

INSPECTION REPORT

BIDDICK HALL INFANT SCHOOL

South Shields

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108682

Head teacher: Mrs M Edwards

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Bell
2456

Dates of inspection: 27th - 30th May 2002

Inspection number: 196340

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Galsworthy Road South Shields Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE34 9JD
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Cannon
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2456	Mrs J Bell	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			History	How well are pupils taught?
			Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
			Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	What should the school do to improve further?
			Equal opportunities	
11368	Mrs K Lee	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22545	Mrs V Hobson	Team inspector	English	
			Art and design	
			Geography	
24031	Mrs I Idle	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Religious education	
30346	Mrs P Lowrie	Team inspector	Design and technology	
			Music	
			Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a larger than average sized infant school situated in the Biddick Hall Estate in South Shields, South Tyneside. It admits pupils aged three to seven. The area suffers some disadvantage and there is high unemployment. The school has 299 pupils on roll; this includes 78 children who attend the nursery part-time. There are 116 boys and 105 girls in main school. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals (122) is very high and well above the national average. All pupils are from white, English speaking families. The children enter the nursery with a broad range of attainment, but many are mainly well below the level expected for their age, particularly in their language and social skills. The school has 65 pupils on the register of special educational needs; this is broadly average. Of the pupils on the register of special educational needs, 40 are at an early stage and 22 need the involvement of outside agencies. Two pupils have a statutory assessment and one has a statement of specific need; this matches the national average. There was a long period of uncertainty in the school following the sudden departure of the previous head teacher. Many staff, including the head teacher and deputy head teacher have been appointed within the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides an effective environment for learning that enables all pupils, whatever their ability or background to make a good start to their education. Although standards in English and mathematics are well below national averages the pupils achieve well when compared with schools with a similar intake of pupils. The head teacher provides effective leadership and the deputy head teacher, senior staff and governors provide good support in managing the school. All staff work well as a team and are committed to providing a high level of care and support that ensures that pupils' personal development is good. Teaching is often good and occasionally very good. This ensures that pupils develop good attitudes to school and learn effectively. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The head teacher provides a good lead in developing the school and the deputy head teacher, senior staff and governors provide good support to managing the school.
- There is a substantial amount of good, and sometimes very good teaching and teachers provide a good range of activities and experiences that promote pupils' eagerness to learn.
- Relationships in the school are very good and so pupils develop good attitudes to school and behave well.
- There is very good programme to promote pupils' personal and social development, and to encourage citizenship and a healthy lifestyle.
- All staff provide a high level of care and support to pupils. All pupils are valued as individuals and grow in self-esteem and confidence as they move through the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

What could be improved

- The standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The assessment of pupils' progress and the way this information is used on a day-to-day basis to build on what pupils' already know and match work more closely to their ability.

- The balance of time to subjects, particularly mathematics and religious education.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound improvement since the last inspection in 1997. It is not easy to recognise the school described in the last report. After the last head teacher left suddenly, there was a period of uncertainty that had an effect on the school's performance in the 2001 tests. A substantial number of staff, including the head teacher and deputy head teacher have been appointed in the last two years. Many of the new teachers are relatively inexperienced but have responded well to their roles and responsibilities. The school appointed a new co-ordinator for assessment and a lot of work has been done on improving the procedures for checking on pupils' progress and setting targets for their improvement. However, the current assessment and recording procedures are time consuming and produce a great deal of information that is not easy to manage. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and there are more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. The co-ordinator for ICT provides a good lead for staff and they have taken part in training and now teach ICT with greater confidence. The subject co-ordinators now have a clearly defined role and are managing effectively the developments in their subjects. Although many have only recently taken on these responsibilities they contribute well to school improvement and there is a useful cycle for monitoring each subject and identifying areas for improvement. Many governors are new but they are now linked to subjects and areas such as special educational needs. This initiative is improving their understanding of the work of the school. Teaching and learning are better and this is reflected in steadily improving standards. The school's accommodation has improved substantially with the creation of attractive library areas decorated by parents, a new entrance to the school and the resurfacing of the playground. Staffing issues have been resolved and the school is entering a period of stability. The enthusiasm and commitment of head teacher, staff and governors means the school has the potential to continue its planned improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
reading	D	E	E	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	D	C	D	B	
mathematics	B	E	E	B	

The school admits children with a broad range of ability but many have language, mathematical and social skills that are well below those expected for their age when they enter nursery. Children make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress throughout the foundation stage, and progress is often rapid in their personal and social development. However, by the time they start Year 1, the children's attainment is still below and often well below that expected in the language, literacy, and mathematical areas of learning. All pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress, whatever

their ability or background. Those with special educational needs are well supported and their progress is at least satisfactory given their low starting point.

The results of the 2001 tests for seven year olds show that the pupils' performance in reading was well below the national levels and writing was below average. In mathematics the standards were well below the national average. However, the school did well when compared with similar schools and standards were above average in all three subjects. The teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science were below the levels attained nationally but above similar schools. Too few pupils achieve the higher levels in these tests. The results for 2002 show a slight improvement in reading and writing but are similar to 2001 in mathematics. However, there is no national data yet available with which to compare.

In current work, standards of reading and writing are often well below those expected of seven year olds. In handwriting lessons they form letters well and write neatly but these skills are not sufficiently well transferred to other writing tasks. Standards in writing could be higher if pupils had more opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects. In speaking, standards are below average and many pupils have a very limited range of vocabulary. Listening skills are sound. Standards in mathematics are often well below those expected at the age of seven. This is mainly due to the insufficient time allocated to numeracy lessons to enable pupils to consolidate learning and practise their skills. Standards in current work in science are in line with those expected by the age of seven. More pupils could attain the higher levels if there was greater challenge for the average and more able pupils. The standards in ICT are at the level expected by the age of seven. Work in religious education does not meet the requirements of the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. This is because there is too little time available for the syllabus to be taught in sufficient depth.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils enjoy school and are keen to take advantage of what it offers them. They try hard and usually concentrate well on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils know what is expected of them and behave well, both in lessons and in the play areas.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and so pupils' personal development is good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance has been poor in the past but is satisfactory for the current year.

Most pupils attend school regularly and on time but there is a minority who are late or are often absent. The school works hard to improve attendance because of the detrimental effect on the progress of these pupils and its efforts are beginning to show an improvement with a reduction in the number of authorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and reception	Years 1 – 2
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Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good
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Teaching is mainly good and sometimes very good. There was some good teaching in all classes. There was a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching where lessons lacked depth and challenge. The teaching of children in the nursery and reception classes (the foundation stage) is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly for their personal and social development. These children make at least satisfactory progress and have a good start to their learning. Staff in the foundation stage have a good understanding of the needs of young children and provide a stimulating range of activities to encourage their learning. The teaching is mainly good and sometimes very good in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of English is sound. The basic skills of literacy are taught well in English lessons. Teachers have good strategies for teaching reading and their enthusiasm for books is passed to the pupils. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, but there are insufficient opportunities to teach literacy skills throughout the curriculum that would enable pupils to develop and practise their writing in other subjects. The teaching of mathematics is broadly satisfactory. However, the limited time given to numeracy lessons means that teachers cannot ensure that skills are practised or consolidated well enough. However, pupils have some opportunities to use numeracy skills to present their findings in science using graphs and tables and to use their measuring skills in design and technology. Teachers and support staff work well with pupils who have special educational needs to ensure that they learn as well as they can.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum covers all subjects. However, the high proportion of time given to English means that some subjects such as mathematics and religious education do not have sufficient time to consolidate pupils' learning. The requirements of the agreed syllabus are not fully met in religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils' needs are quickly identified and met well through the good work done by teachers and the effective teaching by support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The pupils have very good opportunities to express how they feel and learn to get on well together. The staff teach right from wrong and so moral development is good. The pupils' awareness of their own culture is well promoted but provision for multicultural awareness is more limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff know the pupils very well and give a high priority to their well being.

The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good. The school provides a good range of activities beyond the school day and enriches the curriculum through well-planned visits out of school. Procedures for monitoring personal development are good. Those used to monitor academic progress are sound but assessment procedures do not yet enable staff to make best use of the information gained from regular checks on pupils' progress in order to plan the next work. The school has established good partnerships with parents and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher provides a strong lead in the school's efforts to raise standards and she sets a very good example in the high level of care to pupils. A very able deputy, who plays a full part in bringing about school improvement, supports her. All of the staff work well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors work hard to support the school's planning for improvement. They are gaining a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses through links to subjects but this could be further developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is developing sound procedures to look closely at its performance. It identifies strengths and weaknesses and plans carefully to overcome any shortcomings.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Careful financial planning supports the priorities for improvement and the school seeks the best value in its expenditure.

The subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics visit other classrooms to monitor teaching and learning but there are few opportunities for the co-ordinators of other subjects to gain an overview of how their subjects are developing throughout the school. There are sufficient, well-qualified teachers and a good number of support staff, who work well to promote pupils' learning. The school accommodation is adequate for the current number of pupils. The building has been substantially improved and is kept spotlessly clean due to the hard work and commitment of the caretaker and cleaning staff. Resources are generally satisfactory for all subjects except design and technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school. • The school encourages children to work hard, to do their best and to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good and the children make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information on how well their children make progress. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection findings support all of the parents' positive views but not their concern over the information about their children's progress or the concerns about activities beyond lessons, which are good for pupils of this age range.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 When they enter the nursery, the children's attainment covers a broad range but is mainly well below the standards expected for this age group in language, mathematical and social skills. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good or very good in the nursery and reception classes so children make sound, and sometimes good, progress throughout their time in the foundation stage. The staff give a high priority to providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment that supports the children's personal and social development. This ensures that children make rapid progress in their personal and social development. Standards are beginning to improve throughout the foundation stage and the current intake has the potential to do well by the time they reach the end of the reception year. However, by the time they start Year 1, children's attainment is still often below and, for many, well below expectations for their age in their language and mathematical development. Many children have a limited range of experiences outside school and although the school provides a good range of activities and visits, their knowledge and understanding of the world about them is below that expected at the end of the reception year. Many children do well in their creative work and their physical skills are good; they are on course to exceed the learning goals identified for their age in these areas of learning by the time they reach the end of the reception year.

