

INSPECTION REPORT

RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

North Shields, Tyne and Wear

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108575

Headteacher: Mrs M Macdonald

Lead inspector: Mr M Newell

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th November 2003

Inspection number: 257330

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery, infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	136
School address:	Minton Lane North Shields Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE29 6DQ
Telephone number	0191 2005037
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs V White
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in North Shields, about 7 miles from the centre of Newcastle. The school has resourced provision for up to 8 pupils with emotional, social and behavioural needs, from across the Local Education Authority. In recognition of its successes the school has received Achievement Awards from the government. The school has also gained Investors in People for a second time in 2003, Basic Skills Quality mark in 1999 and Healthy School Award in 2003. The number of pupils attending the school is 136 and is increasing. There is no significant level of pupil mobility. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is low and all pupils are of white ethnic origin. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 57 per cent and this is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, is well above the national average at almost 50 per cent. The nature of special educational need covers social and behavioural, communication problems and other general learning difficulties. The attainment of children when they start school is very low, particularly in communication skills.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10638	Mr M Newell	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Inclusion English Science Information and communication technology Religious education Geography History
12682	Mr J Griffin	Lay inspector	
18027	Mrs S Mawer	Team inspector	Special educational needs Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
20301	Mr P Isherwood	Team inspector	Resourced provision for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural needs.
10911	Mrs C Deloughry	Team inspector	Personal, social and health education and citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an excellent school. The inspirational leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, the very good and at times outstanding teaching and the very good attitudes of the pupils are key factors in why the pupils achieve so well. The pupils are offered a stimulating and exciting range of learning opportunities which enthuse and motivate them. All at the school strive for success in an excellent learning environment where the individuality of each pupil is recognised and celebrated. **The school provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses.

- All pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science and attain very high standards by the time that they leave school. Pupils achieve well and at times very well in many other subjects.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent, inspirational and highly motivational.
- Teaching and learning are very good and at times outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and thirst for learning are very good and relationships throughout the school are excellent. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development.
- The curricular and learning opportunities are very good and excellent provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils in the resourced unit.
- The accommodation is excellent and resources for learning are of high quality.
- Excellent procedures are in place for target setting.
- The provision made for pupils' care and welfare is outstanding.
- Links and partnerships with parents are excellent and parents are consistently provided with high quality information about how their child is doing.
- Not enough use is consistently made of computers to support pupils' learning across different subjects.
- Although satisfactory, assessment procedures in the foundation subjects could be better.

The school has made excellent progress since the time of the last inspection. The key issues that were identified at the last inspection were tackled in a most rigorous and effective manner, as were any minor issues. The school went way beyond this, however. It put in place very thorough and innovative programmes of self-evaluation that have led to significant and highly impressive improvements in standards, achievement, learning, and behaviour. This is a school with no sense of complacency and which successfully strives for excellence and a high quality of education for each and every pupil.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	A*
mathematics	A*	B	A*	A*
science	A*	A	A*	A*

Key: A* - Very high; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

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

Throughout the school pupils achieve very well in the core subjects and key areas of learning. The above table shows that over time the school's results are often very high and often placing the school's performance in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The school also performs extremely well when its performance is compared to similar schools. In recognition of its successes the school has won Achievement Awards from the government. Inspection findings show that by the time that pupils leave school standards in English, mathematics and science are very high and all pupils achieve extremely well. Inspection findings show that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 2, with, again, the pupils' level of achievement being impressive. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards in all other subjects are at an average level, with aspects of some subjects being stronger by the time that pupils leave school. This represents good and at times very good achievement, given the very low attainment levels of many children when they start at the school. Music is a subject that is currently going from strength to strength across the school. More use could be made of computers to support learning in different subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve equally as well as the rest of the pupils in school. Given the very low attainment levels of many children when they start school, particularly in communication skills, all children make great strides in their learning and by the time that they start in Year 1 most children reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning apart from in communication, language and literacy, where attainment is below the expected level.

Pupils with special educational needs and the pupils on roll at the resourced provision, which is housed at the school, benefit from excellent support, enabling them to achieve as well as their classmates. Higher attaining pupils are consistently challenged and set demanding work and there is no significant evidence of differences in achievement between boys and girls.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this impacts significantly on pupils' personal development. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and pupils show a real desire to achieve well, to take responsibility for their own learning and to contribute greatly to the life of the school as a community. These factors add much to the special ethos that surrounds all that the school provides and achieves. Despite the high priority that the school places on regular attendance, there is a small but significant minority of parents who keep their children at home too readily and this results in unsatisfactory attendance levels for the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is excellent. Teaching and learning are very good with some excellent and outstanding practice. Teaching is often dynamic, focused, challenging, exciting and vibrant. Pupils become engrossed in the activities and hang on to teachers' every word. Teachers make every effort to make learning an exciting and enjoyable adventure. Only occasionally do teaching and learning drop below this high but always expected level. Teaching assistants contribute significantly and powerfully to how well pupils learn and achieve. Excellent procedures are in place for target setting and for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics, and science and for children in the Foundation Stage, with the school rightly seeking to improve further assessment procedures in the foundation subjects. The learning opportunities that are provided both within and outside of the formal curriculum are very good and at times excellent. The level of care and guidance that is provided for all pupils is of the highest standard and the opportunity to celebrate the uniqueness of the individual is seldom missed. The links and partnerships with parents are excellent and add much to the great sense of community and togetherness that runs through the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent, inspirational, innovative and highly influential within and beyond the school. She has embedded in school practice a highly effective model of self-evaluation which is open, frank and accurate. She has created a tremendous team spirit and all at the school share her passionate desire for high standards and excellence. She recognises, values and nurtures the talents of individuals and has taken all staff with her in her highly successful quest for school improvement. The head is supported by a very able, effective deputy headteacher and senior management team and subject leaders who contribute much to the leadership and management of the school. Governance of the school is a strong feature and governors fulfil their statutory duties very well with the chair of governors playing a particularly important and effective role in the leadership of the school. The school justifiably deserves its high reputation.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are delighted with the quality of education that the school provides and are justifiably proud of the school's attainment and achievements. This is reflected in the exceptionally positive parental survey. Only a very few parents had any concerns on any of the survey questions.

The pupils clearly love coming to school and are very appreciative of all that the school provides. Pupils recognise that all staff want them to achieve well. Pupils find learning fun whilst at that the same time they feel valued and state that this is a school where they are listened to and respected and are given every opportunity to contribute to the life of the school as a community. They are particularly proud of their school council and feel that it makes a difference because suggestions are acted upon.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The areas that the school needs to address to continue to improve even further are:

- Ensure that computers are used more regularly and effectively support and enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Develop sharper and more rigorous procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in the foundation subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects.

Throughout the school pupils achieve **very well** in core subjects and key areas of learning. By the time that pupils leave school they attain **very high** standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in all other subjects are at an **average** level with pupils achieving **well** and at times **very well** given their very low attainment levels when they start school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school pupils are achieving very well.
- Standards are very high in English, mathematics and science by the time that pupils leave school.
- Pupils achieve well and at times very well in many foundation subjects.

Commentary

FOUNDATION STAGE

1. The children in the Foundation Stage get off to a flying start in their educational lives and achieve very well from their very low attainment level when they start school. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 most children attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning apart from communication, language and literacy, where attainment is below the expected level. This is because a significant number of children begin school with exceptionally poor levels of spoken language. This has been the pattern of attainment over the last few years.

