

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LINGDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lingdale

LEA area: Redcar and Cleveland

Unique reference number: 111531

Headteacher: Mr B J Cowgill

Lead inspector: Mr Phil Snelling

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 256745

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	166
School address:	Davison Street Lingdale Saltburn-by-the-Sea
Postcode:	TS12 3DU
Telephone number:	01287 651723
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor J Tombs
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Lingdale is a smaller than average primary school in the village close to Saltburn-by-the-Sea. Nearly all the pupils who attend come from the village, with a few travelling from the surrounding area. The school includes a 10-place support unit for local junior age pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Almost all the pupils are of white British background and from homes where English is the main language spoken. There is one child in the Foundation Stage from a French speaking asylum seeking family. When pupils start in the nursery, many have levels of language and social skills well below the norm for the age of 3. The area has much social and economic deprivation, and the school is in an Education Action Zone (EAZ). Just under one third of pupils are identified as having special needs (above the national average) and 8 pupils (4.8 per cent) have statements (well above the national average). The movement of pupils to and from the school, other than at the usual times of starting and leaving, is low and the number on roll is generally stable. Pupils are organised into single age classes throughout the school. The school received a DfES Achievement Award in 2003 for improvements in standards.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3624	Phil Snelling	Lead inspector	Mathematics Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects (music and physical education) English as an additional language
11084	Jane Hughes	Lay inspector	
17907	Michael Bowers	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects (art and design, design and technology) Special educational needs
32388	Marguerite McCloy	Team inspector	English Humanities (geography, history and religious education)

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** Pupils get off to a really good start in the Foundation Stage from a low starting point due to very good provision and teaching. They go on to achieve well throughout the rest of the school. Pupils enjoy their learning because the activities and experiences provided for them are interesting. They develop and mature well because the school is very committed to providing high quality personal development. Pupils in the Learning Support Unit make good progress as they are taught well. Standards overall are average, the school is led and managed effectively and it provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Staff improve the children's language and social skills very well in nursery and reception;
- The school has a strong commitment to pupils' care and personal development;
- The school provides pupils with a rich, interesting curriculum with many enjoyable activities;
- The headteacher has created a strong team of experienced teachers to lead improvements;
- Targets and learning objectives are not used well to support teaching in some lessons;
- Too little attention is given to raising pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of Britain;
- Pupils investigative skills in science are not developed well enough.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1998 has been good. Most of the issues centred on improving the quality of learning and standards in Key Stage 2 and these are now better. Pupils' achievement in the Foundation Stage is also stronger, giving pupils a flying start. The pupils in the learning support unit are more involved in activities and learning with the other children than before. Parents are much happier with the school than they were then.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. E\* indicates a result in the lowest 5 per cent*

**Pupils achieve well.** Looking at the results, it appears that standards are low. However, this is not a fair reflection of the success of the school because including children from the learning support base skews the results. These pupils have learning difficulties and sometimes join the school as late as Year 6. In the Foundation Stage, children make rapid progress but they are still not on course to reach all the learning goals for their age. In language and mathematical learning they are still behind when they move to Year 1. In Years 1 to 6 pupils' achievement is good and they make up ground, so that most mainstream pupils reach standards around the national average. Pupils in the unit and others with special needs do well for their capabilities; more able pupils could sometimes achieve more.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very strong.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They work hard and thoroughly enjoy their life in school. They get on very well with each other and with adults. Their attendance is satisfactory. The school promotes very good development of the pupils' moral and social understanding but could do more to help prepare them for living in a multicultural society.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is good overall.** Throughout the school, the good teaching and learning are based on the very strong relationships and the way in which teachers present activities which interest and motivate the pupils. The teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good because the staff have a really strong understanding of how very young children learn best. Teaching in Year 4 is also particularly effective, partly due to the skilled way pupils' responses in lessons are seized upon to stretch them or vary the learning. Teaching in the support base is especially effective in English; the work is very well matched to the pupils' individual needs. A visiting teacher from the local secondary school and an instructor from a sports centre give skilled teaching in French and physical education. Sometimes the targets or learning objectives for some pupils in a lesson are not as well matched to their needs or abilities as they could be. At such times, achievement for those pupils is more ordinary.

The curriculum is varied and interesting. The Foundation Stage is especially rich to excite the children. There are good opportunities for older pupils to take part in activities outside school time, especially in sports. Visits and visitors are used well to enliven learning in the humanities. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is particularly good. Staff know the pupils very well; they are caring and have the interests of the children at heart. However, there are not enough challenging opportunities for pupils to develop their skills as scientists.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher provides good leadership in pursuit of a key aim, shared by governors and staff, that the school should be first and foremost a safe and secure place for children to learn. There is also a pursuit of high achievement in which the strong and thoughtful leadership team play an important part. Management is good. There is excellent support for newly qualified teachers and good opportunities for all staff in their development. The work of the governing body is good; they have the knowledge to discuss and make influential decisions as the school moves forward. Whilst the school management collects much information about the work and achievement of the pupils, it does not make the best use of it in moving the school forward.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The parents think much more highly of the school than they did in 1998. The questionnaires reflect that they are very happy with all aspects of the school and its provision. The quality of the school's written communication with Foundation Stage parents is far more attractive and readable than that for older pupils' parents. The pupils themselves are very positive about their school and feel they can pass their views through to the headteacher, even though there is no formal means, such as a school council in place yet.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important steps the school should now take to improve are to:

- Use targets and learning objectives better to support the teaching of particular groups of pupils;
- Better prepare pupils for life in modern multicultural Britain;

- Develop pupils' enquiry and investigation skills to a higher level in science.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils achieve well. In the Foundation Stage children make good progress and catch up quickly from a very low base. They reach the expected standards in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy and mathematical. In Years 1 to 6 the pupils continue to make good progress. For pupils in the mainstream classes, standards in all the core subjects except science are average at 7 and 11. Girls and boys progress equally well and achievement for reception pupils and those in Year 4 is especially good.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are improving from year-to-year;
- Pupils with special needs, including those in the learning support base, make good progress in response to skilled and sensitive teaching;
- Achievement is at its best in reception and Year 4;
- PSHE is very strong;
- The school's more able pupils could be stretched more and challenged harder at times.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start in the nursery and make rapid progress in the reception class. They move forward in leaps and bounds in the development of their personal and social skills, creative skills, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The staff place a great deal of emphasis on developing the children's social skills from the outset and they get to know the routines quickly. They learn how to work together with others so that by the time they reach reception, they can organise themselves to share toys and resources sensibly and amicably. Their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative skills blossom because of the rich variety of the first hand experiences that are offered to them. In these areas of learning, most children are on course to reach the expected level (Early Learning Goals) by the end of the reception year. Their achievement in physical development is satisfactory, though held back to some extent by weaknesses in the outdoor play facilities.
2. The children achieve well in the mathematical area of learning and very well in communication, language and literacy. Their progress is not quite so fast in mathematics because of weaknesses in their mathematical thinking. In literacy they develop a love of books and learn much new language through their speaking and listening activities. Their achievement is growing all the time as staff try new ideas and bring in new initiatives for improving learning. For example, staff have recently introduced new approaches to teaching the children early reading skills through using phonics. Despite catching up a lot of ground in these two areas, not as many reach the expected goals at this age as happens in most schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (14.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.2 (14.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (14.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Having made up some ground in their learning during the Foundation Stage, pupils go on to achieve well in years 1 and 2. The table shows that by the time last year's pupils finished Year 2, they had reached standards which are close to those expected nationally and in mathematics did considerably better. Whilst this group were small and more able than usual overall, the results are a fair reflection of the trend in Key Stage 1 over the past four to five years. Scores are considerably higher than in 1999.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.6 (26.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.8 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	24.1 (28.6)	28.0 (28.3)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. At first glance it might appear that once pupils move into Years 3 to 6 their progress declines. However, this is far from true. These figures are not a reliable measure of the standards and achievement of pupils in the Year 6 class for two reasons. Firstly, the number of pupils taking the tests each year is relatively small, so the under performance or absence of one or two children can have a disproportionate effect. However, of more significance is the inclusion of pupils from the Learning Support Base in the test results. These pupils have significant learning difficulties. They are pupils with low attainment who join the school only in Key Stage 2 and sometimes as late as Year 6. The low attainment of the unit pupils, the number of whom varies from year to year, lowers the overall scores. Work seen during the inspection paints a different picture to the tests as does the school's own analyses of the results. The school analysed its results for 2003 in three ways; for all the pupils, for all the mainstream pupils without the support base pupils and for those mainstream pupils who had been in the school since Year 1. The mainstream pupils' results in English and mathematics were close to the national average and those pupils who had been in the school since Year 1 reached the highest standards. Whilst pupils' achievement in science is not as good as in English and mathematics, it is nevertheless satisfactory.
5. Pupils' achievement in the reception class and in Year 4 is high in response to very good teaching. In reception this is a reflection of the teacher's very good understanding of how children of this age learn best. In Year 4 it reflects teaching which is meticulously planned but which also builds expertly on the pupils' existing knowledge and individual responses as lessons progress.
6. Pupils achieve highly in PSHE. This reflects the school's strong ethos for providing children with personal support and opportunities to address issues. The deputy headteacher has