2 The results of the 2001 tests for seven year olds show that the pupils' performance in reading and mathematics was well below the national average and in writing was below average. However, the school does well when compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils and attains standards above these schools in all three subjects. Although teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science were below average, attainment was above that in similar schools. The performance of boys and girls was similar. The school has focused successfully on improving boys' performance in reading and writing through improved resources and initiatives to improve attitudes. The results for 2002 appear better in reading and writing and similar in mathematics, but there is no national data yet available with which to compare.

3 The last inspection described standards as broadly in line with those attained nationally but it is difficult to recognise the school from the last report. There have been changes in the headship, and a substantial number of staff, including the head teacher and deputy head teacher have been appointed in the last two years. The school's performance suffered due to the sudden departure of the head teacher and the subsequent upheaval following staff changes just before the tests resulted in a drop in the school's expected performance.

4 Pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time, whatever their ability or background. Current standards in reading and writing are often well below those expected of seven year olds. Standards in speaking are very low on entry and many children start school with very limited vocabulary. This improves due to the good work of staff who reinforce speaking and listening skills in all activities. However, many pupils find it hard to convey their ideas and show what they know because they do not have a sufficiently broad range of vocabulary. Listening skills are sound; pupils are interested in what others have to say and listen carefully to their teachers and each other. In reading, many pupils have difficulty in making predictions about what might happen or how the characters in the stories might feel and react in different situations. Although pupils write for a range of purposes and extra time is given to practising basics skills, pupils have too few planned opportunities to develop and practise their writing in other subjects. Their limited vocabulary does not enable them to write interesting and extended pieces of work. In handwriting lessons, pupils form letters carefully

and write neatly but few transfer these skills to other written work. The school allocates a substantial amount of extra time to English skills such as handwriting and spelling but the skills learned are not used well enough in other work to have the desired effect in raising standards. The extra time given to English limits the time available for other subjects such as mathematics and religious education, and this impacts on attainment.

5 Standards in mathematics are often well below those expected at the age of seven. This is mainly because there is too little time given to numeracy lessons and pupils have insufficient time to practise skills and consolidate learning. There is rarely enough time at the end of lessons for teachers to allow pupils to talk about ways they have tackled problems and to reinforce what has been learned. By the age of seven pupils are beginning to have knowledge of two, five and ten times tables. They can use a number line to complete simple addition and subtraction calculations. They work on whiteboards and are gaining confidence in talking about ways in which to solve problems. However, many lack skills in setting out their written work and often make mistakes because they have placed figures in the wrong columns. Most pupils know the names of simple two and three-dimensional shapes and can identify some of their properties. Few have an accurate understanding of reading the time other than to the hour and sometimes the half-hour. More able pupils are able to develop their use and understanding of mathematical terms. Pupils are learning to create and use block graphs; they use these with reasonable accuracy to show their findings in science.

6 Standards in science have improved due to good teaching and are now in line with those expected by the age of seven. A few pupils achieve above this level but the number could be higher if there was greater challenge for the average and more able pupils. The pace of some lessons is slow and pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. Pupils aged seven have a secure understanding of forces. Higher achievers clearly explain why and how to conduct a fair test and know that only one variant can be changed at any one time. Pupils describe accurately what friction is and predict confidently what they think might happen when testing different cars on a ramp. They understand a simple electric circuit and know what makes a bulb light. Pupils know which foods are good for health and which are not. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to record their investigations in their own words.

7 The standards in ICT have improved and are at the level expected by the age of seven. Pupils have sound basic keyboard skills and know the function of different keys, such as 'shift' and 'spacebar'. The sound teaching means that pupils are learning to work with new PCs and software. They work well and can open a program, find a file, type in text and print their work. They successfully use the mouse to control cursors and to locate icons that enable them to drag and position objects correctly.

8 Standards in religious education do not meet the levels required in the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. This is because there is too little time available for work to be taught in depth. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the stories of the Creation of the World and recall well the miracles performed by Jesus and the stories that He told His followers. They know about His death on the cross and also of the resurrection. Pupils gain an understanding of how stories such as 'The Good Samaritan' relate to their own lives. They make sound progress in their study of Judaism. However, they do not have enough opportunities to consolidate their work and many topics are not covered well enough.

9 Standards in other subjects are mainly at the level expected by the age of seven. Pupils' weak literacy skills mean that written work is often thin. Although their limited vocabulary means they find it difficult to talk about what they know, it is evident that many pupils have a greater knowledge and understanding than written work shows.

10 The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory in both the foundation stage and in Years 1 and 2. They are able to achieve similar rates of progress to other pupils because of the good quality of support they receive. The support staff are deployed well and provide effective support to pupils with special educational needs in both individual and group tasks.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils show good attitudes to their work and their life in school, which help them to make steady progress in their learning. These good attitudes have continued since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. Older pupils say that they enjoy school because they 'learn new things every day'. Parents agree that their children like school and are eager to come. Attendance is now broadly satisfactory. Most pupils attend school regularly and on time but there are a minority who are late or are often absent. The school works hard to improve attendance because of the detrimental effect on the progress of these pupils and its efforts are beginning to show an improvement with a reduction in the number of authorised absences.

12 Pupils of all ages try hard to listen carefully and concentrate well in lessons. For example, in a physical education lesson, pupils in a Year 2 class showed imagination when creating a dance based on the poem 'Puddles'. They pretended to jump into puddles and splash their feet, striving to remember and improve their sequence of movements. The best attitudes match the best teaching. Very occasionally, if the teaching is weaker, some pupils become restless but more often pupils' attitudes are still good.

13 The behaviour of pupils is good, both in and around the school. Pupils behave well in class, in assemblies and in the playground. This good behaviour is a result of the good management by class teachers and the consistent approach of all adults to the school's positive behaviour policy. Pupils and parents are confident that any isolated incidences of bullying are dealt with quickly and appropriately. There have been no exclusions.

14 Pupils are very friendly and have very good relationships with adults and with each other. They are very appreciative of the success of others and often celebrate achievement with spontaneous applause. Pupils can work well together in groups. For instance, in a geography lesson, pupils collaborated well with one pupil in each group acting as reader and scribe so that their partners could play a full part in finding out information on the village of Tocquara in Mexico. Younger pupils are able to take responsibility for their own activities and tidy away at the end of lessons. Older pupils know their duties as monitors and 'Playtime Friends' well and wear their tabards and yellow caps proudly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15 The quality of teaching is mainly good and sometimes very good. There was some good teaching in all classes. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection; there is a greater proportion of good and very good teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, work lacked depth and challenge and planning mainly listed tasks and gave no indication of what pupils would learn. Many teachers are relatively inexperienced but have settled well to their roles and make a significant impact on the pupils' learning. They work well together to share ideas and expertise and to identify and build on what works well.

16 Teaching is at least satisfactory in the foundation stage, with some that is good and occasionally very good. Staff in the foundation stage have a good understanding of the needs of young children and provide a stimulating range of activities to encourage their learning. All staff are very effective in successfully promoting children's personal and social development. They use a consistent approach, establish good routines and have clear expectations of behaviour. The nursery nurses and other well trained support staff work well with teachers to promote the children's achievement across all the areas of learning. They take a full role in teaching and work well with the children who need extra help.

17 Children in the foundation stage make at least satisfactory progress and have a good start to their learning. The teachers in the nursery and reception classes are beginning to plan closely together to implement national curriculum guidance in order to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning throughout the two-year programme for children in the foundation stage. Historically, the nursery worked independently and the school is beginning to strengthen the shared approaches to teaching and learning between the nursery and reception classes in order to ensure continuity for children as they move through the foundation stage.

18 Teaching is mainly good and sometimes very good in the Year 1 and 2 classes. Teachers build on the good work done in the foundation stage and this enables the pupils to continue to make good gains in their learning. The teachers know how to teach effectively the basic skills in literacy and numeracy and in many lessons they plan interesting work so that the pupils remain eager to learn. Staff have good approaches to the teaching of reading and pupils develop a sound range of strategies to help them tackle new words. Teachers read to the pupils in a lively and expressive manner to provide examples to encourage pupils to try to use expression when they read. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, and there has been some sound progress in developing opportunities for pupils to extend their vocabulary and write for different purposes. However, although literacy skills are taught and practised well enough through the medium of literacy lessons, they are not consistently well taught and reinforced in all other subjects. The teaching in mathematics is broadly satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved through their work in planning for and implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. The good pace at the start of lessons, when the pupils calculate mentally and try to solve problems, keeps them on their toes and maintains their interest very well. However, the time allocated for numeracy lessons is too short and teachers do not have enough time to consolidate pupils' learning; there is insufficient time left at the end of lessons for teachers to explore what pupils have learned and understood. Teachers do not consistently reinforce the correct setting out of written work and this impacts on pupils' accuracy. Teaching in religious education is satisfactory and it is the amount and content of what is taught that is impacting on pupils' learning and resulting in low standards.