KEY STAGE 1

2. On the basis of the National Curriculum tests in 2003 for Year 2 pupils, attainment was below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. When compared to similar schools attainment was well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Teacher assessments in science showed attainment to be below average. The trend of improvement has been above the national trend. Inspection findings paint an even stronger picture with the attainment of the current Year 2 pupils being above average in English, mathematics and science as this group of pupils is a stronger cohort. The important factor is that all pupils are achieving very well and make great gains in their learning in Year 1 and Year 2, from their very low attainment level when they start school.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 - average points score in 2003.

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3(15.7)	15.7(15.8)
Writing	13.2(14.3)	14.6(14.4)
Mathematics	15.8(18.6)	16.3(16.5)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- By the end of Year 2 standards in all other subjects are at an average level and pupils of all abilities are achieving well and at times very well.

KEY STAGE 2

- On the basis of the 2003 National Curriculum tests for Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics and science was very high and in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, and in English was well above the national average. Over time the school has consistently attained high standards, often being in the top 5 per cent of schools. An even better picture emerges when the school's performance is compared to that of similar schools, as attainment is almost always in the top 5 per cent. The school's trend of improvement is above the national trend. Recently published government data shows that the school's value added measure between the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is bettered by only one school in the country. It is clear that in Years 3-6 pupils of all abilities are achieving very well. Inspection findings show that this pattern of attainment and achievement is continuing, with standards in English, mathematics and science being very high.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 - average points score in 2003.

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (29.0)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	30.0 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	32.3 (30.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Standards in all other foundation subjects are at an average level with elements of some subjects being above average. Given the low attainment of many children when they start school, the standards that they attain show good and in some instances very good achievement. The emphasis that the school has placed on raising standards in the core subjects explains the difference in attainment between the core and foundation subjects and the school is seeking to establish itself as a centre of excellence for the performing arts and signs of success are already evident. For example, the greater emphasis that the school has placed on music provision this year is leading to a rapid increase in standards, and learning and progress in the subject is going from strength to strength. Although standards in information and communication technology are at an average level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, they could be improved further if opportunities were more consistently capitalised on to use computers to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- The pupils with special educational needs achieve highly and at a very good rate because of their early identification and the consistently high and effective teaching and support they receive. Every pupil on the special needs register over the last three years has achieved at least Level 4 at the end of Year 6 in the national tests from a very low starting point. Because of the emphasis on helping pupils to achieve so well in English and mathematics they are also able to make good progress and achieve well in all other areas of the curriculum. Pupils on roll at the resourced provision for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural needs achieve just as well. Higher attaining pupils are set tasks that are demanding and challenging and this enables them to achieve their full potential. Boys and girls across the school achieve as well as one another.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good** attitudes towards all that the school has to offer. Pupils behave **very well** and their personal development is **very good**. Pupils' punctuality is **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** as it is well below the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes towards school and their work are very good
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and pupils' relationships with others are excellent.
- Pupils' personal qualities are very well developed, with particularly strong features in their spiritual, moral and social development.
- Pupils' punctuality is good
- Despite the school's very good efforts, attendance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

7. Pupils are proud of their school and like attending. Pupils are very positive about their teachers, who they justifiably hold in very high regard. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the wide range of after school clubs that the school provides. In most lessons, pupils listen very well and show very good levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. Pupils respond particularly well when expectations are high, lesson tasks are demanding and they are able to engage in a variety of practical activities. Children's attitudes to learning in the Foundation Stage are equally good, as children behave well, are keen to learn and show increasing levels of confidence in their learning and a strong willingness to help and support one another.
8. Behaviour in classrooms, during lunchtime and playtimes is very good. The very good and reliable behaviour of nearly all pupils is an important element in the excellent ethos that surrounds the work of the school. A strikingly calm, social atmosphere prevails in the dining hall. There is no sign of any bullying or other anti-social behaviour. There have been no permanent exclusions for a number of years, although there were four fixed term exclusions, in the previous school year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
104	4	0

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

9. Harmonious relationships among pupils abound, irrespective of background or learning competency level. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence are strikingly positive features and pupils take much responsibility for their own learning and are actively involved in setting and reviewing personal and academic targets. Pupils talk of the confidence they get from teachers, who believe in them and expect them to achieve well. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. Pupils hold the rewards system in high regard and fully support the school's sanctions, where needed. They exercise responsibility for themselves and others in a very sensible and mature way. Older pupils 'buddy' younger pupils by helping them form friendships with others. The school's well established personal, social, citizenship and health education programme is central to pupils' social development. The opportunities to play a wide range of

musical instruments, the range of art they experience and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning make major contributions to pupils' very good spiritual development. Similarly, these factors, together with the good provision that is made for raising pupils' awareness of different cultures, are important features of pupils' good cultural development.

Attendance

10. Whilst attendance is rising steadily, it is still well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is consistently below the national average.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.3	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year (2002/3).

11. The school's measures to promote attendance and combat absence, including first day contact with parents whose child's attendance is causing concern, are very good. High attendance has a high priority with staff, governors, pupils and most parents and the school does all it can to promote good attendance. However, there is a small but significant minority of parents who still keep pupils at home too readily. Pupils' punctuality is good. Nearly all pupils routinely arrive on time allowing lessons to get off to a brisk start.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided for all pupils is **excellent**. Teaching and learning are **very good** with some **outstanding** teaching. The curriculum is **very good** and the equality of access for all pupils is **excellent**. The care and welfare provided for pupils are **excellent** and the way in which the school seeks out and then acts upon the views of pupils is **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **very good** and makes a most important contribution to all pupils' achievements. Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' achievement and progress are **very good** overall and **satisfactory** but rapidly improving in the foundation subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to motivate and enthuse the pupils.
- Teaching is challenging and demanding for pupils of all abilities.
- The contribution that teaching assistants make to pupils' learning is excellent.
- Assessment procedures in the core subjects are excellent and satisfactory but improving in the foundation subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (16%)	19 (53%)	12 (32%)	0 (0%)	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.

12. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good and characterised by strong teamwork and high ambitions for the children to do well. Not a moment is wasted during the day and very effective teaching is balanced skilfully between teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to plan their own learning through play. The highly successful and imaginative teaching is a significant factor in helping the children's very high achievement. Assessment is excellent and used very well to guide and inform lesson planning so there are no problems in teaching work at the correct level for the reception children in the mixed age class.
13. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is very good and at times outstanding. Work that is set is always challenging and demanding and closely matched to the individual needs of the pupils. Reading and writing are taught very well across the school. Pupils are taught every skill necessary to help them become fluent and confident readers. Younger pupils are taught phonics and basic skills in an excellent manner and this provides a very secure platform on which high achievement is built. They are taught precisely what is needed to achieve at different levels of writing and are consistently taught how to use punctuation and vocabulary in such a way that it hooks the attention of the reader. At times, teaching is outstanding because the focused way in which skills are taught or the highly imaginative way in which texts are presented, leads to pupils working to their full potential and producing work of a high standard. Teaching is equally good in science and mathematics where a great emphasis is put on the problem solving and investigative elements of the curriculum. Pupils are expected to put their knowledge to the test in experiments and investigations that capture their imagination as well as presenting them with a real challenge. Invariably pupils rise to the occasion, are totally engrossed in their work and recognise how much fun learning can be. Occasionally, teaching for some of the younger pupils at Key Stage 2 does not reach this level because there is a lack of vibrancy or sparkle or simply the expectations are not high enough.
14. In some foundation subjects teachers are using their subject knowledge to great effect to bring the subject to life and to really help the pupils to achieve well. Whether it be imaginative construction tasks in design and technology, the teaching of specific skills in art or demonstrating a particular movement in dance, the result is the same and learning becomes an exciting and thoroughly enjoyable adventure. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in music where the co-ordinator teaches the subject across the school. Some of the teaching is outstanding and inspirational, with music filling the corridors of the school before, during and after school.
15. The teaching is very effective for pupils with special educational needs and this is one of the main reasons why achievement is so high and why these pupils, who make up almost half of the school population, are making considerably better progress than might be expected. Teaching assistants work very closely with class teachers to plan, measure and record the progress pupils are making and the contribution they make to pupils' learning is both impressive and pivotal. Teachers' planning for each lesson is

closely matched to the targets in pupils' individual education plans and the excellent systems in place for assessment guide the teaching and learning very successfully.

16. Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and achievements in the Foundation Stage, the core subjects and for pupils with special educational needs are excellent. Analyses of National Curriculum tests and other assessment data are excellent, rigorous and never leave a stone unturned in seeking to identify areas for development and improvement, both for individuals and groups of pupils. An excellent set of assessment tests has been devised by the headteacher to check the pupils' acquisition of basic skills so that any difficulties they are experiencing may be focused upon and improved. The area for improvement is in assessment procedures in the foundation subjects. Although they are satisfactory, they are not yet rigorous enough to have their biggest possible impact on how well pupils achieve. The school is already addressing the issue.
17. Throughout the school pupils are regularly involved in self-assessments, which they carry out honestly and critically, setting themselves new goals. Termly tracking information in literacy and numeracy is on display in classrooms and pupils openly talk about the level they are aiming for. Even more impressively, the older pupils know exactly what they need to do to reach the required level and this demonstrates the fact that pupils have a very clear understanding of their own progress. This knowledge is further increased through the marking of their work which is consistently very good, and not only praises but also provides thoughtful and relevant suggestions for future improvement.

Example of outstanding practice

The school has excellent assessment procedures in place in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils are assessed on a regular basis and the information is used in a highly impressive manner to track individual progress as well as small group and year group progress. Where the school goes the extra-mile is in its desire to always look to refine and improve what is already excellent. In English the headteacher has devised a system for assessing and tracking pupils' acquisition of basic skills. The system is very thorough and the information is used to great effect to plot the next steps in pupils' learning. In science the co-ordinator has devised a series of tests that are carried out at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. An external assessment body has validated these tests. This means that when pupils take optional SATs in English and mathematics they also take them for science as well, giving teachers a very good insight into how pupils are progressing in science as well as the other core subjects. The school has introduced termly tracking in literacy and numeracy. Targets are discussed with pupils and the level they are working towards is made clear. These targets are displayed in the classroom. They do not intimidate the pupils. Quite the opposite, they want to talk about them with one another and with adults. Pupils show a great determination to reach their targets and, impressively, older pupils know exactly what they need to do to achieve their target and even the next higher level.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good** and is enhanced by a **very good** range of learning opportunities that enrich pupils' educational experiences. Accommodation and resources are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- The formal curriculum is very good, excellently planned and curriculum innovation is very good.

- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is afforded a high priority.
- Excellent provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The excellent accommodation and range of high quality resources impact significantly on pupils' learning.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently across different subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary.

18. The totally inclusive curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and caters very well for the diverse interests and aptitudes of all pupils in an exciting and vibrant manner. This enables pupils to achieve and develop their capabilities well in all subjects and areas of learning and exceptionally well in English, mathematics and science. The quality of curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and provides children with a rich and exciting array of educational opportunities which bring learning to life. Throughout the school, the systems for planning the curriculum are excellent and ensure that all subjects are fully covered in depth and pupils gain a very good range of knowledge and skills. The school is very receptive to new ideas to improve and develop the curriculum. They have adapted national schemes of work very well to meet their own particular needs and have developed an excellent 'Basic Skills' scheme, which is systematically applied and tested to ensure all pupils receive a very secure grounding in literacy and numeracy. The excellent homework policy, which involves agreement and support between home and school, evokes a positive response and impacts very favourably on the quality of curriculum provided. The way in which computers are used in different subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory but pupils' learning could be further enhanced if the opportunities that present themselves for the use of computers across the curriculum were more consistently seized upon.
19. There are many very good displays around the school which demonstrate the high priority that is placed upon personal, social, health education and citizenship. This subject is not only promoted very well in the planned weekly lessons but also by teachers and support staff throughout the school day. Pupils' learning and educational experiences are enriched by a very good number of visitors to the school, by visits out of the school, a good range of extra-curricular activities and the opportunities that are provided for pupils to regularly take part in sporting and arts activities. Public services, such as the police, health and fire services enrich the curriculum with contributions on personal safety and healthy living. Pupils take part in a range of collections and sponsored events for charity. There are links with a number of churches and pupils visited the mosque in Newcastle. The headteacher has obtained approval to become designated as a School for the Future, whereby a range of agencies, including health, will have a base on the school premises. A particular strength and recent innovation is the increased emphasis that the school is giving to music and the performing arts. The school is now alive with musical performances by pupils of all ages, who play a range of tuned and untuned instruments from different cultures with developing confidence and panache and with a tremendous amount of fun, exuberance and delight.
20. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and promotes high achievement. The curriculum for special educational needs and the requirements of the Code of Practice are rigorously monitored to ensure that pupils receive the help identified in their targets and achieve as well as they can. Pupils benefit from an excellent range of resources and have equal access to the imaginative curriculum in this outstanding and inclusive school.

21. The accommodation is stunning. The building both inside and outside provides a highly stimulating and attractive learning environment. The building also has areas where teaching and non-teaching staff can work when they are not teaching and provides a tremendous working environment for staff as well as pupils. The building is spacious, beautifully decorated and enhanced by high quality displays of pupils' work. Pupils take an immense pride in their environment and, although it is now 3 years old, the building remains in pristine condition both inside and out, aided in no small way by the significant and valued contribution of the caretaker and her staff. Resources are excellent in terms of both quantity and quality and bring an added dimension and incentive to how well pupils learn and achieve because they give every learning opportunity a sense of value and worth.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares **exceptionally well** for its pupils and provides **excellent** advice, support and guidance for all pupils. There are **very good** measures to involve pupils in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The levels of care for all pupils are excellent.
- The support that is provided for all pupils through exceptional monitoring procedures is excellent.
- The school regards the views of pupils as very important to all aspects of its work.

Commentary

22. The formal policies and practices relating to health and safety and child protection are excellent, very well considered and properly carried out. Health and safety procedures are regularly monitored and reviewed and play a pivotal role in ensuring that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. Staff, across the school, know the pupils very well and address their needs. They act quickly if a pupil is unhappy or experiencing any personal problems, and are careful to make sure new arrivals are helped to settle in. The arrangements for induction to the nursery and reception classes are excellent. As a result children are secure, valued and well cared for in a totally inclusive environment. Regular meetings take place with parents to discuss the children's progress and there are very good procedures to introduce both parents and their children to school when they start in the nursery. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary school are good and getting stronger.
23. The support of all pupils' achievements through monitoring, is frequent, thorough and very effectively shared with pupils and parents. Relationships across the school and with parents are excellent. Where there are any concerns about any issue, teachers and other staff work very closely with pupils and their parents to identify how the concerns can be overcome. Pupils clearly know and strive for their individual targets relating to their academic progress and personal development. Pupils with special educational needs also receive an excellent level of care, support and guidance to enable them to take a full and active part in school life. Because assessment systems are detailed for each pupil, any concerns are acted upon very quickly and resolved. In this respect, outside agencies play an important part in supporting pupils and are regular visitors to the school. They are effective in making sure that the outstanding care that pupils receive is maintained.