- had a big impact in leading development of the subject and pupils are enthusiastic to take part in lessons.
7. Boys and girls achieve as well as each other, though the larger number of boys in the learning support base skews the test results. The more able pupils are achieving adequately but not always reaching their full potential. Sometimes their learning objectives and targets are not set high enough so their work is not challenging enough. The staff have identified the need to improve pupils' thinking skills to enable them to tackle problems more effectively. This will help more able pupils to reach higher standards.
  8. The larger than average numbers of pupils with special educational needs (28 per cent) attain standards below the national average. However, they achieve well in relation to their abilities, making good progress in response to the carefully designed programmes of study in English and mathematics. The seven statemented pupils taught in the special educational resource base also achieve well, benefiting from the well planned programme of study organised in their home base and in classrooms, where they are taught, with support, alongside other pupils. At times in mathematics the older lower achieving pupils have targets drawn from the curriculum that do not match their needs closely enough and they struggle with their work.
  9. Standards and achievement in other subjects are satisfactory. Pupils' achievement in knowledge and understanding facts in science is better than their achievement in developing investigative and enquiry skills. They use information and communication technology (ICT) well across the various subjects.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good. There is satisfactory provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance levels are in line with the national average. Most pupils are punctual.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very happy at school and their parents confirm this;
- The school helps pupils towards becoming mature, hardworking members of society;
- Staff consistently promote very high standards of behaviour;
- Children learn to accept that people have differing needs and respond to them with sensitivity;
- There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop a keen understanding of moral and social issues;
- Pupils do not experience enough of what life is like in modern multicultural Britain.

### **Commentary**

10. Pupils are almost unanimous that they like this school. Some make favourable comparisons with others schools they have attended. When a selection of pupils recently completed a detailed, national evaluation for the Excellence in Cities initiative, their positive replies consistently exceeded the average response gathered across the survey. Without doubt, pupils feel valued by staff and strive to do their best work in school.
11. Much of the groundwork for this positive work ethic is laid in the nursery and reception classes. Here, teachers temper their quiet insistence on high personal standards of behaviour and self-discipline from the children with an astute understanding of their differing needs. Consequently, the children do their level best to please staff, they concentrate very well and show great maturity as they share resources and work collaboratively on computers or with outdoor play equipment. Crucially, pupils see these very high standards

as the 'norm' as they move through the year groups; the school is a very calm and orderly environment where pupils know they need to give maximum effort to everything they do in order to reap the benefits. Pupils show increasing sensitivity to the differing needs of others and they accept this as normal. When one pupil with special educational needs started to behave inappropriately during collective worship, for example, no one else took his behaviour as a sign that they too could misbehave. Everyone ignored it and a teacher quickly resolved the problem.

12. All the pupils work hard in class, including those in the support base. These pupils develop good relationships with the adults who work with them. A small number of them have difficulty controlling their behaviour but because their relationship with base staff is good, they respond well to the strategies used to help them modify this behaviour and do not disrupt lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream classes work hard and concentrate well to complete their tasks. They usually produce neat and tidy work. These pupils make good gains in confidence as they apply themselves conscientiously.
13. Adults work hard to extend pupils' personal development; they are particularly successful in providing very well for their moral and social development. Consistent behaviour management ensures everyone knows exactly what is expected of her or him in lessons and around the school. Pupils are able to consider wider questions of what is right and wrong and are given ample opportunities to reflect on aspects of their own feelings and actions during timetabled sessions of PSHE. Many of these involve classmates sitting together in a circle and taking turns to discuss their feelings or views on different subjects. Reception children were quite at ease as they focused fantastically well during a discussion about what they liked doing at school. This was such an effective session because their teacher reminded them how to behave at the start and encouraged them to 'look in each other's eyes and smile as you speak'. The entire group gave rapt attention to what each speaker said and all produced winning smiles as they took turns to speak.
14. Although pupils' experience a good grounding in their own local community and cultural traditions, the school does not currently equip pupils as well as it should to live in a modern, diverse British society. There are opportunities for pupils to learn more about selected faiths and to celebrate festivals such as Diwali but the school does not seek out links with more multicultural schools or communities in other areas. Although it meets the requirements of race relations legislation, it could do more to develop pupils' understanding of different races and cultures.

## Attendance

15. The most recent attendance statistics for 2002/2003 show that attendance was very close to the national median. Attendance levels were higher the previous year. There is no unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive on time, although there is a minority of persistent latecomers. These children are welcomed into school by the headteacher who is aware of the problems that make it difficult for them to arrive on time.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	6.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

No of pupils on roll
133
1

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Imaginative teaching and interesting learning activities capture the pupils' interests. Staff care for them very well and there are strong and beneficial links with other schools.

### Teaching and learning

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	8 (22%)	20 (54%)	9 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

There is very good teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and good teaching throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The blend of experienced and newly qualified teachers works well. Teachers have very strong relationships with the pupils and manage their classes sensitively.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some particularly good teaching in reception and in Year 4;
- Specialist teaching is used well to provide better quality learning;
- Teachers organise and manage their lessons very well so the pace of learning is good;
- There is very good teaching of English to pupils in the support base;
- Teachers could make better use of targets and learning objectives in some lessons.

### Commentary

16. At the beginning of September the school introduced three newly qualified teachers and some of the existing staff moved classes to teach in less familiar year groups. The new arrangements have been managed very well and the new teachers have settled quickly. As a result, good quality teaching has been sustained.
17. Teaching in the reception class and in Year 4 are particularly strong. In the reception class this stems from the deep understanding the class teacher has of the principles of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how the youngest children learn best. In Year 4 the strengths are to be found in the teacher's very good subject knowledge, which allows her to seize learning opportunities as they arise in lessons and so stretch the pupils more.