19 In many lessons, teachers use a good range of teaching methods. They capture pupils' attention at the beginning of lessons, and as a result, pupils listen well and eagerly take part. For example at the beginning of a Year 1 science lesson the teacher's well-organised and resourced session involved all the pupils in a lively discussion about what makes things move. The teacher ensured that pupils knew what was expected of them and they responded well to opportunities to investigate how the movement of water powers a water wheel and to use push and pull forces to find how best to move small cars. There was a good balance between the direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to investigate for themselves.

20 Teachers develop very good relationships with pupils, which helps them to manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. In the most effective lessons the pace is good and so pupils concentrate well. For example, in a Year 2 games lesson the teacher introduced a range of activities of increasing challenge that enabled pupils to practise their throwing and catching until they could direct a ball accurately into a basket. His introduction of a 'parachute' promoted great excitement. He kept pupils attentive as they tried to move a ball around the parachute by working as a team to manipulate it and prevent the ball from dropping off.

21 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is satisfactory. A useful programme of in-service training has ensured that they are confident in planning and teaching all subjects. For example, a lot of work has been done to improve teachers' knowledge in ICT and this has enabled a substantial rise in standards.

22 The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is mainly good in both the foundation stage and in Years 1 and 2. Staff work hard to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem and for example, encourage them to persevere well with their reading and to complete the set tasks. They ensure that targets in the pupils' individual learning plans are regularly checked and updated. The support staff are deployed well and work effectively with these pupils both in class and when they withdraw them for extra help, either individually, or in small groups.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

23 The curriculum is broadly satisfactory and meets statutory requirements, although the requirements of the agreed syllabus are not fully met due to the limited time allocated to religious education. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is based on national guidance and ensures that they receive a good start to their education.

24 The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is broad and relevant. However, at present the school is not achieving a balanced curriculum. This is due to too much time being given to the teaching of English although this is not raising the standards pupils achieve. Too little time is identified for the teaching of mathematics and religious education and, as a result, standards in these subjects are not as high as they could be. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good and is a strength of the school. These aspects of the curriculum are reinforced in weekly lessons, in assemblies and in pupils' religious education lessons. The school has received the National Healthy Schools Award. It was the first school in the local authority to take part in the 'Pride' project, which tackled the difficult area of drugs with young children. During the four-week project, pupils took home a homework pack and studied this with their parents. Parents also attended a weekly training meeting to support the work with their child. Certificates were presented to both parents and pupils at a celebration assembly.

25 The planning for the curriculum is based largely on national guidelines and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Policies and schemes of work for all subjects are in place. All staff have useful long and medium term plans for each subject and these show clearly what is to be taught and help to ensure that skills are developed in a progressive manner.

26 The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and many Year 2 pupils take part in a range of activities. Parents feel that these support their children's personal and social development. Activities take place in six-week blocks and include fitness, French, music, mathematical games, art and gardening. A breakfast club for Year 2 pupils has been trialled for six weeks and the school feels that this has had a very positive impact on learning. Plans are in place to offer this to more pupils during the next academic year.

27 All pupils are included in all aspects of school life. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The pupils' individual learning plans are well matched to what they need to learn and are reviewed and updated regularly. Classroom support assistants and specialist teachers support pupils with special educational needs very well. This enables them to make sound contributions in whole class sessions and supports the development of their self-esteem.

28 The curriculum is extended and enriched by visits and visitors. Pupils visit the local Catholic Church when learning about 'special places'. The nurse, firemen and police visit school to talk about their work. Pupils' literacy skills are enhanced by the visit of a storyteller. Representatives from

Sunderland Football club visit the school to help pupils develop their game skills. The school has a good link with a local company and this has resulted in a group of Mexican visitors coming into school to talk about their music and special events in their lives. Year 2 pupils shared what they had learned in geography about the life and language of people in Mexico with the visitors. Parents and governors work with pupils in school and 'The Friends' of the school raise money to pay for transport to take pupils on educational visits. Pupils visit old people in the local community to sing at Christmas and take gifts to them from their Harvest celebrations.

29 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This aids their learning in many areas of school life and is an improvement since the last inspection.

30 The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development through stories told in assemblies that deal with aspects of behaviour and personal feelings. For example, pupils have time to reflect on their own feelings of belonging to a family, or their school, after listening to the story of 'The Prodigal Son'. Pupils show a reverent attitude in assembly. Religious education makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development through pupils' studies of the life of Jesus and other faiths. Pupils have opportunities to listen to music and reflect on the feelings it inspires. The school makes good use of the school grounds and environment to enable pupils to respond to the wonders of the natural world about them.

31 The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Systems are in place to encourage good work and behaviour, such as reward stickers and pupils are proud to wear badges showing that they have achieved good work in lessons. Class rules are displayed in each class and are used well to remind pupils of their expected behaviour. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and teachers act as good role models. The 'Playground Friends' scheme works well to support those pupils who have no one to play with at break times. Personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons contribute considerably to the development of moral and social skills. Pupils work together well in pairs and small groups, they are able to resolve their differences easily and negotiate. They listen well to others and value their ideas. Opportunities for pupils to talk about their feelings encourages more hesitant pupils to gain confidence to share their ideas in a class group and this raises their self-esteem. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to share their feelings of what makes them feel happy and suggest good wishes when wearing the 'Wizard Wonderful' hat. For example, 'I wish that all my friends are happy'. Pupils consider the needs of others and are most willing to help others with their work.

32 The school's provision for pupils to learn about their own culture is good but opportunities for learning about other cultures and traditions could be further developed. Staff invite visitors into the school to enable them to share their interests and expertise. For example, the nurse, firemen and police visit school to talk about their work. Pupils' literacy skills are enhanced by the visit of a storyteller. The school has also had visitors from Mexico, who talked about their music and special events in their lives. Pupils are involved in visits linked to topics studied in history and geography and visit the theatre and local museums. There are some well-established links with the local churches but there are few links with other faith groups. In religious education and geography there are some opportunities for pupils to be more aware of other cultures. However, more could be done to promote pupils' understanding of Britain's multi-cultural society.

33 The school makes appropriate use of its community links to extend pupils' education and personal development. It is involved in regular fund raising for charity. Pupils visit local senior citizens and the choir performs for them at Harvest time and Christmas. Visitors such as members of the police and fire brigade come into school regularly to share their experience with pupils. The school takes part in local initiatives to promote the health and welfare of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 This is a very caring school, which is meeting its aim to create a happy environment and its motto on the school badge of 'Happy School Days'. There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety which show an improvement since the previous inspection. The daily organisation of the school takes account of the very clear health and safety arrangements. There is very good supervision of pupils at lunchtime and playtime and the caretaker keeps thorough records

of risk assessments and fire precautions. Child protection procedures are appropriate and effective. The head teacher makes sure all staff have the relevant information. The very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) promotes pupils' personal development, encouraging healthy living and pupils' awareness of safety issues.

35 There is good provision for pupils' personal support and guidance. All staff have very good relationships with pupils who respond well to the praise and rewards given regularly to celebrate their efforts and promote their self-esteem and confidence. Year 2 pupils commented that one of the best things about school is that 'the teachers are kind and friendly'. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is based on the staff's good knowledge of their pupils, which is shown in the perceptive comments in the annual reports to parents on their children's progress. The good behaviour in school is a result of the very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for combating bullying. All staff have high expectations that pupils will behave well and encourage pupils to follow the clear rules, which they know well. Parents are content that the school deals appropriately with any incidences of bullying. Pupils are convinced that these are rare but know to tell an adult or 'ignore it or walk away' if they have a problem.

36 The school tries very hard to promote good attendance and to improve the overall level by careful monitoring and a very good range of initiatives designed to make parents aware of the importance of the regular attendance of their children. Through the use of a computerised system, the school quickly notices patterns of absence and takes appropriate action. The weekly 'Attendance Cup' is awarded to the best class and displayed prominently in the hall. The school sends letters home each term to compliment those parents whose children have had very good attendance and also to remind those parents whose children have been absent regularly that they are missing aspects of the curriculum and may fall behind in their work. The school's efforts are beginning to have an effect as attendance levels for the current year show a small improvement.

37 The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are thorough and provide the staff with detailed information about pupils' achievement across the subjects. The school has made good improvement in this aspect of its work since the previous inspection. However, the recording of pupils' attainment is difficult to manage, as there are so many individual records. For example, in order to identify the important areas in which Year 2 pupils need to improve their written work it is necessary to read their individual files. The information provided by these records cannot be used quickly and effectively to guide lesson planning from day to day. Teachers know their pupils well and therefore the match of work is generally satisfactory. However, teachers evaluate their lessons inconsistently and do not always include notes about pupils' achievement with particular skills or knowledge. They may miss trends in their class' understanding of a topic, which makes it difficult to make appropriate changes to a scheme of work for a particular subject. The school checks the attainment of boys and girls to see if there are any differences and has made changes to resources to encourage boys to read. It has yet to analyse the test questions thoroughly to identify overall trends in pupils' understanding and make appropriate changes to a scheme of work for a particular subject. Teachers' marking is often supportive and but in many classes provides pupils with very little information about how they can improve in particular subjects or what they have done well.

38 The assessment and monitoring of the progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The deputy head teacher co-ordinates this area and ensures that pupils' individual plans for learning are informative and specific. Record keeping is detailed and records are carefully maintained. Good links with external agencies ensure there is substantial additional support available. The school employs extra support staff; they work very well with these pupils to promote their learning and raise their confidence and self-esteem.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39 The school promotes a good partnership with parents, who are supportive of all aspects of its work. They feel that their children are happy and so want to learn. They appreciate the welcome they receive and feel comfortable in approaching the school if they have a problem. Parents are consulted and kept well informed of pupils' progress through parent consultations and informal discussions.