24. The school's involvement of pupils in its work is impressive. Pupils are at ease and relaxed in adults' company whilst showing high levels of respect. Pupils talk freely to all adults and are always ready to offer their views and opinions about issues relating to school life, knowing full well that their voices will be heard, respected and acted upon. At the start of the school year, each class creates a set of rules that are displayed and referred to as needed. In lessons, pupils are comfortable making suggestions and asking questions. There has been a school council in place for a number of years. It continues to meet regularly and is very well regarded throughout the school because pupils know that their suggestions will be fairly and fully discussed and that good and feasible suggestions will be acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **excellent** links with parents, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. Links with other schools and colleges are **good**. Links with the local community make a **good** contribution to pupils' development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents hold the school in high esteem and relationships and links with parents are of a high standard.
- The quality of information to parents is excellent and parents' views are sought and acted upon.
- There are good links with the community and other schools and colleges.

Commentary

25. The school has established excellent links with parents and this adds much to the ethos of the school and to pupils' achievements. Over time, led by the headteacher, staff have worked incredibly hard at establishing strong links with parents with the intention of doing as much as possible to develop a strong partnership between home and school. The school has been successful in its aims. Parents have become increasingly supportive of the school and its achievements and of their child's education. The partnership with parents is strengthened by the fact that parents' views are regularly canvassed through questionnaires, which means that the school is exceptionally well informed on their concerns. The school takes quick and decisive action to address any concerns and, as a result, staff are justifiably viewed as very helpful. Parents are invited into termly "Achievers' assemblies", nursery assemblies and homework awards and, as a result, the school is justifiably seen as very open and approachable. The high regard in which parents hold the school is reflected in the exceptionally positive parental survey. Only a very few parents have any concerns on any of the survey questions.
26. The quality of information provided for parents is excellent and this process begins even before children start in the nursery. The practice whereby the early years manager and nursery staff make home visits prior to children starting at the school means staff and parents have an excellent understanding of one another's needs and expectations from the outset. This is then built on in an impressive and exceptional manner. Termly parents' evenings and very good quality annual reports of pupils' progress keep parents right up-to-date with their child's achievements. Half-termly curriculum outlines for each class keep parents very well informed on the work pupils are doing and important information is posted on the parents' notice board in the foyer of each classroom. Very good use is made of the home school reading book and the homework diaries, which means parents and pupils are clear about the homework that has been set. There is a high level of satisfaction about homework and its arrangements and the diary is also

used effectively to keep parents informed about merits and targets for their children as well as providing an effective medium for messages between home and school

27. The school has established good links with other schools and colleges, with the school seeking to further extend these to have an even bigger impact on pupils' already impressive learning and achievements. There are good links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Bridging projects for Year 6 pupils during their last half term at school in the core subjects and information and communication technology are well organised. Curriculum links are well developed with the other primary schools in the locality. The school takes part in sporting events with other schools, providing older pupils with additional understanding of the local community whilst developing their sense of fair play and competition. Student teachers from Northumbria University take part of their teaching practice at the school. Similarly, nursery nurses and learning support assistants take part of their training at the school. These arrangements provide additional learning experiences for the pupils as well as the trainees.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent and highly influential**. The leadership of other key staff is **excellent** and the governance of the school is very good. The school is managed in an **excellent** and impressive manner.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are inspirational and highly motivational and influential.
- The contribution made by other key staff to the management of the school is excellent.
- Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are excellent.
- The analysis of test and assessment data is impressive and very effective.
- The governance of the school is very good.

Commentary

28. The manner in which the headteacher leads and manages the school is inspirational. When she took up her post she set a rigorous agenda for school improvement based totally on raising standards and the quality of education for all pupils. Through her vibrant inter-personal skills and passion for success she has brought all the staff with her and there is a tremendous team spirit in the school. She sets high expectations for all who work at the school but nurtures the skills and talents of every individual. Her drive for excellence has been the main reason why the school has made such remarkable improvement since the last inspection. She is innovative and highly influential both within the school and beyond and her charisma lights up the school. The headteacher places great store in teamwork and valuing the contributions made by every person who works at, studies in, or shows support for the school. In doing so, she has gained the total respect of pupils, staff, governors and parents.
29. The headteacher is excellently supported by a very able deputy headteacher. She complements the head's leadership style very effectively and makes a significant contribution to the leadership and management of the school, as do other members of the senior management team. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has provided drive and direction in helping to raise standards. She has played an important role in helping to ensure that teaching has become stronger by improving the roles and responsibilities of the teaching assistants through further training and support. The

leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are outstanding and, because of this, significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. Changes and improvements have been managed skilfully through the creation of a very strong and unified team who share a clear sense of purpose for excellence and high achievement.

30. Leadership of subjects across the school is very good overall and excellent in the core subjects. All teachers are provided with time away from class teaching duties to monitor teaching and learning in subjects that they are responsible for. These tasks are carried out impressively well and have made a major contribution to how well pupils are achieving and to improvements in teaching. The analyses of test and assessment data are excellent and the information is then used in a highly effective manner for target setting and for tracking the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. The attention that the school pays to detail and the desire to leave nothing to chance or any stone unturned has contributed a great deal to the significant rise in standards over the last 4 years.

31. The governance of the school is very good. The governing body carries out its statutory duties well. Most governors have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development and support the work of the school in a committed manner. Governors are fully involved in strategic planning and relationships between governors and school are excellent. The chair of governors plays a particularly important role in the management of the school and is particularly successful in acting as a "critical friend" to the school, in monitoring the work of the school and in putting her professional skills to very effective use in supporting and improving the work of the school.

32. The school makes excellent use of all the funds that are available to it. This shows in the high quality of education, high quality learning environment and high quality resources. Excellent use is made of the individual talents of all teaching and non-teaching staff. Financial planning is excellent and geared towards sustaining high standards. The management of finances is carried out in an excellent manner by the school clerk, who also provides very good financial information to the governing body and carries out administrative duties very effectively and efficiently. Good procedures are in place to ensure that the impact of any major spending decisions is assessed against the impact they are having on pupils' achievements. Excellent procedures are in place so that the school can be assured that it gets the best value from any goods or services purchased. The recent auditor's report commended the school for its quality of financial management and any minor recommendations have been acted upon. Taking all factors into account, the school is providing very good value for money.

Financial Information for the Year April 2002 to March 2003.

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	498 098	Balance brought forward from the previous year	107 552
Total expenditure	499 290	Balance carried forward to the next	106 360
Expenditure per pupil	4 059		

WHAT IS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RESOURCED PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS?

The school has resourced provision for up to eight pupils with emotional, social and behavioural needs. Pupils are admitted to the school on the recommendation of a local education authority admission panel. There were four children receiving the provision at the time of the inspection. There is a designated teacher and two support assistants who work with the pupils. Close contact is maintained with the pupils' original school and they stay for a maximum of three terms. One of the aims of the provision is to integrate pupils into main school classes as soon as possible.

The provision for pupils in the resourced base is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress because of the very good quality teaching and support they receive.
 - Pupils are excellently integrated in to the main school classes and feel very valued by the school.
 - A very good multi-disciplinary approach results in excellent procedures of identification of need and assessment and monitoring of progress.
 - Links with parents are very good.
 - There is very good management of the provision.
33. Pupils on the register of the resourced base make very good progress both in their academic work and in their social development. They receive very good quality teaching and support and, as a result, achieve very well, showing very good improvement in their behaviour and attitudes to work. In both group and individual sessions, teachers and support staff relate very well to the pupils, developing their confidence and showing them that they are valued. Special sessions, such as the "Playground Detectives", "Scorpions" and the "Friday Club", are used very effectively to develop their social skills. Teachers and support staff very cleverly include very good pupil role models from the main school. This has a very positive effect on developing good standards of behaviour.
34. There is a very positive approach to including the pupils in main school lessons. This is very successful because base staff and class teachers liaise very carefully with each other, ensuring that work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Within the lessons, the base teacher and support staff work alongside the pupils giving them extra support. To stop base pupils becoming over-reliant on the support, base staff also work with other pupils, giving them the benefit of their very high quality support. All staff use praise very effectively and the use of sticker rewards and "choice activities" has a very positive effect on improving behaviour. Regular and excellent monitoring and assessment by the school and other agencies ensure that pupils make very good progress and the return to their original school is as smooth as possible. Pupils benefit from the very good links with their parents; home-school books are used as a very effective way of highlighting positive behaviour at home and at school. Comments made in the books are discussed with the pupils. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets for improvement. This allows them to have a clear understanding on what they have to do to improve. The base manager provides very good leadership. There are very good procedures in place to ensure that the pupils achieve very well and make much better progress than expected.