18. Teachers make good use of homework, mainly in literacy and numeracy. It is set regularly and flows from the work pupils are doing in class. They say that it helps them to reinforce their understanding from lessons.
19. There are very strong relationships between the teachers and pupils, and this has no doubt contributed to the better attitudes and work rate that pupils now have. Lessons are organised well and a brisk pace is usually maintained. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well indeed and the lesson flow is never interrupted. They meet the learning needs of both boys and girls equally well. Based on their good understanding about how pupils learn best, teachers use the right strategies and methods in lessons to sustain pupils' interests and keep them on task. For example, they vary the activities within lessons to reflect the attention span of the pupils, providing a variety of tasks around the learning objective. Boys are as well motivated as girls and as fully involved in their learning. Teachers take a positive approach to involving boys in PSHE to ensure they make an equal contribution to discussions about feelings.
20. The majority of pupils are appropriately challenged in lessons with work that is well matched to their abilities. However, this is not always the case where the learning objectives are not sufficiently adapted to the pupils' needs. Most specific special needs pupils are supported well in class, especially in their English and literacy work and when working with the skilled classroom assistants. However, some less able pupils struggle with their mathematics work because it is too difficult and this shows in their books, where there is little sign of success. Their work is too hard because the learning objectives they are given are based on what is expected of the average child in the year and not sufficiently linked to their particular level of achievement. In science, this weakness in the use of learning objectives disadvantages the more able pupils; their thinking skills are not extended enough because they are not given separate challenges. The 'learning contracts' (targets agreed with parents) that pupils have are valuable and they inform the teaching. However, in their planning, teachers are trying to juggle targets from learning contracts, targets from curriculum documents, learning objectives for the lesson and success criteria by which to evaluate the learning at the end. This would benefit from rationalisation so that there are clear learning objectives for particular groups of pupils in all lessons, based on their needs.
21. All pupils listed as having special educational needs have carefully drafted individual education plans (IEPs). The clear, measurable and time related targets listed in these IEPs successfully direct teachers' planning, providing appropriate learning objectives. The lower attaining pupils who are usually taught alongside children in mainstream classes participate fully in whole class discussions. Learning activities related to their IEP targets are taught in small groups where relevant teaching strategies and visual equipment are used.
22. The quality of teaching in the resource base is good in mathematics and very good in English, because the staff working with these children have very good insights into their needs, plan accordingly and develop very positive relationships with them. These pupils are taught many foundation subjects in their age related classes. This approach to including them increases their self-esteem and enables them to become friends with a wider group of children.
23. Good use is made of small group teaching in the main school. This gives the lowest attaining pupils effective opportunities to become more confident in the handling of mathematical relationships and problems. Skilled and enthusiastic learning support assistants regularly work with identified pupils, giving the required extra help and support to meet their needs.
24. There is some good use of specialist teaching. Pupils immensely enjoy very lively French lessons given by a teacher from the local secondary school. This not only gives them a good grounding in a foreign language but it also provides a very valuable opportunity to

include the support base pupils on an equal footing – the same starting point. Specialist support in teaching physical education is also beneficial, both from specialist skills in school and those from outside.

25. The effects of good leadership and management are seen in the way the teachers work well together as a team. In particular the experienced staff offer much guidance to their newly qualified colleagues. Their team approach is also seen in the consistent approaches to lesson planning and managing pupils.

### **Assessment**

26. Teachers mark work thoroughly and the pupils say that they find this helpful. However, standards do vary from class to class and between subjects. Generally there is good assessment of where pupils have reached and this informs teachers and parents. However, comments are not written in such a way as to give the pupils a clear understanding of what has been achieved and what the next learning activity for them is. Opportunities are missed to guide pupils on how they might apply what they have learned in other situations.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school provides a good range of opportunities that cater well for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils. There is a good range of after-school sporting activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The rich early learning experiences provided in the Foundation Stage;
- The positive contribution made by the school's programme of visits and visitors;
- Pupils' enquiry skills in science are not developed consistently across the school.

### **Commentary**

27. A particularly rich learning environment enhances the Foundation Stage curriculum. A wide range of carefully planned and challenging activities stimulate the children, with exciting opportunities to observe, touch, and participate. A good balance of teacher-directed and self-chosen activities is provided.
28. Good use is made of training provided for supporting the national Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school has employed these effectively in raising achievement, particularly in English. The many opportunities teachers provide for pupils to work across the subjects helps them to see connections and increases relevance in their learning. This can be seen, for example, in the Year 6 work following their residential visit. The geographical focus is linked into work in English, mathematics and ICT as well as the contribution made to physical education through outdoor activity challenges. However, the planning in science does not address sufficiently how and when enquiry skills are going to be developed. As a result, it is not regular and is better organised in some classes than others.
29. The school makes good use of the local community, visits and visitors to supplement work done in the classroom. The children have walks around the locality when studying aspects of geography and community, including visiting a home for the elderly; clergy take assemblies regularly; there are visiting authors, theatre groups, folk and dance artistes. The very good provision of French lessons for Year 6 pupils comes about through links with a local secondary school.

30. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities provided for pupils. All teachers support such events, and the particularly high commitment of the teacher providing sports activities means that there are after school sports three times a week. Provision of peripatetic music teaching allows pupils who would not otherwise get the opportunity, to learn to play an instrument, and musical groups visit the school.
31. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. All pupils with statements receive a modified National Curriculum and there are good opportunities for the inclusion of these pupils in whole school activities. The success of the resource base is such that one pupil has been transferred to full time teaching in the Year 5 class. In the infant classes, good curriculum practice has enabled slow learning pupils to work on a one to one basis with a learning support assistant because the general mental mathematics and the shared text whole-class sessions are too complex. This enables pupils to follow the individual work by joining a specific ability group. There is potential to make more use of the expertise and resources available in the Resource Base as an aid to learning for some lower attaining pupils in mainstream classes.
32. Staffing levels in the school are good. There is a balance of experience and expertise, and the school's commitment to maintaining their current year-group classes means that the teacher to pupil ratio is favourable.
33. The school has generous grounds. Although the building itself has some awkwardly shaped spaces due to the previously open-plan design, it is good overall. The classrooms are bright, well thought out learning environments and all areas of the school are enhanced by good quality displays of children's work. The Foundation Stage play area would benefit from some upgrading, with a surface made from more suitable materials and better facilities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

There is very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The school offers very good support, advice and guidance for all its pupils; it involves pupils well in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides an attractive and welcoming learning environment for pupils;
- Staff pay close attention to all aspects of security, health and safety;
- Induction arrangements are very well planned and delivered, particularly by the reception teacher;
- Pupils feel that their voices are heard by staff and that the school responds to their requests;
- Parents are happy with the support and guidance offered to their children.

### **Commentary**

34. The headteacher places very high priority on pupils' care and well being. Above all else, he wants children to look at this school as a place of sanctuary, where they know what to expect and like what they find. He, along with the staff and governors, achieves this aim very successfully. This school is, indeed, a very secure yet welcoming place to be. However, the 'cosiness' of the environment should not seduce parents into thinking that there is an equivalent lack of rigour. Quite the reverse – staff encourage pupils to work even harder in the relaxed atmosphere that is at the heart of this school.
35. Staff carefully address issues of health and safety and everyone is aware of the correct procedures to follow. Child protection arrangements are very effective; the headteacher and deputy headteacher work together on any concerns when they arise. They do all they can to

ensure the well being of every pupil in their care but do not always receive pertinent information about particular children from outside agencies as quickly as they would like. Lunchtime staff are kept informed of pupils with medical or dietary needs and they uphold the same very high behavioural standards expected by teachers.

36. There are very effective support systems in place to ensure all pupils receive the best guidance during their time in school. Staff know each child very well and complete useful 'learning contracts' for them and these are shared with parents. They provide a good point of reference from which to build on pupils' academic and social development. Almost all pupils are certain that there is an adult in school they can turn to with any concerns and parents value the pastoral care provided by staff. The well considered induction programme for children in the Foundation Stage is particularly effective as it gives parents a clear introduction to the work of the school. They are able to offer their children better support as a result. and the children settle more easily into school routines. The recent arrival of an asylum seeking family at the school resulted in much support being given through the good relationship the school has with the local secondary college.
37. There are good levels of care, support and guidance for pupils with special needs, including those in the learning support base. IEPs are carefully written and respond to pupils' needs. They are regularly reviewed and used as a measurement guide to assess pupils' progress. Professionals from outside agencies continually check the progress of statemented pupils against the specific criteria included in the statement. The school is gradually moving to a position where it includes individual pupils in review meetings, so giving them more involvement in their own learning.
38. Pupils are confident that the staff know their views about the school and that they can let adults know when there are things they would like to change. Currently, pupils address these issues informally with the headteacher and he decides how to respond. Although pupils agree that this system works well, these pupils are capable of running a successful school council, where they would experience democratic processes at first hand.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents are sound and there are good links with the local community. There is very effective liaison with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have far more positive views of the school than at the time of the previous inspection;
- The school gives parents a clear overview of its life and work;
- Staff provide evaluative written and verbal feedback to parents on the progress their children make during the year;
- The school welcomes community links to support pupils' personal and academic development;
- There is very close liaison with secondary schools to help the whole transition process for older pupils;
- The school does not grab the attention of parents or encourage a positive response from its current style of written communication.