40 The inspection team agrees with parents that the school shows a clear commitment to involving them in the life and work of the school and so help to raise standards. This is shown in the good appointment of a teacher to be responsible for parental liaison and the many opportunities that the school provides to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. For example, the school arranges regular workshops, which offer guidance on literacy and numeracy so that parents get to know how they can best help their children at home. The many parents who attend the workshops and also listen regularly to their children read at home help to promote pupils' progress. The school also provides a good range of homework packs, which are used well by pupils and parents. Parents also make a good impact in school by helping in classrooms, which they are encouraged to do. They have been very involved in the redecoration of the library into a bright and stimulating resource. This all helps to raise standards and to promote the links between home and school.

41 Parents are also pleased with the information provided by the school. The inspectors agree that this is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. Parents are kept well informed of school matters and events through the friendly newsletters and the notice boards throughout the school. For instance, in the nursery, the parents' notice board tells parents of the songs and rhymes for the month so they can repeat them at home. The annual reports on pupils' progress paint a clear picture for parents on how well their children are doing in each subject and also on their personal development, including their rate of attendance and comments such as 'well done' or 'could do better!'

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42 The leadership and management of the school are good and have been maintained since the last inspection despite many changes in the school. The previous head teacher left very suddenly and many staff also left the school. The current head teacher has been in post a year and the deputy head teacher has been in post two terms. Many teachers and support staff have been appointed within the last two years. The head teacher has worked very well with staff to develop good teaching and learning, and to raise standards. She provides a very strong lead for the school in establishing the very good ethos that ensures the high quality care and support for all pupils. The head teacher is supported by a very able deputy head teacher and together with the staff, they make a strong team with a clear commitment to bringing about improvement. The school has thought carefully about how to improve standards and particularly how to meet the needs of all its pupils in order to improve their learning. The head teacher and staff have worked hard to identify where it needs to improve and the school's improvement plan provides a useful framework to plan, implement and monitor the effectiveness of developments. For example, the current priorities are all relevant and based on a clear awareness of the school's needs. They rightly include priorities such as raising standards in literacy and numeracy, greater use of ICT in all subjects and the more effective use of assessment to plan future work.

43 Given the many changes in staffing and the resulting uncertainty this caused, it is difficult to recognise the school in the light of what was described in the last inspection. However, although many staff are new and relatively inexperienced they are working well to develop their new roles and responsibilities. The head teacher, staff and governors have worked hard and the school has made

satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Some areas, such as assessment and the role of the co-ordinators still need further work, but the school knows what it has to do and has identified these areas for development.

44 Most subject co-ordinators have recently taken on their responsibilities but all work with enthusiasm and are already getting to know what works well in their subjects and where there is a need to improve. They have opportunities to analyse other teachers' planning for their subjects and there is useful informal discussion. The co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy have had time to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the work in these areas by visiting other classrooms. These opportunities are not yet in place for other subject co-ordinators and this is needed if they are to give a lead in developing their subjects. This is especially important since many of the co-ordinators are new to their role. The head teacher and deputy head teacher have monitored teaching and learning and given useful feedback to teachers on their work. Everyone in the school is clear about the part they play in taking the school forward. However, teachers evaluate their lessons inconsistently and do not always include notes about pupils' achievement with particular skills or knowledge. The head teacher and co-ordinators for mathematics and religious education are aware of the problems caused by the limited time available for these subjects and the school is reviewing the curriculum to resolve this issue. Given the short time in post for the head teacher, deputy head teacher and many co-ordinators there has been little opportunity for all their identified improvements to be tackled.

45 Staff are well supported. The professional development of the teachers is well planned and takes into account the school's priorities and individual needs. Training for teaching staff is linked to good effect to the school's well-managed programme of performance management.

46 The governors are very supportive of the school. They are kept well informed by the head teacher and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the requirements in the agreed syllabus for religious education are not yet fully met due to the limited time available for this subject. Governors work hard, through their committees and visits, to check on the school's provision and to help it improve. Many governors are newly appointed and the link of individual governors to the main subjects and special educational needs is providing the governing body with a good overview of the curriculum. The school's financial planning is good and specific grants are used efficiently. The head teacher and governors seek the best value in their expenditure. The head teacher, senior staff and governors track the school's progress towards the targets set for improvement and considers what value has been received from the money that it has spent. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The school secretary provides high quality support for the daily administration of the school and uses computer systems well to support the work of the school.

47 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very effective leadership. The deputy head teacher took on this role after his recent appointment and he has worked hard to update the school's provision to meet the requirements of the new code of practice for these pupils. He provides clear guidance to class teachers and support staff. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the pupils in his care and carefully monitors the work of support staff to ensure provision is of a constantly good quality. He works well with outside agencies to ensure pupils' needs are met. Pupils with learning problems are identified early and those on the special educational needs register have well written and useful individual education plans that indicate clear targets. The school has installed a good computer program that helps class teachers to write and monitor these plans. The governors have wisely decided to employ a large team of support staff to work with teachers to improve pupils' learning opportunities. They bring many individual strengths to the school; they have a clear commitment to the education and well being of all their pupils.

48 The school has sufficient, well-qualified teachers to meet the requirements of the curriculum and the age range of the pupils. The teachers are deployed effectively and regularly undertake in-service training to keep up-to-date in new initiatives and willingly share their expertise with colleagues. A supportive and caring environment permeates the school and year group teams plan their work together and support each other well. This helps new teachers to settle in quickly. The school has useful systems in place to ensure newly qualified teachers are well supported. The school is well served by a team of hard working support staff who know what is expected of them and who are very effective in helping individuals and small groups.

49 The building and grounds are of an adequate size to enable the teaching of the curriculum. They are well kept and maintained by the conscientious caretaker and cleaning staff who have an obvious pride in their work. The surface of the small play area has been renewed since the time of the previous inspection and is now smooth and well marked out for games such as hopscotch, which pupils enjoy. Classrooms and other areas are bright and stimulating, designed to promote pupils' self-esteem. For example, the entrance and administration area creates a welcoming atmosphere with displays of pupils' writing and artwork on the theme of 'We are all special'. Pupils are proud of the new attractive and exciting library, which is beautifully decorated in a jungle theme to promote their interest in books and reading. Parents helped in this work and many parents praised the environment of the school and felt it motivated their children to learn.

50 Resources are generally satisfactory for all subjects except design and technology. While there are sufficient consumable items such as wood and glue, there are insufficient tools for pupils to use. This means that they have fewer opportunities to develop their skills in making and improving their designs. The school has improved the library area providing a good range of books at an appropriate level for the pupils. These cover all subjects and include cultural stories from other countries. There are sufficient computers and a satisfactory range of programs to cover the current curriculum needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 In order to further improve pupils' progress and attainment, the head teacher, staff and governors should: -

- (1) Improve standards in English by: -
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop spoken vocabulary in all subjects and ensuring that they are encouraged to reply in sentences;
 - providing more opportunities in all subjects for pupils to use descriptive language;
 - ensuring that pupils transfer the good writing skills learned in handwriting lessons to their other written work;
 - enabling pupils to develop and practise their writing skills in other subjects;
 - supporting pupils' spelling through the provision of banks of commonly used words and simple dictionaries.
(Paragraph numbers 4, 18, 69, 72, 73, 74, 88, 122, 123)

- (2) Improve standards in mathematics by: -
 - allocating a sufficient amount of time to numeracy lessons so that work is covered in enough depth and enables pupils to consolidate and extend their learning;
 - enabling pupils to be more accurate by ensuring that they order and set out their work correctly and neatly.
(Paragraph numbers 5, 18, 44, 77, 80, 81, 82)

- (3) Improve standards in science by: -
 - raising the achievement of average and above average pupils by ensuring that they are sufficiently challenged;
 - improve the presentation and ordering of work in science so that it is not mixed up with other subjects in the same book making it difficult for pupils to see what they have achieved;
 - enabling pupils to use their writing skills to set out their own findings.
(Paragraph numbers 6, 18, 83, 85)

- (4) Improve systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress by: -
 - making sure that the planned review results in systems that are manageable;
 - ensuring that the information gained from the day-to-day assessments enable teachers to plan work that builds more precisely on what pupils have already learned;
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about what they are going to learn, how well they are doing and how they can improve;
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work provides information on what they do well and guidance on how to improve their work.
(Paragraph numbers 37, 43, 74, 75, 83, 86, 102)

- (5) Review the balance of time to all subjects and ensure that: -
 - there is greater depth and breadth to teaching and learning in mathematics and religious education;
 - the high proportion of time given to English is evaluated to ensure that it raises standards in literacy.
(Paragraph numbers 5, 8, 18, 23, 24, 44, 77, 80, 81, 119, 122, 123, 124)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	6
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	28	20	4	0	0
Percentage	2	18	43	31	6	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	260
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	122

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	56

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	35	33	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	30	29
	Girls	25	31	30
	Total	50	61	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74% (78%)	90% (96%)	87% (92%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	26	29
	Girls	28	29	32
	Total	58	55	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85% (89%)	81% (89%)	90% (90%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	143
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	24.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	609,076
Total expenditure	637,191
Expenditure per pupil	£2,910
Balance brought forward from previous year	£59,406
Balance carried forward to next year	£31,291

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	299
Number of questionnaires returned	129

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	32	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	44	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	43	11	2	1
The teaching is good.	65	31	2	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	36	12	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	27	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	30	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	50	39	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	68	25	1	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	38	1	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	25	9	5	14

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52 The provision for children in the foundation stage (nursery and the reception classes) is good. This is similar to the last inspection, although judgements then were mainly concerned with the nursery and did not include the reception classes. In the past the nursery operated as a separate unit and the reception classes were included in Key Stage 1. The planning in the foundation stage now takes account of national guidance for this age group but more needs to be done to ensure that stages of learning are more clearly identified and built upon in the reception classes. There are useful opportunities for joint planning across the foundation stage and staff in the nursery and reception classes have begun to work together to develop a programme to underpin learning throughout the whole foundation stage. This is a positive initiative and will enable the school to provide a continuous programme of learning that can be built upon as children move through the nursery and reception classes. The nursery teacher is the co-ordinator for the foundation stage and has a good understanding of what needs to be done to continue to develop the curriculum for these children.

