn through their involvement in practical work.
- The effective focus on the use of key scientific words.
- The very good achievement of pupils in their national tests at the end of Year 6.
- The development of very effective teams however teachers’ expectations of the standards required for pupils’ recording of their work is variable.

Commentary

50 Pupils are provided with good opportunities to make good gains in the development of their skills of scientific enquiry in all aspects of the National Curriculum. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection and, as a result, the quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well, overall. In a lesson for pupils in Year 2 the teacher carefully explained the process of investigation required to explore the properties of

materials. Pupils worked well together and responded well to the opportunity to choose which materials they wanted to test. Pupils made good gains in their ability to identify which materials would, for example, stretch, bend and squash. Pupils in Year 2 are making increasingly accurate observations and record, for example, what happens to a plant if it is not watered. Year 6 pupils have a wealth of practical opportunities that very effectively prepare them to move on to the next stage of their education. They are, for example, able to complete a simple electrical circuit and name the main components. Pupils have also investigated the impact of micro organisms on food and pupils produced some very good examples of extended writing that very effectively described their observations. The school organises exciting Investigation Weeks where pupils are effectively involved in developing their enquiry skills across the curriculum.

51 The staff have high expectations of pupils' language development in science. They effectively encourage pupils to share their ideas and communicate them using appropriate scientific words. Pupils in Year 2 use terms such as "bending" and "stretching" with good understanding. Higher attaining pupils in Year 3 are effectively taught to use terms such as "materials" and "flexible" in the right context. Pupils in Year 6 use terms such as "condensation" and "solution" very confidently as they investigate whether changes are reversible or not. Attractive and relevant classroom displays help to reinforce pupils' interest and good achievement in science. The information gained from the good use of assessment effectively informs teachers' lesson planning and is used to set challenging targets for pupils' achievement. This is particularly evident in Year 6 where pupils achieve very well in their national tests. The results have shown consistent improvements and pupils are very effectively challenged in most lessons.

52 Leadership and management are good. The development of teamwork is very good and the staff teams help to promote very good relationships and pupils' good achievement. Planning for the future development of the subject is good and resources are well organised and, as a result, pupils have an interesting and relevant curriculum. However, the subject co-ordinator does not formally monitor the quality and teaching of the subject across the school and this leads to some inconsistency in the teachers' expectations. For example, the quality of most pupils' work is good and at times very good, however, limited recording and reporting by a small number of pupils is only satisfactory demonstrating some lack of subject expertise.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective use of a good range of assessment and recording systems.
- The good focus on challenging and motivating activities for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- There is a clear vision for the future development of the subject.
- There are weaknesses in the suitability and reliability of the computers.

Commentary

53 An innovative range of systems is used to assess and record pupils' achievement, for example, an electronic portfolio of work is kept for each year group. This well considered initiative is forming the basis of an effective profile of pupils' gains in their learning over time. Also photographic evidence is kept as an effective means of recording pupils' practical work in this subject. Pupil's work is monitored each half term and this helps to promote good teaching and learning for most pupils in Years 3 to 6.

54 Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 achieve well and are able to load a computer, respond to text on a screen and use a mouse with confidence. Lower attaining pupils also achieve well and know that it is important to handle a disc with care. Good demonstration and support by the staff challenges these pupils to make good gains in their use of the mouse to manipulate the cursor on the screen and as a result young pupils make satisfactory achievement. Where teaching is good it helps to build on pupils' positive attitudes to ICT and consequently they are keen to take a full and active part in lessons. Pupils in Year 6 are effectively taught to research information from the Internet and, as a result, they enhance the quality of their work. The good development of pupils' independence skills is evident in their ability to select a font, save and retrieve work with no help from staff. The consistent use of key words by the staff has effectively promoted pupils' ability to confidently use words such as "cursor" and "highlight" in the right context. Overall achievement is satisfactory.