## Commentary

39. The school provides parents with a detailed range of information about school life, the expectations of staff and the progress their children are making. Parents agree that they are well informed about what their children can do and they appreciate the efforts of the hardworking staff. Teachers offer very regular feedback to parents at termly parents' meetings, through detailed learning contracts and in evaluative, end of year, written reports about how their children are performing in school.
40. There are times when parental response to a school initiative is lukewarm and this can be disheartening for staff. To combat this apathy, the school needs to look for new approaches to parental involvement in its work. A striking example of how it could move forward is found in an aspect of the reception teacher's work. She has hit upon a far more visual method of engaging parents' attention. At the pre-school introductory meeting, she now uses a snappy, multimedia presentation to illustrate what it is that children enjoy about this school. She spikes parents' curiosity in the Foundation Stage curriculum by showing them snippets of what their children will do each day and then encourages them to come in and participate. The headteacher, governors and staff now need to nurture this initial parental interest by presenting the whole school in an equally dynamic and 'parent friendly' way. At the moment, key publications like the school's prospectus and annual report from governors are dense, dry documents that do nothing to portray the lively, effective and caring heart of this school. Parents need to believe that they can find interesting projects in school that they will enjoy and wish to continue with. These may subsequently lead to a more significant parental involvement in school life.
41. Similarly, the school needs to push parents even more assiduously towards areas where they can make a real difference. Some parents already fulfil several roles in school – parents, cleaners, governors and lunchtime supervisors. Others lack the confidence to put themselves forward and need subtler coaxing to offer their skills. When parents do get involved they make a strong contribution to pupils' learning, making number sacks or helping with reading are good examples. The school is very fortunate to have a Friends And School Together (FAST) room; this is an ideal place in which to encourage parents to meet regularly and for more to become active participants in adult classes.
42. Effective community links ensure that pupils enjoy wider social and curricular experiences than would otherwise be possible. The interesting range of educational visits take into account the limited experiences of many of the children and help to build their self-esteem. Similarly, there are good extra-curricular opportunities and many children take these up. A number of local service providers and businesses support the school and, along with EAZ input, these bring an added interest to the curriculum.
43. There are good links with parents of special needs pupils who are kept well informed of their child's progress and receive copies of all documentation, including IEPs. They are invited to all reviews. Much work has been completed with the local secondary school, and admission arrangements have been modified to enable pupils taught in the resource base to be taught by a smaller group of teachers than usual. This helps them to settle into routines, develop positive relationships with key teachers and feel secure and confident in their new surroundings.
44. All other pupils also benefit from the very well structured liaison programme with the local secondary schools. Lingdale was the pilot primary school for a transfer project and now links are so successful that staff come down from the main transfer college to teach the older pupils prior to their move. They benefit from the dynamic French lessons and staff from both schools work hard to ensure pupils' best interests are met. Pupils also enjoy visits to a local college to practise various skills such as bricklaying.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and leadership team work well together to bring about school improvement. Management and governance are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction of new staff is excellent and professional development for all staff is strong;
- The strong leadership team promotes good curriculum development and better learning for pupils;
- The governors have a good grasp of the school's needs on which they base strategic decisions;
- The school gathers information about performance thoroughly, though it does not make the most efficient use of it in moving the school forward.

### Commentary

45. The headteacher is a dedicated leader who reflects first and foremost the school's commitment to pupils' welfare and personal development in his approach to management, though not to the detriment of high achievement. He has created a very strong leadership team who are the driving force in curriculum change and development. This was reflected through the discussions held with the team, which demonstrated that their sharing of subject responsibilities works well in promoting change. They have a good understanding of what good learning looks like and they are thoughtful and analytical in their approach. The attention they give to trying to improve learning for the children is a strong feature of the pupils' good achievement. For example, much attention is presently being given to progressively building the development of 'thinking skills' from the Foundation Stage through the school, a weakness they have identified in teaching and learning. Given the high number of newly qualified teachers, good workload management is reflected in the way the team has picked up the responsibilities of the special needs and literacy co-ordinators who have recently moved on. No individual senior member of staff has to carry too much responsibility.
46. There is comprehensive monitoring of the school's provision and standards pupils reach, particularly through analysing data. A great deal of statistical information is gathered and reviewed by the headteacher. However, the benefits from the evaluation of all this information are not fully realised in school improvement because the School Development Plan is too general. Whilst it does identify the right general areas for improvement it does not set out clearly which are the most important changes that need to be made nor does it indicate how the success of changes will be judged. Links between the school's self-evaluation and the plan are at times tenuous. For example, it is hard to track through the plan how the school is tackling the improvement of mental arithmetic and problem solving, which are seen as weaker areas and being worked on. Thus the school does not get the most efficient use out of its monitoring information and the plan does not give a clear picture of how change is happening.
47. The school has implemented performance management very well. Teachers' objectives are clearly linked to subjects where the school is aiming to improve pupils' achievement. For example, all teachers have objectives linked to pupils' literacy, such as improving phonics or boosting the achievement of pupils close to the next level in writing. Staff professional development is also strong, with much provision based on the discussions within the leadership team.

48. The governing body works effectively. Governors are well informed and they are closely involved in taking major decisions about the direction the school moves in. A recent major decision taken in partnership with the headteacher was the decision to appoint three newly qualified teachers to vacant posts from September. In a small school this held potential benefits and risks that the governors weighed up carefully; they were able to account for why they arrived at their decision. The decision has proved worthwhile. The governors ensured that a rigorous appointment procedure was followed, leading to good quality teachers being appointed. The headteacher then ensured through good management that the new teachers were suitably placed in year groups between more experienced staff. This was seen to pay dividends during the inspection with the new teachers being extremely well supported by both formal induction and informal help by colleagues. The good level of training that governors are now undertaking bodes well for further improvement, particularly in helping them to review more deeply the school's performance and in asking why standards are as they are and how they might become better.
49. The teacher now responsible for the Learning Support Base took up her position at the beginning of the current term and has made a good start in considering the way that the resource operates. All documentation relating to the latest Code of Practice is in place and administration procedures are efficient and effective. The school has yet to consider the greater potential role of the resource base in developing it as a school resource rather than as a class. This would allow it to maximise its use for all groups of pupils with special needs. Whilst the level of inclusion of the unit pupils in mainstream is now generally good, there are opportunities to take this further. For example, it would be beneficial for these pupils to participate in their year group assemblies or to be sometimes involved in the first part of whole class lessons in English and mathematics before working on specific group tasks alongside other lower attainers.
50. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and this is a better school than it was then. Pupils are achieving more and the teaching and learning are better, especially in Key Stage 2. The good start in the Foundation Stage has become more of a flying start. The headteacher's leadership has improved and governors are far more involved and effective. Parents are much happier with the school than they were then.
51. The school's improvement has been helped by its being part of an EAZ. This has given the staff access to a wider range of training and projects than before and broken down some of the school's previous isolation.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	546,863	Balance from previous year	19,899
Total expenditure	483,872	Balance carried forward to the next	80,000
Expenditure per pupil	2764		

52. The school has a satisfactory approach to managing its finances to achieve its educational priorities. The governing body is very committed to retaining a class for each year group and the school can point to higher levels of achievement by pupils since it created single age classes throughout. The balance carried forward in the budget this year is larger than expected for two reasons:

- three newly qualified teachers have replaced three experienced staff members;

- the LEA unexpectedly returned funds to the school.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

53. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good** and has improved since the previous inspection. Children are prepared well for transfer from the nursery to the reception class and from reception to Year 1. They enter the nursery on a part-time basis once they are 3-years-old. The 4-year-old children attend in the mornings and the younger children attend the afternoon sessions. All children achieve well because the teaching is very good and the curriculum is carefully planned to provide a wide range of interesting, enriching, challenging and relevant activities, which are well matched to their needs. This reflects the strong leadership of the Foundation Stage. All adults set a very good example for the children and manage them very well. There is an appropriate balance of adults and children to ensure that the needs of all are fully met. All staff work very well together, carefully monitoring all children's progress.
54. The accommodation inside is good but outside facilities are only satisfactory because they are difficult to supervise and consequently children do not have continuous access to the secure outside play area. There is a separate enclosed area, which is well used for static equipment such as large water play. The secure outside play area does not have any soft surfaces that would safely support climbing and sliding equipment. There are few markings on the surfaces, so it is difficult to make the best use of peddled wheeled vehicles in role-play.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are confident and happy because of the very good relationships;
- Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and because staff expect a lot of them;
- Every opportunity is taken to promote the children's development and they are in line to reach expected levels at the end of the year.