53 The nursery nurses and classroom assistants are deployed well and take a full and effective role in teaching. They make an effective contribution to the children's learning. Children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and supported well by class teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants. This effective support means that these children make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their earlier learning.

54 The children in the foundation stage are making a good start to their learning through the good range of experiences that underpin their future learning and ensure they are prepared well for transfer to Year 1 at the end of the reception year. When they enter the nursery, the children's attainment covers a broad range, but is often well below what can be expected for children of this age in all areas of learning. Teaching is at least satisfactory and occasionally good or very good in both the nursery and reception classes. This ensures that the children achieve well in relation to their low starting point and make at least satisfactory progress. Standards are beginning to improve throughout the foundation stage and the current intake has the potential to do well by the time they reach the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

55 This area of learning is promoted very well and is taught effectively throughout the foundation stage. This ensures that the children gain in confidence and feel comfortable in expressing their ideas and feelings. Many children are settled well into the routines of their class base and move confidently both indoors and at outdoor play. By the time they reach the end of the reception year their personal and social development is often very good and they transfer confidently to Year 1. All staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively and the children are achieving well. Staff are caring, supportive and encourage the children's efforts and achievements. They listen with genuine interest to what children have to say. For example, at the end of a session the nursery teacher chooses children to talk about what they have done and, although many children have limited vocabulary, she encourages them to talk within their group and uses effective questioning to extend their answers.

56 Children build trusting relationships with all the adults in the foundation stage and this helps them to understand other people's points of view. From starting in the nursery, children are encouraged to show initiative and to be increasingly independent. They respond well, work together as

friends, share equipment with each other and are learning to tidy equipment away. They do their best to dress themselves independently after physical education lessons and settle readily into daily routines, such as milk time. Children in the nursery make choices from activities listed on a 'planning board' and many parents stay at the start of each session to help their children to become independent in choosing. In a reception class, children gained independence as they were taught how to carry mats in their physical education lesson. By the end of the reception year children can work and play independently and in groups. They share sensibly and have learned to take turns. The staff manage children very well; from starting in the nursery children are taught the difference between right and wrong and as a result, behaviour is mainly very good. Children make good progress in their personal and social development because of the good routines and clear expectations of the staff. Relationships are very warm and supportive and the staff are beginning to work well as a team now that the foundation stage is established. In a reception class, children have identified and made pictures of 'Special Friends'. Staff forge good partnerships with parents by inviting them to visit with their children before they start school and to help in the classrooms if they wish to do so. This helps children settle well in school. Teachers keep detailed records of the personal, social and emotional development of individual children, which are used very effectively to ensure they are well supported in this area of learning. This is particularly effective for those who have special educational needs or who are immature.

Communication, language and literacy

57 These areas are often taught well in both the nursery and reception classes and so children achieve well from their low starting point on entry. Children's communication skills are poor on entry to nursery and staff in both the nursery and reception classes work hard to develop these, but they are still often below, and sometimes well below what is expected for their age at the end of the reception year. Learning experiences are planned carefully to promote and extend children's talking in particular. There are good role-play facilities in the nursery. For example, when children were playing in the 'castle' and 'I'm the king' said one child 'only kings and princesses can come in here'. However, most of the nursery children are still communicating using simple words or gestures and do not readily engage in conversation. The vocabulary of many reception children remains restricted and narrow.

58 Children enjoy books. For example, in the nursery they listened attentively to the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. The teacher reminded the children that they had baked gingerbread the day before and one child recalled 'We put that sticky stuff in'. The teacher built well on the children's recall of their baking session to lead into the story. Although few remembered all the events they could join in enthusiastically with the refrain, 'can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man'. In the reception classes, some children know that an author writes books and can identify the title. Staff throughout the foundation stage reinforce letter sounds in all activities and through songs and rhymes. Reception children sometimes match objects to the correct initial letter sound but they need lots of prompting and support. In a well-planned lesson in a reception class, the teacher motivated children well by letting them choose where to go on an imaginary adventure. They chose the beach and the teacher worked well to reinforce 'ch' sounds as the children repeated 'chuff, chuff' as their 'train' moved. Children eagerly volunteered words such as 'chocolate', 'chips' and 'chicken' but many confused the sound and suggested words such as 'jam' and 'shoot'.

59 Children's writing skills are reinforced through play activities in the nursery and staff encourage them to 'write' captions for pictures and to 'write' lists, messages and letters in role-play; these contain a few recognisable letters. These skills are built upon in the reception classes, and children copy their name accurately and many can write their Christian name independently. Teachers write sentences dictated by the children and a few can identify that they 'need a capital letter to start

the sentence'. Average and less able children complete sentences with help from staff. For example, children in one reception class were well supported by a classroom assistant as they used picture/word cards to create 'silly' sentences. Most are beginning to copy under adults' writing with increasing accuracy although letters are not often formed well. Few write independently.

Mathematical development

60 The children's mathematical development is often well below that expected for their age when they start in the nursery. Teaching is at least satisfactory throughout the foundation stage and so children make sound progress over time. Staff ensure that mathematical learning is fun and children respond well and enjoy their activities. In the nursery, staff reinforce counting in all activities and children learn to match numbers to objects up to five. In the reception classes, teachers are beginning to prepare children for the numeracy lessons in Year 1 and use the time at the start of lessons to work with the whole class on counting in different ways. Although standards are below, and frequently well below those typically found by the end of the reception year, many children can count securely to ten and count back to zero. However, not all children can confidently order numbers from one to 10. When, for example, they order sets of objects from the smallest set to the largest, they often struggle to get them in the correct sequence. They recognise coins but few have an understanding of their values. Staff in both nursery and reception classes ensure that children have good opportunities to become familiar with coins through role-play, such as in the 'Pet Shop' and 'Biddick Market'. Teachers introduce practical problems well and enable children to use toys to reinforce their learning. For example, the teacher used toy cars to enable the children to count and to learn basic subtraction.

61 Children are beginning to learn mathematical terms such as 'larger than' and 'smaller than' and are gaining an understanding of position as they learn terms such as 'above', 'below' and 'under'. They can look at objects of different sizes and know which is the longest. In the nursery, children ordered three plastic bears according to size and recognised 'large' and 'small'; one child quickly volunteered that the other bear was of 'medium' size. Children in both nursery and reception classes learn to recognise colours and shapes within their activities. In the nursery, children make collections of objects of a chosen colour such as red and this is changed regularly so they become aware of the prime colours. Children begin to recognise simple two-dimensional shapes such as circle and square by identifying them in games and construction materials. Reception children are beginning to extend their learning and recognise some two and three-dimensional shapes such as a triangle, oblong, cube and sphere. In one class, mathematics was linked well to creative work as children coloured in pictures of butterflies and tried to make each wing symmetrical.

62 Throughout the foundation stage, teachers ensure children have opportunities to use mathematical skills and knowledge in activities, such as songs and number rhymes. Children use play-dough to make recognisable two-dimensional shapes and use large three-dimensional cylinders, cones and cubes to build towers. Teachers ensure lots of repetition and try to find different ways to promote particular ideas. They use classroom displays well to reinforce number recognition and children use number games, role-play and counting and matching games on the computer to improve their knowledge of numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63 Teaching is at least satisfactory in this area of learning throughout the foundation stage. This ensures that children make sound, and sometimes good, progress from their low starting point. The children have often had a limited range of experiences before starting school and most are likely to be below the early learning goals identified for their age by the end of the reception year. Teachers plan a good range of interesting activities and visits, linked to topics each term. These include visits to the church, local shops and parks. Visitors are also invited into school to share interests and expertise. Many children make sound progress in using ICT and work confidently with the computer programs. They have sound basic skills and know how to move objects on screen using the mouse to move cursors or drag items into position. For example, children in the nursery moved shoes on screen to match them to the feet on a caterpillar. Children are beginning to work sensibly in pairs and to help

each other. In the reception class, a few children can select the option they need to access the game they prefer from a simple menu.

64 In both classes children have opportunities to bake and this reinforces their scientific understanding as they describe how heat changes the cake mixture or dough. For example, children in the nursery made gingerbread men and could recall the way the dough became darker and firm. Teachers plan for a sound range of activities linked to the natural world and use the school's grounds to good effect to reinforce learning. In the current topic on 'minibeasts' many children in the reception classes can recall the stages in the life of a butterfly. Staff take good account of children's experiences at home and out of school and in the nursery children dress up as 'Bob the Builder' and work well together in their construction area to build houses and garages.

65 Children learn how some things change over time as they grow plants. In the reception classes children know what plants need to grow and observe and check their growth. They work with their teacher to learn to use information books. They learn about how they have changed since they were babies and know differences such as walking and talking. Children in both classes check on the weather and help their teachers to record this each day.