35. The resourced base was established after the previous inspection was carried out and, therefore, no comment about improvement can be made.

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

Provision is **excellent** in the Foundation Stage.

36. In this outstanding environment provision has moved rapidly from good to excellent since the last inspection. Children achieve very highly from a very low starting point in all areas of learning. There are currently twelve children attending mornings only in the nursery and who started when they were three, and twenty four children in a mixed reception and Year 1 class.
37. There is an exceptionally strong drive for learning in the Foundation Stage and there are many reasons why children are achieving so well. Teaching is very good in all areas of learning, and a strong, unified team of adults who are ambitious for the children, set high expectations and provide a very good and imaginative curriculum, which meets children's needs extremely well. Staffing levels are generous and all children are supported well. Relationships are excellent and, as a result, the children's personal skills rapidly improve, impacting very positively on standards. Outstanding leadership and management have kept the department on an upward track, managing change and improvements skilfully through excellent procedures in planning, monitoring and assessment. Assessments are used directly to plan work at the correct level for all children, including those with special educational needs, and there are no problems in teaching mixed ages in the reception and Year 1 class. The accommodation is excellent and high quality resources provide children with an exciting place in which to learn.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching.
- Excellent relationships between children and adults create an atmosphere of highly effective learning.
- Planning is excellent.

Commentary

38. This area of learning receives a high profile when children start in the nursery and the children achieve very well. They make rapid progress, and by the time they start in Year 1 many children have reached the early learning goals. This is due to very good teaching, excellent relationships and a well planned and ordered environment in which children quickly settle and feel secure. New children are still heavily dependent on adults but others, having been encouraged to take responsibility, are now confident to work independently on their tasks. They take turns being monitors by helping to give out milk and take the register to the office very sensibly. Behaviour is very good. Because staff are highly skilled in knowing how young children learn effectively, they plan an excellent range of activities, which lead to sustained interest and concentration from the children and a strong desire to learn.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- All children achieve very well because teaching and learning are very good.
- Writing is taught exceptionally well.
- Every opportunity is seized upon to enhance children's communication skills.

Commentary

39. In all activities there are excellent opportunities for the children to develop their language skills, which are exceptionally low when they start school. All children achieve very well, but despite the very good teaching attainment is below the expected level by the time the children start in Year 1. Adults "go the extra mile" to help children to extend their language skills across all areas of learning. The children are taught to listen to one another as soon as they start school and this is reinforced in many activities. Because of this, children in reception listen exceptionally well to adults and to one another. In the nursery, children's listening skills are developing well. Not a moment is wasted and staff provide challenging activities that are well matched to the needs of pupils and particularly those with special educational needs. By the end of the nursery year the more able children write their own names and most are making marks in their free writing. The sharing of books, listening to stories, playing games and singing rhymes are meticulously planned so that children quickly learn letter sounds and a few simple words. Their learning is fun and highly effective. The excellent progress and provision continue in reception, with a wealth of opportunities for language development to flourish. Very good focused support is given to help the children improve the way they form letters and the shared writing in literacy lessons is taught extremely well, exploring words and sentences from stories in a highly stimulating way and keeping children totally engrossed in learning. Many children are already reading simple stories and a good number of parents take an interest in helping their children with reading at home.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- All children achieve very well.
- Teaching is of a high standard and places a high emphasis on learning through practical activities.
- Mathematical skills are put to very good use across many areas of learning.

Commentary

40. The high quality teaching of practical activities helps children to achieve very well from a low starting point and many attain the early learning goals by the time that they start in Year 1. Teaching and learning are very good and give a very good focus to helping children to use mathematical language more confidently and develop ideas to solve problems through play. In these practical activities, the excellent accommodation and very good resources impact very positively on children's achievement. In the nursery class, skilled questioning helps children develop a keen interest and understanding of

numbers and shapes when they play a game and name and sort the shapes and count up to five. Mathematical skills are extended very successfully across all areas of learning. The very effective teaching and learning continue in reception with activities to help children learn about the language and sequencing of time. By the end of reception most children are recording simple addition and subtraction sums to ten and filling in missing numbers on a number line, knowing that six is one more than five.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good and provides children with countless opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- The school provides a wealth of visitors to enrich learning.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are very good and help to ensure that all children achieve very well. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. Visits and visitors, along with excellent accommodation and high-quality resources, strongly support this area of learning and help many children to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. This represents significant progress. The imaginative play areas are changed regularly to keep interest levels high and whether it is in the post office, garden centre, baby clinic or international café, the children are consistently challenged in their learning. In religious education the children celebrate many of the important festivals of the world, by dressing up at Christmas or making special foods and dragons for the Chinese New Year. In a recent focus on “growing up” the children in reception re-enacted the birth of Jesus and a parent came with her baby to school so that comparisons could be made between how babies were looked after then and now. Investigations take place regularly. Children in the nursery carry out mini-beast searches whilst reception children use magnifying glasses to explore transparent materials. They record their findings satisfactorily in pictures. Computers are used regularly. At first, children in the nursery need a lot of adult help but by the end of reception they are moving the mouse confidently to make pictures and patterns and use the keyboard to write their names.

Physical development

Commentary

42. No sessions were observed outside or in the hall and so no judgements can be made about teaching or the overall provision in this area of learning. However, detailed assessments show that many children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning and so are achieving extremely well. Their skills in handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools are at expected levels because of the high focus on developing these skills well. Plans are at an advanced stage to develop further the large outdoor play area for physical development and other areas of learning. At the moment the quality of accommodation and resources overall are very good but there are some areas for improvement to enhance learning even further. In particular, the garden area is small for investigative work and there are few imaginative

markings on the playground to extend opportunities for play and for children to move in different ways on their wheeled toys.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- All children achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Children are provided with a vibrant range of activities that enriches their learning.

Commentary

43. Staff plan a wide range of stimulating activities and, with very good teaching and high levels of support, the children achieve particularly well with many attaining the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The children need a lot of help to learn important skills when they first start school and, therefore, the direct teaching of specific skills is the focus of many activities, along with very good opportunities for play. They are taught, for example, the skills needed to mix paint, and use brushes to express their ideas in family portraits. They quickly learn how to use scissors and glue to confidently make models of favourite nursery rhyme characters. They often make up their own stories and have free access to musical instruments to accompany their story telling and for play. There is a wealth of opportunities for imaginative play in the "home corners". The children regularly take part in planned music making sessions with adults and are slowly building up a good repertoire of favourite songs and rhymes. In reception there is a lot of fun and laughter when the children sing action songs in a satisfactory manner and all willingly volunteer to be the conductor when they play instruments and learn to stop and start the music. Children in reception benefit from a weekly lesson with the music specialist in the school. She is building up their skills in music very successfully as well as helping them to gain a strong enjoyment for the subject.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain very high standards by the time that they leave school and throughout the school all pupils achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching is very good and at times outstanding.
- Leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
- Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and for target setting are of the highest standard and are highly effective.