#### **Commentary**

55. The personal, social and emotional development of children on entering the nursery is well below what is expected for their age. Almost all children have underdeveloped social skills and find it hard to conform to the high expectations set by staff. However, as they progress through the nursery and into the reception class, the constant positive example set by the adults together with the clear organisational procedures help the children to understand what is expected of them and they very quickly learn the correct way to behave. In contrast to those children who have just started, the older nursery children know the routines well, settle to tasks with the minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. The way adults conduct themselves and work together gives the children a very good example of how to co-operate in a calm but rigorous approach to work. By the time the children are fully established in the nursery, the majority of them show interest in what they are doing, concentrate well, even when not directly supervised, and are eager to learn.
56. This very good provision is continued in the reception class. Here children are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve and are reminded of the high

standards that the adults expect. They are friendly and take a pride in their work. Children are encouraged to share, take turns amicably and put up their hands before answering a question. When children do not conform they are dealt with firmly but fairly so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of others within the group. Children are expected to clear up after themselves, which they do without much prompting. The very supportive and fair relationships ensure that children are prepared to answer questions and are confident to seek help when required. These children are on course to attain the expected standard (Early Learning Goals) by the time they leave the reception class because of the continual reinforcement of rules by the adults and the development of an environment of mutual courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to succeed.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enter the Foundation Stage with very low levels of communication skills. Many are restricted to gesturing and pointing at adults' clothes to engage their attention;
- Very good teaching ensures that these children achieve very well;
- Significant numbers of children do not reach the expected level at the end of reception.

### **Commentary**

57. The majority of children are not on course to meet the expectations in this area of learning. However, children are making very good progress from a very low level of competence when they entered the nursery. This is because of the many opportunities they have to talk and listen. All staff in the nursery take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary through probing questioning and constant insistence that they listen to the contributions of others. For example, when a child was re-arranging furniture in the dolls house, the adult working with her continued to talk to her, asking her where she was placing the furniture and which room was the playroom. This made the child think about and order what she was doing. It stimulated her imagination and prompted her to reconstruct a story. Children have very good opportunities to enjoy books and listen attentively to stories. The use of a large water play tank stimulated children to create a sea world aquarium by filling smaller containers with water and sorting and classifying various marine animals, placing them in the separate aquariums. They used emergent writing techniques to record the names of these creatures, sticking the names to the sides of the tank. Children love taking on the role of adults in playing games. Both boys and girls take on similar roles, such as 'house keeper', 'baby minder' or 'construction worker'. They play sensibly, portraying the role of adults with nursery staff carefully intervening to help them develop their ideas and increase vocabulary.
58. The emphasis on listening continues in the reception class through the use of 'circle time', as each child has their turn to speak when they are holding 'Talking Ted'. There are appropriate links with personal and social development as the children talk about their classroom rules. In the reception class, quite rightly, there is a greater involvement in adult initiated activities and children are encouraged to recount what they have heard. During role play they begin to develop their competence in writing, learning to write their names as part of the daily registration procedure. Their reading development is supported by regular sessions where children learn to associate phonic sounds with letter shapes. More formal and high quality teaching enables children to learn how to sequence a story. For example, good use was made of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' to direct children to create a story map, through sketching the events and 'writing' an account of what happened. The teacher

asked the children to 'read' their writing and wrote down the words they spoke. The outcome could be seen in the emerging writing style and many good attempts to form letters correctly into words. Very good examples of links between areas of learning were seen when one child created a three-dimensional imaginary story map of Goldilocks in the wet sand tray. There are many very good opportunities for children to write at the writing table where they compose and illustrate their own storybooks. They show great pleasure in perusing books, following the teacher as she 'reads' from the illustrations and systematically introduces vocabulary. Very good opportunities for speaking and listening were encouraged when the teacher gave children the chance to create their own alternative endings to the Goldilocks story.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers offer interesting activities to stimulate the children's interests and develop their thinking;
- Teaching of mathematical language and vocabulary is good.

### **Commentary**

59. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities to promote mathematical thinking and understanding. Children are making good progress, but because of their very low levels of attainment when they enter the nursery, only a few of the more able are on line to meet the levels expected for their age. The key area of under development is identified in mathematical thinking. The school recognises this and works hard to provide interesting mathematical activities where children are challenged to solve problems. For example, during a very good lesson in the reception class, one more advanced child did not know the value of the digit '6'. She found the digit '6' in her number line, counted the spaces from 1 to 6 and triumphantly assembled six cubes, which she placed round the digit. In the nursery, children were seen learning the names of two-dimensional shapes. They selected a sponge template, covered it with paint, and then printed it on large sheets of paper. The adult intervened well, talking to the children to introduce the mathematical name of the shape, and then asked them to find an example of a square, thereby assessing their current level of vocabulary. When they had completed their print patterns, positional language was introduced as the adults asked which shape is 'under', 'next to', 'above' or 'below' or 'on top' of the square. This is another good example of the linkage between mathematical development and, on this occasion, creative development.
60. Reception children can count single digit numbers accurately backwards and forwards with more able children showing a confident ability to recognise number values to 9. The teacher skilfully introduced the concept of one more and one less, using genuine pennies as visual material to help the children gain understanding. However, the concentration spans of the less advanced children are short. There are very good opportunities for children to learn about measurement; for example, children throughout the Foundation Stage fill and empty containers with water or dry sand to gain insights into the capacity of containers of various sizes and shapes.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A comprehensive range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area;
- Staff engage children in sensory experiences to help them develop understanding;
- Very good use is made of visits to the surrounding locality.

### Commentary

61. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well. Most are working at levels expected for their age. The whole of the Foundation Stage is a stimulating sensory environment inviting children to explore and learn through sensory experiences. A wealth of appropriate challenging activities are planned to engage their curiosity and enhance their understanding. For example, an autumnal walk gave children a first-hand experience of the changing season. They were able to walk through the piles of fallen leaves, examine their rich variety of colours and observe the north easterly wind make the leaves swirl and glide as they fell to the ground. Other visits to the local allotments gave the children invaluable opportunities to observe vegetables growing and a full range of animals including poultry, ponies and pigs kept by the local inhabitants. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children have good opportunities to use computers to create patterns and develop their manipulative skills. They assemble dens using large construction materials and create three-dimensional vehicles, buildings and towers by imaginatively using recyclable materials, joining them with glues and masking tape. The younger children have a basic understanding of floating and sinking. They observe that 'heavy objects sink while lighter objects float'. They know that the moon changes shape. Older children are aware of the cultures and beliefs of others. Reception children have a very good understanding of how heating mixtures can make them change. They examine the constituents of porridge, feeling and smelling them before mixing them together and heating them up.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in respect of developing children's fine motor skills and manipulative dexterity;
- The outside play area does not present an exciting challenge to the children and there are difficulties in respect of setting up a programme for continuous use of the outside play area.

### Commentary

62. Most children are in line to achieve the expected levels for their age. They kick and throw balls accurately, retrieving them carefully. They play sensibly, although their listening skills are not well developed. Children have limited opportunities to play outside. Although the adult to child ratio is appropriate, the large classroom area makes it difficult for indirect supervision of children at play in the outside play area. Children have a timetabled regular outside play activity. Here they use peddled wheeled vehicles energetically and safely, showing care and consideration for their classmates and sharing the resources. However, the limited surface marking inhibits more imaginative use of this equipment and the lack of any soft surface makes the use of any climbing or sliding equipment difficult. Children

develop their manipulative skills well by handling scissors and brushes and they use small construction equipment with dexterity.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching ensures that a full range of aesthetic and interesting activities are provided;
- There are very good links with other areas of learning, particularly knowledge and understanding of the world.