Physical development

66 The teaching in the foundation stage is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good in outdoor play and in formal sessions in the hall. Many children make good progress in their physical skills. They are likely to meet the expectations for their age by the end of the reception year. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children use tools appropriately when they paint, join objects together and cut shapes from paper. Adults give children time to persevere when they find the handling of some materials challenging and guide them well in developing and practising their skills in cutting, folding and sticking. Outdoor activities are well planned to develop the children's co-ordination and balance. Support staff are deployed well and work effectively to encourage the children who are less confident. In the nursery, outdoor play is organised well but there are few opportunities for reception children to have similar experiences. The school is currently planning to further develop the outdoor area to enable all children in the foundation stage to have regular access to outdoor play.

67 The children in the reception class have regular opportunities to have physical education lessons in the school hall. They are confident and used space well as they walked, ran, hopped and skipped, changing speed and direction at a signal. The staff supervise physical activities closely and are careful to impress upon the children that they need to take turns and behave sensibly and safely. However, in one dance lesson there were few opportunities for reception children to develop their movements as they interpreted the music. The teacher spent too long organising and ensuring that children were sitting exactly right, and the slow pace of the lesson meant children stayed still for too long. In a good gymnastics lesson, children showed good control and balanced well as they walked along benches. The teacher intervened effectively to challenge the children 'I want to see some good curled shapes on this apparatus'. She reinforced the children's independence by enabling them to take part in getting out and returning mats and small equipment.

Creative development

68 The teaching and learning in both the nursery and reception class are at least satisfactory and children are well on course to reach the goals set for their ages in most aspects of this area of learning, with a few children who could attain more highly by the end of the reception year. Staff in the nursery plan a range of activities through which the children explore different media, such as when they mix different coloured paints, or roll and flatten clay and play dough. Children play imaginatively to create their own games with small figures and models. They use large and small blocks and other construction materials and plan and make buildings such as castles, houses and garages. Reception children have regular opportunities to paint and make careful observational drawings. They make

choices of suitable materials to create collages such as their current work on 'minibeasts'. They enjoy music making and can tap out simple rhythmic patterns. They know many songs by heart and sing tunefully. The children in the foundation stage enjoy their music making and join enthusiastically in simple action songs and there are good opportunities in both classes for the children to act out roles and create imaginary scenes.

ENGLISH

69 Children arrive in school with very low attainment in English and make satisfactory progress throughout the school. By the age of seven they achieve below average standards in speaking and standards in reading and writing are well below those expected for their age. This is below that identified in the last inspection. The current year group has more pupils with special educational needs and this group of pupils entered school with very low language and literacy skills. The many changes of staff also disrupted their learning. In writing their limited vocabulary is insufficient for them to be able to produce interesting and extended pieces of work. When reading stories many pupils are unable to predict confidently what will happen or how people might feel in different situations using a range of vocabulary.

70 Pupils' listening skills are generally satisfactory. Teachers encourage pupils to listen to each other's contributions in discussions. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and join in with repeating refrains such as in 'The Pig in the Pond'. This reinforces their understanding of speech patterns. Pupils are very enthusiastic and enjoy listening to stories and poems. Their limited vocabulary and their reluctance to speak in full sentences limits their speaking skills. Often pupils answer a question with a word or phrase, which teachers model as a full sentence. However, teachers rarely ask pupils to answer in full sentences using the vocabulary that is most appropriate for the subject.

71 Pupils use phonics well to sound out words when they are reading and writing. Well-planned programmes carried out by effectively trained support staff enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress with their knowledge of letter sounds. Pupils with higher attainment use their knowledge of sounds to read more difficult words such as 'winding' and 'touched' but do not always read the text for sense or correct themselves when they misread a word. However, most pupils enjoy reading and are very enthusiastic about the authors they study in literacy lessons. They are particularly proud of their new library and enjoy sessions spent choosing books. Higher attaining pupils are confident about using the index and contents to find information in non-fiction books while other pupils have difficulty describing how to find a particular book for a topic.

72 Pupils regularly take home spellings and learn spellings during the school day. However, despite this, correct spelling does not transfer to their written work. Even higher attaining pupils often spell common words incorrectly such as 'his' and 'me' because they do not have prompts or simple dictionaries easily available. This is a missed opportunity to reinforce reading and writing skills and help pupils to produce higher quality work. Teachers use frequent and regular time to develop pupils' handwriting skills. All pupils use a style that will lead more easily to a joined up style. However, although they write carefully during handwriting lessons this rarely transfers into their other written work. Presentation is often poor with many spelling mistakes. This combined with limited descriptions and a lack of interesting sentence construction means that pupils' writing is well below average.

73 The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' speaking skills through drama and role-play. The school has identified this as an area for further development and a new scheme of work to support teachers has been prepared. However, the school does not formally identify the way in which pupils use their literacy skills in other subjects. Teachers do not identify new or essential vocabulary in their planning.

Therefore pupils do not hear and use new vocabulary frequently during lessons and there are missed opportunities to reinforce words and their meanings. Some teachers have a tendency to restrict their vocabulary. For instance, in an art and design lesson the teacher talked about jewels without giving pupils the opportunity to explore the names of different kinds of jewels such as rubies and emeralds. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to draft and edit work for display but this does not include using a simple dictionary to spell words correctly or to find alternative words. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social skills using stories. The story of 'Mucky Mabel' helps pupils to reflect on their own manners while role-play for 'Pig in the Pond' gives pupils good opportunities to think about expressions in the speech and body language. Teachers make good use of computers in the classroom to enable pupils to use word processing to support their writing.

74 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall although there were some good and very good lessons. Pupils and teachers have good relationships that encourage pupils to take part in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and they reinforce class rules frequently with praise and team awards. Good classroom routines help pupils to settle to work. Teachers give clear instructions, which supports all pupils in achieving their tasks, especially those with emotional or behavioural difficulties who may be easily distracted. However, there are too few reminders about the presentation of their work and teachers' expectations are not high enough. When marking teachers give insufficient attention to the quality of pupils' work. Common words that are frequently misspelled and untidy writing is accepted. Marking is positive but gives pupils little understanding of how to improve. Teachers always display the purpose of the lesson but do not always refer to it sufficiently to ensure pupils understand what they are going to learn. Where the expected outcome is referred to at the end of lesson pupils have a good understanding of what they have learned. For instance, at the end of a Year 1 lesson the teacher reinforced the work of the previous day about capital letters and checked on the pupils' knowledge of how to use them.

75 Assessment procedures are good. The school uses a range of tests and assesses pupils' work regularly. However, although the system is thorough it is unmanageable and teachers have too much paperwork to file to be able to use it effectively to plan appropriate lessons for their pupils. This is because teachers record every assessment for each child on an individual sheet that they file into an individual profile. This also makes the monitoring of pupils' progress more difficult as the files contain a large amount of information. Although teachers are setting targets for lessons pupils do not yet have individual targets for literacy. This combined with the limited amount of helpful marking showing pupils how to improve means that pupils have a very limited idea of their own progress. Some records are underdeveloped and do not include higher levels of achievement. This means inexperienced teachers are not supported sufficiently well when identifying the higher attainers and their achievements.

76 Leadership in the subject is satisfactory, although the co-ordinator has not yet had sufficient opportunities to check on the effectiveness of the current heavy emphasis on English in the school timetable. The many changes in staff since the last inspection means the school has not yet clearly identified the impact of the extra time given to its handwriting or spelling initiatives on pupils' work. Staff have attended a wide range of training courses and there is considerable expertise in school to implement the National Literacy Strategy. The additional learning programme for pupils with special educational needs is well established and pupils enjoy an interesting and effective programme. This enables them to make good progress towards their targets. Staff use resources well especially during class sessions helping all pupils to be fully involved. However, insufficient use is made of tape recorders to develop individual listening skills in classroom listening areas. Although teachers plan some dictionary work this is infrequent and there are very few samples in the pupils' workbooks. The library has had a positive impact on pupils' parents and staff and good use is made of the resource. There is a good range of non-fiction books that include all areas of the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

77 For many pupils standards are below and often well below what is expected by the age of seven. This mirrors the results in national tests and reflects their low attainment on entry to school. However, teaching is broadly satisfactory and sometimes good, so most pupils achieve well from their low starting point on entry and make sound progress. Teachers share learning targets with pupils at the start of lessons and plan to evaluate the progress towards achieving them at the end to help ensure that work carefully builds on previous learning. However, the time allocated to numeracy lessons is too little, often as low as 40 minutes a day. This means pupils have insufficient time in the main part of the lessons to practise and consolidate their skills and understanding. Much of the work is unfinished. In many lessons teachers run out of time and so the time at the end of lessons is cut short and there are few opportunities for discussion to enable teachers to check on what has been learned or for pupils to share how they have solved problems. Pupils are now grouped by ability in Year 2, which is helping to ensure that work is more carefully matched to their needs. However, this means that pupils have to move between classes for their lesson and this further reduces the time available.

78 Teachers give good emphasis to the development of number skills, which aids understanding. The National Numeracy Strategy is used well to plan work. All pupils' contributions are valued, which helps to improve levels of confidence and motivation among all pupils whatever their age, ability or background. The classroom assistants are deployed well and provide good support to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They question carefully to ensure pupils understand the work and ensure that they make at least satisfactory progress in the targets set for them. These are often linked to basic number skills and in raising pupils' confidence in using what they know.