Commentary

44. Standards have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. Much of this has been down to the desire to raise standards through a rigorous approach to

improving teaching and learning and through putting in place excellent procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and using the information to set and continually review challenging targets. The school's efforts have been rewarded. On the basis of the 2003 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils, standards were well above the national average and very high, in the top 5 per cent, when compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment. The school has been attaining at this level for the last 4 years. This data shows the remarkable value added measure that the school achieves because when the children start at school attainment levels are very poor in terms of communication skills. Inspection findings show that this pattern of attainment is continuing and attainment by the end of Year 6 is very high. Inspection findings are that standards by the end of Year 2 are above average, with this group of pupils being stronger than last year's cohort. The 2003 test data showed attainment to be below average in reading and well below average in writing but when compared to similar schools attainment was well above average in reading and above average in writing. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent.

45. From an early age every opportunity is capitalised on to improve pupils' communication skills. This is done through skilful open-ended questioning and insistence that pupils are attentive and good listeners in all lessons, not just literacy. Much emphasis is given to developing pupils' phonic awareness in both early reading and writing activities. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of carefully chosen, exciting and interesting texts that capture the interest of boys and girls and which demonstrate that reading can be enjoyable. The very focused and systematic manner in which the subject is taught, with the push to ensure that pupils acquire basic reading and writing skills, means that by the end of Year 2 pupils are now writing technically well, with good attention to sentence structure, punctuation and presentation, even though their vocabulary understandably lacks a little adventure. Reading skills are developing well and pupils are confident and increasingly expressive readers and already have a desire to read more, because of the passion and enthusiasm in which literature has been presented to them by teaching and non-teaching staff.
46. This very good start is built on as pupils move through the school. Pupils continue to acquire reading and writing skills at a fast rate because of the high quality teaching. Expectations are high and pupils are expected to play their part. Termly targets are set and displayed and pupils are only too ready to talk about them and know what they have to do to achieve them. Reading and writing skills are taught in a direct and systematic manner. Pupils are provided with guidance and writing frames that enable them to write for different purposes and high quality literature resources provide a great stimulus for reading as teachers continue to teach reading skills in a highly skilful manner. By the time that pupils leave school standards are high and pupils write well, with very good attention to grammar and with a panache that hooks and maintains the attention of the reader. Reading standards are high because pupils read fluently, with a high level of understanding, and interpret nuances in text.
47. Teaching and learning are very good and at times outstanding. Planning is excellent and the way that the school organises literacy lessons means that pupils are taught in single aged year groups rather than the mixed aged classes which they are taught in for most other subjects. This initiative impacts positively on pupils' learning. The great strength is that tasks that are planned take excellent account of the differing ability levels and are demanding and challenging whatever the ability of the pupil. In many lessons the pace is electric and never drops for a moment. Expectations are very high and pupils are left in no doubt as to what is expected of them both in terms of quality and quantity of work. As teachers are always building up the self-esteem of the pupils

and making them believe “they can do it”, pupils rise to the challenge. Additional writing sessions and excellent sessions to help pupils prepare for national tests again help build up pupils’ confidence and strengthen pupils’ belief that they can achieve well. Teaching assistants play a pivotal role in supporting and enhancing learning. Their contributions are significant and valued by teachers and pupils alike. Marking is often of the highest quality and the pupils’ desire to do well means that they readily take on board comments. On occasions, teaching for the Year 4 pupils does not reach this standard because it does not have the drive or pace that are such key features of teaching elsewhere in school. Satisfactory use is made of computers to further enhance pupils’ learning.

48. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and shows a fierce determination to maintain high standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning is excellent and has played a significant role in improving teaching over time. Excellent procedures are in place for assessing, tracking and target setting, with an outstanding initiative in place for assessing and tracking pupils’ acquisition of basic skills. High quality resources and accommodation help to create a learning environment geared for success and high achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Language and literacy are promoted very well across the curriculum. Teaching ensures that the many opportunities that are on offer to extend pupils’ speaking and listening skills in different subjects of the curriculum and the wealth of opportunities to enhance pupils’ writing skills are capitalised on and make an important contribution to how well pupils achieve.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high by the time that pupils leave school.
- Teaching is very good and at times excellent, enabling all pupils to achieve very well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are outstanding.
- Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils’ progress and for target setting are of high quality.
- The use of computers to support and enhance pupils’ learning is satisfactory but could be better.

Commentary

50. There have been outstanding improvements to provision since the last inspection. All weaknesses have been addressed successfully and standards, achievement, teaching, co-ordination and resources have improved significantly. Teaching, which was satisfactory, is now very good. The underdeveloped leadership and management are now highly effective. The co-ordinator has shown excellent skills and a clear purpose in tackling weaknesses from the last inspection and improving every aspect of provision. It has been achieved through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, by tracking and evaluating pupils’ progress and then taking rigorous and highly effective action.

51. Inspection findings show standards in Year 6 are very high and match the results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests. Since 2000 there has only been one year where pupils failed to reach very high standards, making the school consistently among the highest attaining 5 per cent of schools in the country. The school also performs extremely well when compared to similar schools. The attainment on entry to school is very low and all pupils throughout the school are achieving very well and making comprehensive gains in their learning. Inspection findings show standards in Year 2 to be above average. This is a stronger group than the one which took the test in 2003 and achieved standards below the national average but very high against similar schools.
52. By the end of Year 2 pupils are already developing as good mathematical investigators because they are encouraged at every opportunity to examine different ways of finding the right answer. Pupils have good numeracy skills and recall a good range of number facts. Although pupils are developing a good understanding of shape and measures and an early awareness of data handling, fewer pupils use a good and accurate level of mathematical vocabulary. By the time that pupils leave school the teaching ensures that all pupils are accomplished mathematicians, with a high percentage of pupils consistently attaining beyond that expected of 11-year-olds. An important feature is that teaching continually stresses the importance of using and applying mathematical skills in meaningful and demanding tasks with the result that pupils develop good quality problem solving and investigative skills.
53. There is a total commitment to improve pupils' learning in mathematics and there are many reasons why achievement is exceptionally high. A significant factor is the very good and often excellent teaching and a high number of teaching assistants, who enhance the learning extremely well, especially for pupils with special educational needs. The teaching assistants share in planning, are very well briefed before a lesson and keep detailed notes to feed back at the end. The most inspiring teaching is characterised by high expectations of what pupils can achieve and a confident and imaginative delivery of the lesson which captures the pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Every minute is spent productively in helping pupils learn rapidly. Explanations are clear and questions are effective so pupils know what to do to complete their tasks successfully. Assessment information is used very effectively to plan work at the correct level of challenge for all pupils. Only occasionally is teaching not at a high level and lacking the very high expectations, pace and dynamism that drive most teaching forward. Relationships in the school are excellent, lessons are interesting and pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils display high levels of motivation and a keen desire to do well. This impacts very positively on learning and achievement. The use of computers to support mathematics is improving, with a few examples of "spread sheets" to show popular games in Year 6 and graphs of favourite fruits in Year 2. However, further developments are needed to help pupils to interpret results and draw conclusions.
54. The procedures for assessing and for target setting are excellent and used to plan very successful teaching that moves pupils rapidly on in their learning. The monitoring and tracking of progress is outstanding and so teachers know exactly where each pupil has reached in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Marking clearly shows pupils how well they have done and how to improve. The marking is linked closely to the setting of individual targets, which are shared with pupils and parents and are displayed in the classroom. Pupils are very aware of their achievements and the older pupils know exactly what they need to do to attain at the next higher level. The importance that the school places on rigorous assessment is a very powerful tool in keeping standards high and teaching effective.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. The breadth of the curriculum ensures that there are good opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. They are used in design and technology but there are occasions when measuring is not done accurately enough.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Standards are very high by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils throughout the school achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good and a great emphasis is placed on developing the pupils' ability to investigate.
- Leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
- High quality procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- More use needs to be made of computers for research and for data handling and recording findings.