### **Commentary**

63. Children are on line to reach the expected levels and they achieve very well. The children in the nursery confidently apply layers of paint to paper, carefully spreading and mixing it to create colourful patterns. Although initially they have lower than expected skill levels, children's fine line drawings show a confident style. They use colours imaginatively. Children confidently turn their ideas into models using construction kits. Their construction of tall towers using wooden blocks highlights their original ideas and they also develop their hand-eye co-ordination skills in producing towers that balance and are rigidly constructed. Painting and sticking activities are effectively enhanced by the use of three-dimensional materials. As children become more advanced, their early drawing skills are easily recognised, for example, as a sketch of a dancing child. They use clay to fashion thumb pots and they experiment with other malleable materials. Children respond positively to music and achieve very well overall.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Improvements in the quality of teaching and planning since the last inspection have resulted in consistently good learning across the school;
- Pupils are well motivated by the teaching;
- From low standards on entry to Year 1, pupils achieve well and make good progress;
- Pupils' skills in reading comprehension are not sufficiently developed to enable higher achieving children to reach above average levels;
- The targets set for pupils could be better matched to their varying levels of attainment.

### **Commentary**

64. The Key Stage 1 results, over the last three years, show that attainment is broadly average in writing and reading, although more pupils attain the 'mid range' of Level 2B and above in writing than do so in reading. The inspection evidence shows that, when compared to attainment on entry, this represents good achievement. The results for pupils at Year 6 also indicate average attainment when taking into account the figures for those pupils in the support base. This again represents good achievement, particularly for those children who

have attended the school all the way through from nursery or reception. The present Year 6 pupils present a similar picture in terms of their standards.

65. In reading, Key Stage 1 pupils are currently in line to be broadly average by the end of Year 2. Children of all ability groups make good progress, although there are some limitations that make the higher Level 3 standard more difficult for them to reach. This is because many pupils have not yet developed higher skills of comprehension. Their experiences of reading are often limited to those provided within the school and may not include a wide range of texts outside. The children are therefore less confident in demonstrating a detailed understanding of the main points of a story, or in expressing their preferences and providing reasons.
66. Appropriate attention is paid to building up the pupils' knowledge of phonics through word-level work within English lessons, particularly at Key Stage 1. Shared text work and guided reading sessions are a common feature across all classes. These successfully support pupils in learning to read with growing understanding. However, being able to extract information from texts is a little more challenging for many pupils, as is reading 'between the lines'. Not reaching the levels of understanding required at Year 6 to make appropriate use of inference and deduction has limited the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in reading.
67. As a result of the school's focus on the development of writing skills, these have improved in recent years. The teachers' knowledge of levels is secure and they consistently assess work accurately. They are well aware of what the children need to do next to improve.
68. Opportunities for writing are well planned and often stimulated further through providing interesting experiences. For example, during the inspection, a visiting author was observed in a writing workshop for Year 6 pupils. The children's listening and responses were excellent and they showed a genuine interest in the process of writing and publishing stories. They asked the author a range of questions about some of her books with which the class were familiar, and worked with enthusiasm on developing their own stories. Pupils of all abilities were actively involved, and there was no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls. For instance, when the author showed the class the cover of one of her books, one boy eagerly responded: 'I know that one! I've read it and my favourite bit is.....!' Another boy started his writing about an unusual gate with 'I went to a castle beyond the gate, and a drawbridge came down as if someone was expecting me...'
69. In a very good Year 4 lesson, the children were being taught to identify the organisational structure of a particular type of text. Using a projected image of the computer screen, the teacher was able to demonstrate to the class an example of non-fiction text in web pages on the Internet. Her skilled questioning, adapted to address different ability groups, consolidated the children's understanding of the key literacy and ICT vocabulary which were a feature of the lesson.
70. Standards in speaking and listening are average by the end of Year 2, and pupils willingly offer their verbal contributions in lessons. This reflects skilled work by teachers in developing listening skills. Although pupils' contributions are often of limited vocabulary and lacking in detail, this represents good progress from their initial starting point on entry to school. In Key Stage 2 also, average standards are achieved, as children become better able to develop ideas and clearly describe events and opinions.
71. Standards in spelling and handwriting are broadly average across the school. By Year 2, pupils' independent writing shows good phonetic attempts at spelling unfamiliar words, with legible handwriting, although not always consistently even. By Year 6, pupils' spellings

according to their particular ability level are mostly accurate. Handwriting is mainly joined and legible, although there are inconsistencies in quality across different tasks.

72. The quality of teaching is good across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use the National Literacy Strategy Framework well to support effective learning. Teaching in the learning support unit is very good; it is based on very close knowledge of the pupils' needs and highly enthusiastic delivery, which motivates them well. Procedures for assessment and monitoring of English are thorough. Teacher's marking often makes reference to learning objectives and how the child has achieved in relation to these. However, the more general nature of the targets set for pupils does not sufficiently inform different groups or individuals of more specific areas for improvement.
73. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. This is particularly so in Key Stage 2 where no overlong lesson introductions or unsatisfactory teaching were seen during this inspection. There is now consistency of progress across the school. At the time of the last inspection, evaluation and co-ordination of English across the school was identified as an area for development. This has been addressed well over the last few years, and co-ordination is currently shared by the school's leadership team who work well together to raise standards.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

74. The development of literacy across the curriculum is good, with other subjects being used to extend pupils' skills. ICT is used in word processing and desktop publishing to present aspects of history, geography and religious education work. Teachers identify specific vocabulary in their different subject plans and develop this in lessons.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising;
- Pupils make good progress in all the different strands of the subject;
- There is very good teaching of the subject in Year 4;
- There is very good leadership in improving teaching, learning and the curriculum;
- Marking is not always used to best effect;
- The use of learning objectives and targets to support teaching could be better.

#### **Commentary**

75. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are average. Pupils' test results in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have shown a pattern of gradual improvement over the past four years, with a particularly strong surge last year. This small group of pupils, now in Year 3, all reached the standards expected with a good proportion reaching a higher level. The work of the current Year 2 pupils' shows they are nearly all on course to reach the national average (Level 2), with the more able being challenged well to try to reach the higher Level 3.
76. Standards in Years 3 to 6 are average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below average in Key Stage 2. The annual test results are not a good reflection of the true standards because the figures are skewed by the inclusion of pupils from the learning support unit. Thus in 2003, the results showed the school's

performance to be well below average nationally. However, pupils performed as well as those in schools with a similar number of free school meals and their progress was satisfactory when judged against the levels they had reached at the end of Key Stage 1.

77. Pupils' achievement is good. By the time they leave reception, pupils have caught up some ground from their low levels when they start school but they are still behind where they should be. They make good progress throughout Years 1 to 6, producing a good volume of very well presented work. They achieve well in all the different strands of mathematics; number, shape space and measures, and data handling. Boys and girls make equally good progress, though again this is not reflected accurately in test results because of the greater number of boys with special needs.
78. Most of the pupils are challenged in lessons at the right level but sometimes below average achievers in Years 3 to 6 are given work that is too hard and this slows their progress. Similarly there is some variation in the challenge of the work given to more able pupils. They are often given useful extension work but their initial task is not always as demanding as it might be. One reason for these mismatches lies in the way learning objectives and targets are used to support the teaching. For example, there are targets taken from the numeracy curriculum, targets from pupil contracts, separate learning objectives and expected outcomes for lessons all being used to support the teaching. These would benefit from being rationalised to give a clear set of objectives in lessons for the different groups of learners, written in a way that the children can easily understand.
79. The teaching of mathematics is good, including that in the learning resource unit. Relationships in the classes are very strong and this makes pupils eager to learn and willing to try more difficult calculations without fear of getting them wrong. A weakness at the time of the last inspection was in the teaching of mental arithmetic. This is much improved and is now good, though there is still a need to ensure that it is a regular feature in all classes. Teachers give good explanations to pupils when introducing new knowledge and ideas. They use resources well and are beginning to unlock the potential that the interactive whiteboard can offer in teaching numeracy, shape or data. Where present, support assistants are used well to boost the work of special needs pupils. Teachers mark and assess pupils work thoroughly but in doing so do not give enough guidance to them as to what they should do next.
80. Mathematics teaching in the unit is made more effective by the good use of teaching resources. For example, pupils were clearly helped to understand their number work in a lesson seen through using a range of number lines, number squares and vocabulary flash cards. Another good feature was the skill with which the task was set up; a succinct explanation to which pupils listened most carefully.
81. The best teaching was seen in Year 4 where the teacher showed very good knowledge as to how best to teach mathematics. Particular features were:
- carefully planned and well chosen learning objectives carefully explained to the pupils;
  - open questions directed at particular pupils, demanding that they think beyond the first answer and apply what they know to other situations;
  - constant use of the correct mathematical terms and checking to extend pupils' understanding of them;
  - stimulating and challenging activities which sparked the children's interests;
  - spontaneous seizing of opportunities by the teacher to extend pupils' knowledge, based on what they found out during their work.