79 The most able pupils in Year 2 are taught very well and are working at the level expected for seven year olds. The teacher questions very effectively and pupils learn well because he provides good opportunities for them to talk about the different strategies they use to solve problems. In a very good lesson, the very good pace kept pupils interested and they eagerly volunteered answers. The teacher's expectations were clear to pupils and sufficiently high to challenge this more able group. By the end of the lessons pupils could use terms such as 'partition' and show they understood by solving problems such as $36p+26p+32p$ by partitioning the tens $30p+20p+30p$ to get $80p$ and then the adding the units, $14p$ to reach $94p$. The teacher used a timer for each task and this motivated the class very well. Average attaining pupils can use numbers thrown on a dice to make simple calculations such as $14-2$ and $7+5$. They have difficulty in identifying which are tens and which units in two digit numbers such as 36. They are beginning to understand the concept of rounding numbers up and down to gain an approximate answer. The lower attaining pupils are beginning to use accurately simple addition and subtraction to 20. They are beginning to be aware of rounding up numbers and know 19 is nearer to 20 rather than ten. However, many are confused by bigger numbers and give inaccurate answers such as 73 is nearer 60.

80 Pupils learn to read the time and are accurate to the hour and sometimes the half hour, and learn about simple measurement. Most pupils develop sound mental strategies for calculating and are learning to identify accurately halves and quarters of numbers. They make simple block graphs and use these skills in science. There are too few opportunities for sufficient work on space, shape or measures due to the limited time available. Many pupils learn slowly and need time to work on practical tasks to ensure their understanding.

81 Although teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly for the more able pupils, there is too little attention given to the recording of work. Much of the work is done on individual white boards and rubbed out at the end of the lessons so teachers have no record on which to assess pupils' progress. Teachers do not ensure that pupils know how to set out and order

their work correctly. Many pupils do not set out work to show which are tens and which are units and so their calculations are incorrect. Work is often undated and poorly presented and this is not picked up in teachers' marking. While most marking celebrates pupils' efforts, it does not always help them to further develop their understanding and show how work could be improved.

82 The subject is led satisfactorily. The co-ordinator is new in post since the previous inspection; she is enthusiastic and has run successful numeracy workshops for parents. She has had opportunities to visit other classrooms to check on the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy. However, this has not been further developed to enable her to check on teaching and learning and their impact on standards. The school has identified that the time allocated to mathematics needs to be improved and is reviewing the organisation of the curriculum to resolve this problem. Test results are carefully examined to identify weak areas and to resolve them. These are then used well to set realistic targets for each group.

SCIENCE

83 Standards in science have improved since last year and are in line with those expected nationally by the age of seven. Standards match those identified in the last inspection. A few pupils achieve above this level but a significant number does not. This is due to the lack of challenge, the slow pace in some lessons and the need for more positive marking to ensure that pupils know what it is they have to achieve. Pupils make good progress in lessons where the pace is good and where there is a clear focus on the objective to be taught.

84 Pupils aged seven have a secure understanding of forces. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate their understanding of forces clearly by pulling a door open and pushing it closed. They use their physical education knowledge well to show a press-up and state that 'it is both a push and a pull'. They investigate, in depth, what makes things move and clearly understand what happens when they use sand and water to make a waterwheel move. Pupils use the outside environment well to look at the force of the wind as they watch their streamers move. In Year 2 pupils extend their knowledge, skills and understanding by testing model cars on a ramp. Higher achievers clearly explained why and how to conduct a fair test and know that only one variant can be changed at any one time. Pupils described accurately what friction is and know that oil is used to lessen the amount of friction created. They predict confidently what they think might happen when testing different cars on a ramp and suggest that 'small wheels will go faster'. They use their knowledge gained from making cars from construction materials to support their predictions and think that 'big tyres will be better'. Pupils understand an electric circuit and know what makes a bulb light. They have studied food for a healthy life style and this work was closely linked to their work during the school's Science Week. This work is attractively displayed for parents in the school reception area. Good use is made of the school grounds to develop effective understanding of other living things and the conditions they need to thrive. For example, pupils use the school's pond and there is a popular gardening club where pupils of all abilities grow their own vegetables, herbs and flowering plants.

85 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Many of the teachers are enthusiastic and involve pupils directly in what they are finding out about. For example, in Year 1, they have opportunities to work in two smaller groups and experience two activities relating to forces. These activities interest and motivate pupils well so that they make good progress in their understanding of the forces used to make things move. Where the teaching is good and very good, staff plan lessons carefully so that the activities meet the needs of groups of pupils who make different rates of progress. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and this enables pupils to feel confident to offer suggestions in a secure learning environment. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. They are keen to work hard, show enthusiasm and the majority are very willing to offer good ideas and suggestions. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by skilled classroom support assistants. This support enables these pupils to contribute in whole class sessions and make good progress. However, where the teaching is satisfactory, average pupils are not being challenged well enough by the activities planned in order to achieve higher standards. Written work is not of a high standard and the quality of handwriting produced in handwriting sessions is not evident in the written work in science. The

presentation of work is poor and it is hard for pupils to see the progression of their work, as it is included with many other subjects in one book. Pupils now have more opportunities to record their information in different ways such as graphs and tables and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

86 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and a good overview of the subject. A new scheme of work is in place linked to a nationally agreed scheme. Assessment is undertaken at the end of each six-week unit but there is little evidence to show that the results of the assessment are used to inform future planning and teaching. The co-ordinator monitors planning and has collected a portfolio of levelled work but there are no opportunities yet for her to monitor teaching. Resources for science have improved since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

87 Standards in art and design are in line with expectations for pupils who are seven years old and similar to those reported in the last inspection. However, the quality of classroom displays adds value to their work and provides a stimulating and colourful environment. Pupils draw confidently using a range of pencils, pastels, charcoal, and have interesting objects for still-life observation. For instance in Year 2 pupils study driftwood, shells, and wood for observations. They demonstrate an awareness of pattern and texture and some begin to use shading to give shape to their objects. They discuss tone and use printed papers to create animals' heads that show a good sense of shape. Year 1 pupils choose collage materials enthusiastically to represent the Queen's crown. They have appropriate cutting skills and cut particular shapes to decorate their crowns. Pupils experience three-dimensional work using clay and papier-mâché and they make small models and sculptures. However, many pupils are not able to express their ideas well orally. When talking about sculpture many were unsure of the word but talked about 'models' and 'fings'. Where teachers had emphasised vocabulary pupils talked enthusiastically about 'light reflecting' and 'shadow'.

88 The quality of teaching in art and design is satisfactory overall although more skilled and confident teachers provide pupils with very good examples of how to shade and show detail. Teachers generally organise pupils and resources well. However, they sometimes spend too much time discussing previous work, such as the storyboards, which pupils had done in the week before. Instead of choosing one or two examples to show particular skills teachers showed too many and there was too little input from the pupils. Where the quality of teaching is good or very good, teachers ensure pupils understand the skills they are using and reinforce the subject vocabulary continually. Pupils then talk enthusiastically and have a better understanding of what they have learned. They use new words when they sensitively discuss each other's work, commenting on parts that they think are good. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the lessons and their talents are recognised by staff and pupils. At times, there is spontaneous applause because a child has achieved well.

89 The curriculum covers all the aspects of the subject. It is based on a published scheme adapted to meet the needs of the school and the National Curriculum. Art and design is also included in other subjects as a means of illustrating different topics; for instance, pupils illustrate the Great Fire of London using collage and appropriate colours. Sketchbooks are sometimes used but in a limited way. Pupils draw simple plans and sketches but do not use them to plan their work. These are underdeveloped and do not include pupils' own choices of favourite pictures, papers, and textiles that they might use to develop their ideas. The subject makes a good contribution to social development with group work. For instance, pupils make collage tiles, which they use to create large-scale displays. They also have good opportunities to respond to other artists' work, for example, when looking at still-

life they look at the work of three artists and discuss their likes and dislikes as well as the techniques of using light and shade.

90 The subject is led satisfactorily. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has continued to monitor the subject through displays of pupils' work and the planning. Assessment is satisfactory and a collection of pupils' work demonstrates different ways of carrying out topics. Although it contains some very good work, it does not show the skills used and ages of the pupils so although it provides a resource for teachers it does not identify levels of achievement. Teachers generally use resources well and there is a satisfactory range, which is accessible to teachers. Pupils use computers for designing patterns and painting and drawing to a satisfactory level of achievement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91 Judgements about design and technology are based on a small number of observations supplemented with an analysis of pupils' work on display, discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, and an examination of teachers' planning.

92 Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with what is expected for seven year olds by the end of Year 2. This is the same as the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make simple drawings of their plans for their designs. They make models from construction kits and use this knowledge to create constructions from other materials. Pupils work, with some success, with a variety of materials such as paper, card, wood, and fabric. In Year 1 pupils had designed a healthy lunchbox, making biscuits and designing the topping, while those in Year 2 had designed material for Joseph's coat and then woven their designs with fabric. Pupils know that there are a variety of means of joining materials such as glue, sellotape, stapling and brass paper fasteners. Pupils in Year 2 designed and made a wheeled vehicle that moved, taking care with finishing techniques, paying attention to detail and working to improve the appearance of their vehicles. They worked purposefully in pairs, discussing their ideas and deciding what to do next. They effectively evaluated their work in progress and their final products.

93 Teaching is good and work is well planned. Pupils enjoy planning their projects and respond well to opportunities in creative and investigative work. They can discuss their ideas with other pupils, share resources and have good collaborative skills when working in pairs or groups. Teaching is organised to take account of pupils' different abilities and needs. As a result, their attitudes to their work are good and they work with enthusiasm. They respond positively to suggested improvements and modify their designs accordingly.

94 The subject is well managed and resources are satisfactory. There is a clear policy for design and technology supported by a useful scheme of work that provides good guidance. This enables skills to be taught in an appropriate sequence that builds upon pupils' previous experiences.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

95 Standards in geography and history are as expected for pupils who are seven years old and have been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching is often good in both subjects and pupils achieve well given their limited experience and general knowledge when they start school.