55 The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and is well aware of future national developments in the subject, for example, the proposed introduction of PIVATS levels for ICT in the near future. Consequently, the good subject improvement plan provides clear criteria for the successful development of the subject and in particular the link with financial expenditure is well developed. The co-ordinator understands the need for more updated equipment and the limiting effect the current unreliable equipment has on pupils' achievements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56 Teachers appreciate the introduction of interactive whiteboards and are becoming increasingly confident in the effective use of this resource across the curriculum. The pupils

enjoy using the whiteboards and they make good gains in their ability and confidence to use them to enhance the quality of their work. ICT was used well in a lesson for Year 6 pupils to enhance their understanding of symmetry. Also in a lesson for Year 5 pupils they used the ICT resources to make good gains in the development of their grammatical skills. However, technical problems with the equipment and consequently, the staff's lack of confidence in the reliability of the current computers do limit some activities and, as a result, the use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory.

HUMANITIES

57 It was not possible to observe any **geography** lessons during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on provision and achievement in the subject. However, pupils' work, displays around the school and discussion with the co-ordinator indicate that pupils are provided with a suitable range of varied and interesting work. Younger pupils explore their school and its local area, including comparisons between life in the town and the country. As they move up through the school, pupils have many opportunities to learn more about their town and its surroundings, including the rivers from source to estuary. They learn the countries of the British Isles and study different parts of the world, for example, the main European countries and a range of climatic regions such as the rain forests. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' mapping skills. Their understanding of geographical features is enhanced by the many well-planned trips they make into the local area and further afield.

58 Only one **history** lesson was seen during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on provision and achievement in the subject. However, pupils' work, displays around the school and discussion with the acting co-ordinator show that work in history is varied and interesting. In the lesson seen teaching and learning were very good and pupils were fully involved through the very effective use of resources and high quality support from the teaching assistants. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about the history of their local area. They develop a sense of chronology when they look at photographs of themselves and talk about members of their families. By Year 6 they have had many opportunities to study history in a wider context and to develop an understanding of such diverse periods as life in ancient Egypt and life for evacuees during World War II. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' enquiry skills and they search for information from local sources such as museums and street names, and from the Internet.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- Assemblies make a strong contribution to religious education.
- The curriculum is relevant to the pupils and is well linked to the agreed syllabus.

Commentary

59 Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good when teachers set the scene well and make very good use of relevant resources, such as palms. Pupils enjoy role-play which enables them to act out parts such as the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem. Pupils in Year 3 are encouraged to think about their feelings of the Easter story and in Year 4 pupils can remember what they have learned about the Passover feast and ways that Jewish people celebrate. Good story telling evokes an atmosphere which holds pupils' attention and maintains their concentration throughout. Pupils achieve well because of this and because lessons are well planned with activities well matched to their knowledge and understanding. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

60 Through religious education pupils are taught the key principles that support some of the major world faiths, for example the promises that Noah made to God. In a Year 5 lesson when pupils were discussing the Easter story, pupils were so absorbed and awe

struck by the thought that the crowd in Jerusalem condemned Jesus and chose Barabas to go free instead, that they could not continue with the lesson for a short time as they were so bound up in the drama of Jesus' crucifixion. During the inspection Year 6 pupils visited a local synagogue as part of their study of Judaism.

61 The well-planned weekly themes for daily assemblies support religious education well and widen pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious festivals, symbols and special books across the major faiths that they study. A very good assembly about "special books" gave pupils a very clear understanding of how the different elements of the Bible might have been brought together in a very practical and easily understood way using pupils' own experiences of writing and reading. In the same theme, the bi-lingual assistant showed and explained to pupils about the "Qu'ran" when talking about Islam.

62 The curriculum is enriched by visits to different places of worship in the community and this helps make the subject "come alive". Also frequent use of the local church, where the vicar is a governor and regular visitor to school, further enhances pupils' learning about Christianity and the school's bi-lingual assistant shares her personal knowledge about Islam with the pupils. The curriculum has recently been reviewed and assessment procedures are now in place so that pupils' progress can be tracked. The subject is well led and managed and the co-ordinator is constantly improving resources to support the different faiths studied and encourages visits to different places of worship, for example a synagogue and mosque in the local community.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