82. Mathematics development is very well led and managed by the leadership team. A number of initiatives have brought about the rise in standards. The school has made good use of expert help sought from the LEA numeracy consultant. Staff have undertaken training. The leadership team looks carefully at pupils' performance in tests to identify weaknesses and this has led to changes in the way some elements of the subject are taught. There has been a lot of improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen in Key Stage 2, and pupils' numeracy and investigation skills are stronger. Pupils' progress no longer deteriorates towards the end of Key Stage 2 because teaching is better and their enjoyment and work rate in the subject are much improved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

83. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics skills in other subjects are satisfactory. For example, in science, pupils produce good quality tables and graphs of their results from investigations.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils progress well in their knowledge and understanding to achieve the national standard;
- The good teaching includes an appropriate balance between the development of investigative skills and the acquisition of knowledge;
- There are good examples of the use of ICT and mathematics;
- Assessment is not detailed enough to identify the next steps in learning;
- Pupils understanding of how to set up an investigation is not secure.

#### **Commentary**

84. The evidence of work done by Year 2 pupils and discussions with them indicate that standards are average. This was reflected in the 2002 and 2003 teacher assessments. However, less than average numbers of pupils achieved the higher standard. There is little evidence to suggest that there will be an improvement at the end of the current academic year. However, regardless of this low attainment, pupils are achieving well.
85. Pupils in Year 6 are in line to achieve the expected average standard by the end of the year, if overall attainment of the oldest boys taught in the special needs resource base, is not taken into account. Almost all children, including those with special educational needs and the lower attaining pupils are making steady progress. However, the current small numbers of higher attaining pupils result in the school not achieving the national percentage of pupils at the higher level. This is a reflection of the wide variations with each year group. For example, in 2002 the school achieved above average percentages at the higher level, but this fell away in 2003.
86. In the lessons seen during the inspection teaching varied between satisfactory and good. Although no lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, talking to pupils and examining their written work indicates that teaching is satisfactory. Pupils speak confidently, showing a sound knowledge of scientific facts. However, their understanding of how to set up an investigation is not secure. This is because lesson planning is not sufficiently detailed to engage some pupils fully in investigative activities. For example, the Year 2 pupils could talk accurately about the factors affecting plant growth but they could not develop ideas that would help them find out what would happen to a plant if you deprived it of light. Although

there is good evidence of independent writing in their science books, there is no evidence of systematic use of the recently introduced 'I can do' statements. Although the work is well presented, it does not indicate sufficient progress to ensure full coverage of the programme of study by the end of the academic year at both the average and higher levels.

87. Where teaching was good, in Year 4, the lesson planning successfully included the use of investigation to challenge pupils to discover some of the scientific facts about simple circuitry. Sufficient resources were available to enable groups of pupils to experiment – this stimulated their enthusiasm and fully engaged them in the activities. Pupils in the special needs resource base were fully included in the lesson, their self-esteem being enhanced, as they formed an integral part of the group. The teacher and the other adults effectively supported the pupils by adopting the role of advisor. The quality of this learning environment was such that the pupils realised that one part of a spoon being metal conducted electricity whilst the other part being plastic did not. This prompted them to make generalisations about the sorts of materials that would or would not conduct electricity, thus widening their investigations. There was a good emphasis in all lessons seen of the correct use of vocabulary.
88. The improvements since the last inspection include:
- better planning, some of which includes practical activities where pupils predict and investigate;
  - teachers have greater confidence because they have improved their subject knowledge;
  - there are good examples of the use of mathematics and ICT to support work in science, including the use of charts, graphs and Venn diagrams.
89. Assessment procedures are improving, though the 'I can do' statements are too general and do not consider interim targets. The presence of above average numbers of Year 6 boys in the special needs resource base has skewed the overall range of ability in Year 6, and this will be reflected in the attainment scores in tests at the end of the year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been recent improvement in resources and staff expertise;
- Direct teaching in ICT is good;
- ICT is used effectively to support learning in other subjects;
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in ICT are not established.

### **Commentary**

90. By Year 6, pupils' ICT skills are average. In the direct teaching sessions seen in both Year 6 and Year 4, good teaching enabled pupils to make rapid progress and achieve well. The analysis of pupils' work in other year groups indicates that they achieve well and that there are good examples of the use of information and communication technology in other subjects. Since the previous inspection, national funding has meant that the resources for the subject have been improved and staff confidence and expertise has developed through training. The recent introduction of interactive white board technology is another good example of the school's determination to keep up with the latest initiatives and developments.

91. The use of national and local authority guidance as a basis for planning ensures that all pupils experience the various subject applications. Examples of pupils' work show they are learning to use ICT for word processing, graphics, the Internet and data handling as well as control, monitoring and modelling. Teachers' planning and general observations confirm that classroom computers are used regularly. Good regular use is made of the ICT suite to teach specific skills to large groups of pupils. Good assessment procedures and recording systems are in place to measure pupils' progress accurately. However, this information is not yet used systematically to plan further learning activities.
92. In the lessons seen, teachers' own specialist subject knowledge was used well to give clear precise explanations and demonstrations. There was good use of questioning and pupil input. Pupils were keen to show their skills to the class by demonstrating the techniques they had acquired. Lessons moved forward with a brisk pace, ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved well. Year 6 pupils quickly and accurately combined text, sound, photographs and digital images to create personal records of their recent residential experience. In a Year 2 mathematics session, pupils' use of ICT skills was extended and reinforced when they used a number program that involved completing a 100 number sequence by inputting the missing numbers.
93. Pupils are confident and competent when accessing the Internet for research in history, recording sensor data for science temperature change and presenting text. They are enthusiastic about the use of ICT, clearly enjoying their lessons and they work independently, with partners or groups to achieve well. Class pupil 'experts' are often on hand to give extra support and advice.
94. The subject is effectively led and managed. A portfolio of pupils' work is being assembled and is collated alongside the scheme of work to provide teachers with a clear exemplification of standards. Recent initiatives include the introduction of individual pupils' ICT diaries. These provide good evidence of each pupil's level of expertise. The new white board technology is not yet used to its full potential and there is more to do in ensuring that work in the subject is evaluated regularly.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that ICT is used effectively outside direct teaching sessions. Pupils use computers to complete programs that consolidate numeracy skills in mathematics and for writing tasks in English. Recent software programs have been identified for almost all subjects. Good use is made of visits to the local newspaper office where the older pupils have opportunities to use desktop publishing to compile the school newspaper, involving more advanced word processing skills.

## HUMANITIES

### Commentary

96. In **history** and **geography**, work was sampled, with inspectors seeing three lessons in Key Stage 1, one of history and two of geography. This was not enough to make a firm judgement about provision across the school. The quality of teaching in these lessons was good. Inspectors also looked at work already done in the subjects, talked to pupils and held discussions with the leadership team about subject co-ordination across the school. In this sampling, standards were found to be as expected for the children's ages.
97. In geography and history, the infant children go on walks in the local area, identifying buildings, objects and landmarks. They use illustrations and photographs to learn about natural and physical features, and draw simple maps and plans. They are beginning to

demonstrate an awareness of localities beyond their own. In the junior classes, children's geographical enquiry skills are further developed through their use of maps and plans at various scales. They learn to identify features of early settlements, study land use in the local area and learn about the water cycle.