Commentary

56. Improvement since the time of the last inspection has been excellent because there has been an outstanding rise in standards and provision in the subject. Much of this is due to the leadership of the subject co-ordinator, who has ensured that there have been significant improvements in teaching and learning, the emphasis on investigative work, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and in how teaching and learning are monitored. Test results over time for Year 6 pupils show that over the last 4 years the school has regularly attained results that placed the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. In 2003, 89 per cent of pupils reached Level 5. When compared to similar schools, results are always in the top 5 per cent. Inspection findings show that attainment remains at a very high level for Year 6 pupils. Standards in Year 2 are above average and are better than last year's results, which showed attainment to be below average. This reflects the different natural ability levels of the pupils. Pupils of all abilities are achieving very well.
57. From an early age much emphasis is given to developing pupils' investigative skills alongside their scientific knowledge. Investigations are well differentiated so that the higher attaining pupils are provided with more open-ended tasks. Pupils are encouraged to have a go and to find things out for themselves. As a result, pupils are already discovering the rudiments of fair testing and recognising that as scientific investigators they sometimes get it wrong. By the end of Year 2 pupils now have good scientific knowledge of materials, healthy living and a secure knowledge of electricity and its uses, which is built on very well as pupils move through to Year 6. By the end of Year 6 pupils' knowledge is very strong on electricity, light and sound, plants, habitats and how the human body functions. Pupils have a well-developed scientific vocabulary because they are provided with a glossary of scientific terms for each topic they are studying and pupils then use the terms accurately to talk about their work. Pupils' investigative skills are at a high level because investigations are planned into the curriculum at regular intervals and pupils use their scientific knowledge very well to hypothesise and to make accurate predictions. Older pupils instigate their own investigations to given criteria and carry these out with confidence.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teaching ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered in depth and topics are re-visited and revised to help pupils prepare for tests. Teaching is challenging and demanding for pupils of all abilities. The excellent balance that is struck between the development of knowledge and skills means that pupils see the connection between the two and use their knowledge well in scientific investigations. Scientific concepts are explained clearly and succinctly because of the strong subject knowledge of the teachers. No time is wasted in lessons on over long introductions and the end session of lessons is used very well to check if the learning objectives have been met or exceeded. Targets are set for pupils and these targets take full account of the differing abilities of the pupils. Marking is of a high standard because it always explains why pupils have gone wrong if they have not fully understood a concept or explains why a piece of work is good. Pupils take on board the comments and their work improves. Teachers do not over use worksheets and often insist that pupils write up their findings in their own words. However, not enough use is made of computers for research or to present findings in tabular or graphical format.
59. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The co-ordinator has excellent knowledge and a fervent desire for all pupils to attain the highest possible standards. Excellent procedures are in place for monitoring teaching and learning on a regular basis. Assessment procedures are equally excellent and the co-ordinator has devised end of year tests which have been validated by an external assessment body and are used very effectively to track pupils' progress in much the same way as literacy and numeracy. Data analysis is embedded in school practice and contributes much to the continued improvements in the subject. Resources are excellent in terms of quality and quantity and add an extra dimension to how well pupils learn.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are at an average level they are improving at a good rate.
- All pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Resources and accommodation are excellent.
- More cross-curricular use of computers is needed to help raise standards further.

Commentary

60. Standards are at an average level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and are improving at a good rate. Pupils of all abilities are currently achieving well. Improvement in provision has been very good since the time of the last inspection. The subject now has a high profile in school and is enhanced by the high quality computer suite and excellent computers that are installed which provide a very attractive learning environment.
61. The emphasis on learning is on the direct teaching of specific skills and then providing pupils with every opportunity to put these skills to good use in meaningful tasks. By the end of Year 2 pupils change font sizes and colour, know how to save and send the work to the printer. The higher attaining pupils show good mouse control and use paint programs well to produce work in the style of different artists. Pupils are achieving well and developing their skills at a good rate, although they do not always use an

appropriate technical vocabulary or have a good awareness of the use of computers in the wider world. By the end of Year 6 pupils have developed good word processing skills, and input data into spreadsheets in a satisfactory manner. Pupils are confident at merging text and graphics and have satisfactory keyboard skills. Pupils use technical vocabulary well. Pupils access the Internet for research purposes and have a satisfactory awareness of the potential of electronic communication. Discussions with pupils indicate that they have not covered graphical modelling or the use of sensors in depth.

62. Teaching and learning are good across the school. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise have improved over the last 2 years because of good quality training courses and because they now have more access to computers where they can hone their own skills. Specific computer skills are taught well and pupils are provided with sufficient time to try things out for themselves. Good use is made of an interactive whiteboard to make teaching points clearer and more readily understood by pupils. Once a skill has been taught, pupils are provided with relevant but interesting tasks where they can put these skills to the test. Just occasionally teachers do not gain the full attention of the pupils when a pertinent teaching point is being made and a learning opportunity is missed. More challenging tasks are always provided for the higher attaining pupils. Good use is made of the co-ordinator's skills and knowledge in teaching other classes and this impacts most positively on the pupils' achievement.
63. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in improving the quality of provision in the subject and regularly and effectively monitors the quality of teaching and learning. She has an excellent grasp of what is needed to further improve standards. Assessment procedures are good and a levelled portfolio of pupils' work provides a good guide for colleagues as to what exactly pupils need to do to achieve at a particular level.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. The co-ordinator has accurately identified in her action plan the need to make more use of computers in different subjects of the curriculum as at present opportunities are being missed to enhance pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

The provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well across the school.
- The subject is well taught.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Computers are not used enough as a tool to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

65. Standards are in line with the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 but given the low attainment level when children start school this represents good

achievement for pupils of all abilities. Improvement has been very good since the time of the last inspection.

66. The school places a good emphasis on pupils learning to respect other peoples' faiths and cultures and this is reflected in Year 1 and Year 2 where pupils have a secure understanding and awareness of Judaism and talk and write about rabbis, synagogues, and Bar Mitzvah. They have an equally secure understanding of Christianity and name important festivals and certain parts of churches. The good teaching in the subject provides pupils throughout the school with many opportunities to explore their own feelings and beliefs and to compare them with others. By the time that pupils leave school they have a satisfactory knowledge of Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, although it is only the higher attaining pupils that recall any deeper knowledge and understanding after prompts. Pupils' knowledge of Christianity, its festivals and celebrations is satisfactory.
67. Teaching and learning in the subject are good. Teachers show great sensitivity in introducing different faiths and are keen to point out the similarities as well as any differences with Christianity. Good use is made of artefacts to help bring learning to life. Few visits are made to places of worship, other than churches, which would heighten pupils' awareness and understanding of the features and characteristics of different faiths. Teachers use their subject knowledge or own experiences well to motivate the pupils and to keep their interest. Good use is made of the subject to strengthen pupils' speaking skills through discussions and to enhance their writing skills. More use could be made of computers for research purposes.
68. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a very secure knowledge of the subject and supports colleagues very well, in addition to regularly monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This impacts positively on pupils' achievements and on the quality of provision.