63 No lessons in **art and design** were observed during the inspection but evidence around the school, subject files and classroom displays were sufficient evidence to judge that pupils enjoy art and design lessons very much and are given a very wide range of experiences using many different media and techniques. The school has gained the Artsmark Silver and are waiting to see if they have achieved the Artsmark Gold. Pupils' work displayed around the school results in a vibrant and colourful place in which to learn and which demonstrates how much their work is valued and respected. They study the work of artists such as Van Gogh, Dali, Escher and Turner and their colourful paintings demonstrate very good use of colour and technique and understanding of the different styles of the artists. Pupils learn to appreciate the visual properties of still life compositions and use different media to produce a range of collages. They learn to mix colours and this was particularly effective, using black and white, to produce very atmospheric paintings of the local coastline. Class collages show how pupils scrunch, tear and cut paper to make butterflies and use paint to demonstrate the symmetrical aspect of them. Printing patterns make attractive displays and mix red and yellow and blue and white to show "hot" and "cold" colours. As well as working in two-dimensions pupils use clay to make pots for Diwali. Art and design is used well to illustrate topics in other subjects, for example, Greek shields and portraits of kings and queens in history, a rain forest collage in geography and Josephs' coat of many colours in religious education. Good use is made of ICT to produce abstract art pictures and to show different shapes in mathematics.

64 Only one lesson of **music** was observed during the inspection so no firm judgements about the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' achievements can be made. However, scrutiny of files and information from the co-ordinator indicate that pupils are offered various opportunities and activities to stimulate and develop their interest in music. The school has strong links with the Tees Valley Dance and also the Tees Valley Music Service. Pupils have the opportunity to work with professionals which improves their performances and because of the wide range of different music and dance styles they learned, they made good improvements in their understanding of moving to music. A project with students from Middlesbrough College resulted in an energetic performance of

music and dance which was performed at a local theatre and was recorded on a compact disc. Pupils have also had the chance to play African drums, watch contemporary dance through “Street Dance” performers and the Birmingham Royal Ballet Company. In partnership with another special school pupils have performed a version of Romeo and Juliet linked to West Side Story giving them exciting opportunities to work together while at the same time helping them to learn more about different cultures. In the lesson seen young pupils enthusiastically used a range of percussion instruments, such as, xylophone, chime bar, Swanee whistle and glockenspiel, to make sounds and learn about the changes in pitch as they tapped different bars.

65 Music is played throughout the day in the hall and this ranges from classical pieces to popular music to hymns or reggae. It does not impinge on the learning ethos but adds to a positive atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils recognise many pieces and identify favourites showing how much they appreciate it and how well it supports their listening skills. A “musician of the week” is nominated at an assembly showing the strong emphasis on music throughout the school.

66 Only one **design and technology** lesson was seen during the inspection. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision and achievement. However, pupils' work, displays around the school and information from the co-ordinator indicate that pupils are given an appropriate range of interesting and varied work. In the lesson seen teaching and learning were good and pupils were fully involved, shared resources and ideas amicably and were well supported by the teaching assistants. They use a wide range of media and techniques, including fabrics, papier mache and clay, and begin to use ICT to research, plan and enhance their work. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they know how bread is made, can use different joining techniques and understand how to use simple tools safely. There are well planned links with other curriculum areas such as literacy, numeracy, mathematics and geography.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is very good because of the very good teaching and opportunities to develop their skills.
- There are very good football activities during the lunch break.
- Too much time is lost at the beginning and end of some lessons.

Commentary

67 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6 making teaching and learning good, overall. The school has been recently awarded an Activemark Gold and this reflects well on the very good leadership and management of the subject. Year 6 pupils are very effectively challenged to develop their water skills and, as a result, achieve very well. Each pupil has a very clear target and makes very good gains in their confidence in the water, their survival skills and also distance swimming. Pupils share in and celebrate each other's swimming awards during school assemblies and this very effectively raises pupils' confidence. In a lesson for pupils in Year 5 they quickly changed into appropriate clothing and this ensured that the lesson started promptly. The sports hall is an excellent facility with plenty of space for pupils to take part in vigorous exercise safely. Good demonstrations by the staff effectively challenged pupils and, as a result they made good gains in their development of increasingly complex balances. Very good teamwork was a feature of the lesson and, as a result, pupils were able to work well in pairs and groups.