98. A particularly strong feature in the Key Stage 2 provision for geography is the residential trip for older pupils. This gives opportunities for extended fieldwork and outdoor activity such as orienteering and climbing. It also makes a strong contribution to pupils' social development as they co-operate with each other across a variety of activities arranged for them during their week at Peat Rigg Centre. The follow-up activities back at school include links to mathematics through calculation of OS map co-ordinate work. English and ICT links are made through the children's writing in the style of newspaper reports which are constructed during the visit to local newspaper offices.
99. In history, Key Stage 1 pupils gain an awareness of differences between past and present through stories about famous people (for example Florence Nightingale). They are developing a sense of chronology through the use of timelines, sequencing of events, and looking at artefacts. For instance, a class of Year 1 pupils were excited to be able to look at a toy that was fifty years old, and see its clockwork mechanism working. By inspecting the materials used to make it, and the illustrations on the original packaging, they were keen to offer responses to the teacher's question: 'How do we know it wasn't bought at Toys R Us last week?'
100. The use of interesting artefacts and the contribution of visits and visitors continues into Key Stage 2; for instance, trips to Eden Camp, York's Jorvik museum, and a group of 'Tudor' actors who come into school. The school has reviewed resources and ensured the purchase of sufficient textbooks, artefacts, maps and aerial photographs to support the delivery of the National Curriculum requirements.
101. Teachers' planning indicates good opportunities to develop subject related vocabulary and language skills. ICT is used well to enable pupils to record and present their work, and to research on the Internet.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's involvement with local clergy who are able to share knowledge and bring artefacts into classes;
- A lack of opportunities locally to visit places of worship other than Christian.

### Commentary

102. Standards of attainment at the end of each key stage are satisfactory and in line with the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and this is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection.
103. Much of the work in religious education has close links with the school's programme of work in personal and social development, and as such makes an effective contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral education. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on the theme of 'special gifts', the focus was on moving the children's thinking away from possessions into the realm of the 'gift of love'. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were able to reflect upon their recent

visit to a place of worship and understand the meaning of the service of baptism. They were interested in the input by the local vicar, listening well and asking appropriate questions.

104. The school makes good use of resources such as artefacts, visits to a local church, and video programmes. However, there are few opportunities to gain practical experiences of places of worship in other faiths, due to the impracticalities of distance and travel arrangements.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Commentary

105. Only a small amount of lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. This was insufficient to make a firm judgement about provision. However, discussions were held with the school leadership team about these subjects, photographic evidence was examined; pupils' previous work looked at and inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences and work.
106. It is evident from the school programme of study and 'the range' of work displayed around the school that work planned in **art and design** is varied and interesting. This is a similar picture to that of the time of the previous inspection. Good attention is paid to the development of line, colour and shading. This was a feature of a good lesson in Year 6. Here pupils achieved well because they were interested in and challenged by the project in which they had to create half the face of a well-known celebrity from one half of a photograph taken from glossy magazines. Display around the school celebrates the pupils' creativity, as seen in their artistic creation of abstract patterns to interpret music. Other displays included paintings in the style of world artists, experimenting with colour mixing and washes and the use of ICT to create images of landscapes and seascapes.
107. In **design and technology**, discussion with pupils showed that they are gaining experience of a range of materials and techniques and are developing the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products. The youngest pupils list food samples that they will choose from to create a healthy meal, and show an early understanding of evaluation as they decide whether their choice of food is a healthy one. The oldest pupils carefully examine how a survival tent is constructed before they commence making their designs. Year 5 pupils working enthusiastically alongside pupils from the special needs resource base develop their cutting and joining skills as they construct various wheeled vehicles, then evaluate them in respect of the process of construction and the choice of materials used.
108. Whilst insufficient evidence is available to support a judgement about the overall quality of teaching, it is clear that there has been an improvement on the previous report since the oldest pupils now understand the process of designing, making and evaluating.
109. In **music**, all the children were heard singing in assembly and one lesson was seen in Year 2. In assembly the children sang beautifully. They sang in tune with clear words and a very mellifluous sound. Their singing was sensitive in the way it reflected the words, more vigorous or gentle as appropriate. This is an improvement in singing for the older children, which was judged at the time of the last inspection to be enthusiastic and accurate but lacking in quality.
110. In the lesson seen in Year 2, the children made satisfactory progress in learning about a 'steady beat'. The lesson was based on a new scheme introduced recently to help some staff who are not so confident in teaching music as they are other subjects. The materials were used well and pupils learned new musical terms such as 'pulse'. The teacher cleverly made a connection to the children's science work on pulses to help them grasp the idea.

However, the small classroom space the lesson was held in was a little restrictive when pupils tried to reinforce their learning through marching in time with the music. Overall, the pupils' achievement was as expected at their age. Staff attend local authority music training sessions on a regular basis to help develop their skills and confidence.

111. The school has bought brass instruments that enable six pupils at a time to learn to play the cornet through the local authority's visiting teacher. Both boys and girls are involved. Pupils listen to the music of particular composers in assemblies and learn about their lives. Visitors to school include musicians, such as a brass ensemble who came during last year. A number of children have recently been involved in a Samba Band as part of an EAZ project.
112. Of the different strands of **physical education** only games lessons were seen. This reflects the school's approach by which dance, gymnastics and games are taught in blocks at different times of the year. However, it was clear from looking at teachers' planning and talking to the pupils that the different elements are taught regularly. Swimming takes place regularly and standards are good by the time pupils reach Year 6. Older pupils also visit a residential centre where they take part in adventurous activities.
113. Some good use of specialist skills is made in the teaching of games, both from within the school and outside. The teacher who normally works in the learning support base takes the older children for games and the school is using additional skilled support from a qualified sports coach. The result is good teaching and learning for the Key Stage 2 children, with clearly identified skills being taught well. In the lesson seen in Year 4, pupils participated enthusiastically in a well planned warm up, much needed in the cold wind! The objectives for the lessons were clear, resources such as balls plentiful and in good condition. The teacher gave demonstrations of key skills such as catching. She picked up on the best performances by the children to use as exemplars, with comments such as 'Look at how he bends his knees'. Pupils achieved well. As the lesson progressed, many were clearly improving their technique and gaining a greater understanding of the importance of good movement and use of space in team games. Whilst most pupils in lessons were suitably dressed for vigorous activity, one or two in Year 5 were not. It would be beneficial for the school to try to ensure that all pupils are suitably dressed.
114. The games lesson for Year 4 provided a good example of the successful integration of the learning support base children into mainstream activities. Very good support was given by the learning assistant to ensure that these children were given confidence and fully involved in co-operative challenges. A wide range of additional and valuable sports opportunities are created for the pupils through after-school games clubs, run on three nights of the week by the learning support teacher.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good** across the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very keen in their commitment to the PSHCE programme and there are plans to extend it still further;
- Teachers ensure that the sessions provide valuable learning experiences for pupils;
- Pupils cherish these times and miss them when they do not take place.

### Commentary

115. Staff have increasingly high levels of expertise in the area of PSHCE due to the keen interest of the deputy headteacher in the subject. She has researched the area in depth and has passed on much good practice to her colleagues. Pupils of all ages value the time they spend talking and listening carefully to their peers and when, as sometimes happens, a class has to forgo a session, they say that they really miss it. The school has already planned to extend the reach of PSHCE across the school and to involve even more local service providers.
116. In the best sessions, pupils are able to give time to thinking about particular issues they may encounter in life. They try hard to empathise with the feelings of others and, in one particularly effective session, Year 4 pupils acted out different scenarios on a theme of 'how we can support and care for each other'. Although it was the end of the day, pupils concentrated really well and were fired with enthusiasm by their teacher who offered well focused guidance. Even when they were interrupted by pupils from another class walking through the hall, this did not distract them from their preparations. They were engrossed in the 'mini drama' they were preparing and enjoyed performing for their classmates. Pupils become increasingly self-confident during these non-threatening activities. They understand that it is quite alright to 'pass' during a discussion although the vast majority have a valid contribution to make. Teachers give effective feedback to pupils, such as 'I liked the way you said that'. This helps them to respond appropriately next time they face a particular situation and so improves their social skills and overall personal development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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