History and geography

69. Work was sampled in geography and history but insufficient lessons were seen to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Evidence indicates that there is good coverage of **geography** over the year and that good attention is paid to the development of geographical skills as well as learning about climate, physical features and comparing and contrasting different countries. By the time that pupils leave school they have developed satisfactory mapping skills, a secure knowledge of the differences in climate and living conditions in different parts of the world and how they compare to their own environment.
70. In **history** the subject is covered in sufficient depth. By the time that pupils leave school they have a satisfactory knowledge and recollection of periods of history that they have studied, such as the Victorians, Ancient Egypt and the Romans. They are aware that artefacts can provide us with a great deal of information about the past and that there are primary and secondary sources of evidence. They are less aware of how different people might interpret the same period of history differently. The subjects are used well in most classes to provide good writing stimuli but more use could be made of computers.
71. Evidence indicates that standards in geography and history are at an average level and this represents good achievement given the low attainment level when children start school. Co-ordination of the subjects is strong because of the knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinators and because there is regular and very effective

monitoring of teaching and learning. The co-ordinators have identified the need to develop assessment procedures, which, although satisfactory, could be more formalised, consistent and rigorous.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. Very few lessons were seen in art and design and design and technology. It is not possible therefore to make firm judgements about provision in these subjects. However, from evidence of talking to pupils and co-ordinators and examining work it is clear that the school is providing pupils with relevant and varied experiences and that standards are at an average level at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
73. From the examination of pupils' work, standards are average in **art and design**. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. There are good displays of pupils' art and design around the school and sketch books are used widely to improve techniques. In Years 3 and 4, for example, the pupils experiment with different tones in sketchbooks to show the contrast between light and dark through shading. Their ideas are used to complete striking portraits using good shading techniques as well as making sure the faces are well proportioned. Pupils' skills are developed further when they study the work of artist Modigliani and use chalk, paint or pencil to draw portraits that are not in proportion. Good use is made of the work of artists from all over the world and this not only improves ideas and techniques but also enriches the spiritual and cultural awareness of pupils. Computers are beginning to be used to extend opportunities in art and design but three-dimensional work, particularly sculptures and clay work, is not planned sufficiently into the curriculum.
74. In **design and technology** pupils' work shows that average standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers have worked hard to improve the weaker aspects of design and evaluation, although a tighter focus is needed to make measuring skills more accurate. Planning is good and national guidelines are adapted well to suit the school and provide a good range of products to design and make. High quality teaching is evident when pupils are challenged and enthused with stimulating activities and a strong emphasis is given to the designing and evaluating aspects of the subject as well as the making element, which pupils invariably enjoy more. Planning shows a good focus on food technology but opportunities are sometimes missed to use computers to enhance learning.
75. In both subjects the role of the co-ordinators is very good. This is because there is a regular, systematic and rigorous programme in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Co-ordinators have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and their action plans are clearly focused on improvements and raising standards. They are both very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject and this is reflected in the high quality of their own teaching. Formal assessment procedures are satisfactory but are not yet developed enough to be having the biggest possible impact on raising standards further.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and some is excellent.
- Pupils are currently achieving well.
- There has been significant improvement since the last inspection.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The use of computers to enrich pupils' learning is satisfactory but could be better.

Commentary

76. The new co-ordinator is used very effectively to teach music in all classes. In a very short time her challenging and stimulating teaching is beginning to enable standards and achievement to rise rapidly. All pupils achieve well. Although standards are average and similar to the last inspection there are significant signs of improvement in all elements of music. Pupils across the school are currently developing skills of appraisal, performing and composing at a good rate. Pupils are developing the ability to play a range of tuned and untuned instruments from different cultures with a real sense of rhythm and vibrancy. Pupils sing well, in tune and with gusto. The excellent resources at the school add to the quality of teaching and the sheer enjoyment of the pupils. During the inspection all classes were observed being taught by the co-ordinator. Teaching overall was very good and examples of outstanding practice were seen. An inspirational lesson observed in Years 5 and 6 demonstrated the skilful knowledge of the teacher in exploring rhythm and pulse and pupils' enthusiasm and keenness to learn. Most of the strong features of this lesson appeared in all other lessons observed.
77. The quality of co-ordination has improved since the last inspection and leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is making outstanding progress in her desire for the school to become a centre for the performing arts. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to broaden their musical experiences by joining a choir, samba band and recorder group. Some pupils are also learning the violin and guitar. All these clubs and classes are taken by the co-ordinator whose own skills extend to a high performance on many musical instruments. Whenever possible the pupils perform at concerts in the school and to a wider audience in the community. The co-ordinator's expert knowledge of the curriculum and very good assessment procedures are used effectively to plan lessons that are closely matched to pupils' needs. She has identified the need to include information and communication technology into the curriculum for music, as this is a weaker aspect, and she is in the process of purchasing programs to support and extend the teaching and learning.

Example of excellent practice

Pupils appraising music and then exploring rhythm and pulse

Time is set-aside at the beginning of the lesson for appraisal. The pieces are carefully chosen to provide interest and extend the pupils' repertoire of music. Pupils show high levels of motivation in expressing their ideas through discussions and drawings, because they know the teacher always values their contributions. She is skilled at raising levels of self-esteem and encouraging them to listen with attention to detail. Good links are also made with speaking and listening. When they move on to work on rhythm and pulse with instruments they become totally engrossed, because they are given exciting things to do. They are introduced to a new 'ostinato' beat, revise open and closed sounds and practise 'cyclic' patterns, using a wide range of exciting musical instruments including drums from different countries. As well as learning to play some very complex rhythms, the structure and language of music is taught at the same time in a very inventive way. By the end of the lesson pupils are using words like dynamics and tempo and timbre confidently and in the correct context. In this inspirational lesson, the pupils achieve very well.

Physical education

Provision is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in a varied range of physical activities although there are few opportunities for pupils to take part in outdoor adventure activities.
- Assessment is satisfactory but is not as effective as it could be.

Commentary

78. It is not possible to make a judgement of standards and achievement in all aspects of physical education. However, in dance and gymnastics standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and average in swimming by the end of Year 6. About a third of pupils in Years 5 and 6 swim confidently in the deep end using a variety of strokes, while many others swim the required 25 metres. The good teaching in these areas of learning enables pupils to achieve well. The accommodation and equipment are very good and a very well planned curriculum supports the learning well and especially the development of skills.
79. Teaching and learning are good. A great strength of the teaching is the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and teachers. This results in pupils making a great deal of effort and determination to show that they can improve their movements. They demonstrate this when, for example, practising different ways of jumping across a rope. Teachers also give good demonstrations or use pupil examples well to help the rest of the class improve their movements and in doing so set higher expectations. Work is well planned at different levels to take into account the mixed age classes. Music is carefully chosen for dance sessions to keep interest levels high. For example, the "Pink Panther" theme was chosen for a lesson in Years 4 and 5 to provide a very good stimulus for pupils to explore and extend their movements as detectives. Pupils often remain very focused and interested right to the end of lessons and work productively with a partner.

80. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is new to the subject but already through her monitoring of teaching and learning has identified areas for improvement. She has a very clear sense of purpose and plans to extend the opportunities for additional clubs such as judo next term. Gifted and talented pupils receive additional opportunities for physical education at the local high school. At the moment there are no planned opportunities for pupils to take part in outdoor education. Assessment procedures, although satisfactory, are not formal enough to consistently track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZEN EDUCATION

Provision is **very good**.

81. No opportunities were provided during the inspection to directly observe the teaching of this element of the curriculum, but scrutiny of books and discussions with pupils indicate that provision is very good and is not only promoted very well in the planned weekly lessons but also by the teachers throughout the school day. The many very good displays around the school, clearly demonstrate the high priority that is placed upon this aspect. "Playground detectives", for example, are out looking for good behaviour and friendships during the school break-times and a fictional situation of "Danny vandalising the garden" is used very effectively to examine attitudes and responses to unsociable behaviour in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to learn about the dangers of drugs and other substances and sex education is given both through the science curriculum and through visits from the school nurse.
82. There are many very good displays around the school which demonstrate the high priority that is placed upon personal, social and health education and citizenship This subject is not only promoted very well in the planned weekly lessons but also by the teachers throughout the school day.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	1
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	1
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	1
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	1
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	1
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4);

unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).