68 Regular lunchtime football sessions are provided for the older pupils and this activity is very well managed by a member of the support staff. He has effectively developed his expertise and qualifications and makes a very valuable contribution to the school's good sporting opportunities. The school's excellent sports hall is used for these sessions and this contributes to the sense of occasion and respect that pupils have for the school environment. The pupils are very keen to attend the coaching and, as a result, they take part with enthusiasm and behave very well. This activity fully meets the range of pupils' capabilities in the school and includes both boys and girls. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' health and safety and they are very effectively warmed up before the main activity. The staff's high expectations and consistent behaviour management help to develop very good relationships. Pupils apply their individual skills, yet also play very well as teams with a well-developed sense of fairness. These coaching sessions prepare pupils very well for their football matches against other schools. During the inspection the pupils

played football against a local mainstream school and the game was played in a very positive, sportsmanlike manner.

69 In a lesson with Year 2 pupils most had changed and were able to link movements on the floor successfully but others, not in physical education kit were a bit reluctant to join in this part of the lesson and didn't have as much freedom of movement as the others so limiting their sequence of movements. Instructions were clear and most of the pupils made satisfactory gains in achievements in this part of the lesson. The good use of pupils to demonstrate their movement helped to extend pupils' range of movements and this also helped to maintain pupils' concentration. However the lesson finished too early giving pupils too little time to consolidate what they had learned.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

70 No **citizenship** lessons were seen during the inspection and, therefore, it was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision and achievement in the subject. However, the school does place a high priority on developing pupils' ability to play an active role as citizens. Planning for the teaching of citizenship is included in personal, social and health education and other subjects. The members of the school council are democratically elected to their posts by the pupils. Lively debate and well informed decision making are encouraged in the constructive meetings. The school council uses questionnaires as an effective means of gauging the opinions of their electorate. The school awards "Citizen of the Week" to a pupil in an assembly each week. This is a good initiative that recognises the valuable contribution that the pupils make to the running of the school. Pupils are very keen to represent the school in, for example, football matches with other schools and these very effectively promote pupils' community spirit.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education (PHSE) is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good use of assessment.
- Very good opportunities are provided to extend pupils' personal development.
- The promotion of a healthy, safer lifestyle for pupils impacts positively on all aspects of pupils' activities in school.

Commentary.

71 No discrete lessons were observed and consequently it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning but sufficient evidence from the daily short sessions at the beginning and end of the day, and at other less structured times such as lunchtime, breaktime and playtime, enables the judgement to be made that pupils' achievement is very good. The curriculum policy is detailed, the available resources are very good and personal, social and health education is given a very high priority in other lessons. In addition, every opportunity throughout the day is used very well to promote pupil confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' gains in their learning are assessed using PIVATS and, as a result, challenging targets are set for pupils' personal development. These focus on, for example, pupils' independence and organisational skills and help to promote pupils' very good achievement. They are involved in setting their own targets which are clearly displayed around the classrooms reminding pupils what they need to do to improve on a daily basis.

72 Pupils are provided with very good opportunities to develop their very good relationships. For example, they sit in a circle and take turns in talking about activities that they are good at, Year 6 pupils are able to discuss topics in a sensible and mature manner and, as a result, achieve very well. Pupils worked with the Tees Valley Dance Company and this experience made a very good contribution to raising pupils' self-esteem and, as a result, they gave a confident dance performance in a local theatre. It improved their ability to work co-operatively and interact with people outside their familiar school environment. The initial and final sessions of the day provide very good opportunities for the staff to extend pupils' personal development, for example, have one-to-one chats, work collaboratively, take turns and share equipment. Lunch is a memorable occasion and pupils are able to enjoy their very high quality meal in an exceptionally attractive environment. The décor and organisation of the mealtime contributes to make this very good social occasion. The staff and pupils share quality time and, as a result, pupils make very good gains in their personal and social development. Activities are stimulating and varied and meet the full range of pupils' special educational needs very well. Equally the very good range of assemblies provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and take part as a responsible member of the school community.

73 The school works closely with the drugs awareness team and many pupils understand the dangers of commonly available substances and drugs. Within the scheme of work a module about sex and relationships is well thought out and is taught to pupils in Year 6 which is in line with the governor's decision. A very good range of whole school initiatives such as a "fun day" helps to promote the very good teamwork and ethos of the school and the successful drive to achieve Activemark Gold helped to promote pupils' understanding of the need for regular exercise. The staff and pupils are currently working towards a Healthy Schools Award and this initiative is having a very positive impact on all aspects of school life. The school appreciates the contribution of the community policeman who provides a very good range of real life situations that very effectively develop pupils' awareness of health and safety issues.

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