96 In geography, pupils know that the climate in different countries affects how people live and they begin to ask interesting questions about peoples' lives based on pictures they have seen. They study the local area, particularly in and around the school, and identify changes that have occurred

such as the new library and the new gardens. They begin to identify some features that they would like to change.

97 In geography teachers use the subject vocabulary well and encourage pupils to use new words when answering questions. However, this is not as clearly identified in pupils' writing which shows limited vocabulary and sentence construction. Often teachers mark pupils' work with reference to their English attainment rather than looking at the geographical skills that pupils have achieved. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and are eager to investigate. They enjoy talking about other countries but have a more limited knowledge of their own area.

98 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. In a Year 2 class the teacher was particularly effective in challenging stereotypical ideas about Mexico. She reinforced the idea that people who live in cities and large towns would not use the same ways to cook and wash clothes as people in the pictures the pupils were using.

99 In history, staff take account of pupils' limited reading and writing skills and use art and design to good effect to enable pupils to communicate what they know. It is clear that many pupils have a wider understanding than their written work suggests. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported by adults, who ensure that they understand texts and know what to do.

100 Teachers plan an interesting range of activities, based on national guidance for history. They introduce imaginative ideas that interest and excite pupils and so they are eager to learn and behave well. For example, in Year 2 a toy bear called 'Barnaby' is sent back in time. He returns with 'pages' from Samuel Pepys' diary with their eyewitness accounts of the Great Fire of London. This results in some good discussion and well-produced collage work and simple writing that shows pupils have understood the plight of people fleeing the fire. Pupils know who Florence Nightingale was and what she did to help wounded soldiers in the Crimea. In their work on Remembrance Day, pupils understand why we wear poppies and know about the national memorials such as the Cenotaph and those for the local area.

101 Pupils use ICT to find information about their topics using an interactive website that shows a virtual museum. This type of work is at an early stage and many need help to do it but they are developing a good understanding of how computers can be used to help them learn. They do not yet have the skills to always decide what material is relevant.

102 Assessment overall is satisfactory in both subjects but it is not always consistent throughout the school. The assessment portfolios are effective in showing the different levels of work achieved by different ability pupils but this is not clearly related to the skills and knowledge developed in each topic.

103 The subjects are managed satisfactorily and the co-ordinator has updated the policies and ensured that the work is based on national guidance. There have been no opportunities for them to observe work in other parts of the school in order to monitor teaching and learning and identify what works well and what needs to be improved. In both subjects, the school makes good use of visits and visitors who come into school to share their expertise. In geography, pupils have visited the beach and a local farm. Teachers make good links between the subjects. For example pupils visited the beach for a geography topic and also learned about seaside holidays a hundred years ago. They have visited a local supermarket and learned about where foodstuffs come from and how they are transported. In history, pupils have a good recall of a visitor who shared Victorian toys and they know about ways life has changed over the past years through the work of a theatre group that enacted a play, 'Granny's Life'.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104 Standards in ICT match those expected for pupils by the time they are seven. This has improved since the last inspection. Few ICT lessons were seen but pupils were working on computers in other lessons such as English and mathematics. Standards have also been judged on evidence from teachers' planning, pupils' previous work and discussions with them and with staff. The provision for ICT has improved with computers in every classroom and programmable equipment such as a 'Roamer'. Pupils learn to control it by giving directions to the toy robot so that it follows a particular

pathway. Teachers have attended training that has raised their confidence in teaching ICT skills and further training is planned.

105 Teaching is at least satisfactory and enables pupils to make steady progress over time. Basic keyboard skills are taught well. Pupils use the mouse to access functions, icons and cursors. They use these to move pictures and text across the screen in matching games linked to English and mathematics. Each class has access to the Internet and this enables them to use interactive websites to support work in other subjects such as history, geography and science. The school has useful safeguards to protect pupils when using the Internet.

106 Some pupils build on skills learned at home and help others in class. By the age of seven most pupils know how to save work and to access it again later. They are developing their skills in controlling the mouse, opening and closing files and saving work on disk. Pupils have sound keyboard skills and use word processing to write simple sentences, stories and poems. They confidently use art programs to create patterns and pictures. Teachers plan for the use of ICT in other subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils practise spelling and word matching, and use a web site to support their literacy skills. Pupils use games programs that enable them to develop simple numeracy skills such as adding and subtraction. They confidently use the computers but many still need some adult guidance. Year 2 pupils use a program to handle data in mathematics and science and, with some help, they present it in a graph or a bar chart. The pupils who lack confidence in using computers or have special educational needs are supported well by classroom assistants and often helped by more confident pupils as they work in pairs.

107 The co-ordinator gives a good lead and has a useful development plan for ICT. She has worked well to support staff and to develop written material to support the national guidance for the subject. The school has an ongoing priority to further improve provision and this should enable staff in their planned work to further use ICT to develop and support learning in all other subjects.

MUSIC

108 No music lessons were seen. However, there was sufficient evidence from the co-ordinator's and teachers' planning, evidence of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils to make judgements.

109 Standards in music match those expected for seven year olds and match those identified in the last report. Pupils learn well through a range of musical experiences. These are planned termly by the co-ordinator, and teachers then plan their weekly lessons for their class. The school benefits from the input of a pianist from the local education authority's music service, who comes into school each week to support singing lessons.

110 Pupils sing well. In an assembly the pupils listened well to music from the Caribbean and were able to say what they liked about it. When the teacher led the singing of a Kenyan song, pupils were able to repeat the melody accurately demonstrating good tone and pitch. When singing, they have good diction and pay careful attention to rhythm. They sing in assemblies with enthusiasm.

111 The teaching of music is satisfactory. Children learn to play the recorder as an extra-curricular activity. The choir meets regularly to practise and improve the quality of singing. Pupils make satisfactory progress in music. Some pupils record their compositions using their own symbols to represent how many beats should be played. They work well using a computer program 'Compose' to create pieces of music. Pupils give imaginative oral responses to a piece of music.

112 The music curriculum is well managed by the recently appointed co-ordinator, who is committed to developing this aspect of pupils' education. The co-ordinator regularly sees teachers'

planning, and evidence of what pupils have done is collected and recorded. Staff training needs have been identified.

113 Resources for music are satisfactory. Tuned percussion instruments have been purchased and other resources improved since the last inspection. These include instruments from other cultures. Musical instruments are well organised and easily accessible to pupils. There is a dedicated music area in each classroom, in addition to a central resource area. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They listen to a range of music, including music from other cultures, perform in Christmas productions and sing to the wider community. An Arts Week is planned for later in the year, which will include parents working with their children to share the experience of music from other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114 Teaching is often good and so pupils make good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2 their attainment matches that expected of seven year olds and is sometimes higher. This is similar to the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and they are very enthusiastic. They try hard and persevere in all activities, and work well with each other and on their own. Year 2 pupils warmed up sensibly and worked enthusiastically in their games and dance lessons. Pupils stretch in different ways and find ways of travelling about the hall, stopping and changing direction at a signal. Many pupils show sound control as they balance and hold their position in dance. They show flexibility in turning their bodies to make different shapes, and move around the hall with a sound awareness of others' positions.

115 In a well-taught dance lesson with Year 2 pupils the teacher used a poem 'Puddles' well to stimulate the pupils. They used their arms and made effective use of body shapes and movements to show different sized puddles. They used the music well to create dance sequences and could repeat and refine them. The same poem and theme was used with a parallel Year 2 class but, although teaching was satisfactory, the teacher often directed the activities and pupils had limited opportunities to use their imagination.

116 Pupils are developing satisfactory ball skills and throw and catch in a variety of ways with increasing accuracy. In a well-taught lesson, Year 2 pupils explored ways of directing a ball into a basket and as the lesson progressed, many pupils could do this successfully. The teacher effectively used a 'parachute' to promote teamwork as pupils worked well together to move a ball around the surface of the parachute. Pupils listen carefully and follow instructions sensibly to practise their skills. In most lessons, teachers use to good effect the good examples of some pupils and this enables others to refine their own performance.

117 Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and manage pupils well so that most lessons have a good pace. Pupils move quickly from one routine to the next. In most lessons teachers wisely take time to establish clear guidelines about safety and reinforce the need for pupils to listen carefully to directions. They teach the younger pupils to take out and return equipment safely and sensibly. In all lessons, the teachers are clear about what will be learned and they ensure pupils know what they have to do. Teachers make sure that pupils develop a good understanding of the positive impact of physical exercise on their health.

118 The recently appointed, co-ordinator gives a good lead and has worked with staff to ensure all strands of the curriculum are covered according to the season. She makes useful links with agencies such as Sunderland Football Club to enable pupils to learn skills. The resources are good and pupils benefit from well-chosen resources that are well matched to their age and level of physical ability. She has had no opportunity to look at teaching and learning in other classes but physical education has priority next year and some release time is planned.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119 In religious education, pupils' knowledge and understanding is below that expected at the age of seven. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. Religious education is taught in all classes and follows the guidelines of the locally agreed syllabus. However, too little time is allocated to enable the subject to be taught in the required depth and so the expected standards cannot be reached. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some that is good. The most effective teaching resulted in pupils, including those with special educational needs, making very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of many aspects of the life of Jesus and how His teaching is important today.

120 The theme for Year 1 pupils, during the inspection, was 'Belonging'. They understand that they belong to their class and their school. When acting a ceremony of baptism, pupils begin to develop an understanding of belonging to the family of God and what the symbols used in a Christian baptism represent. They know that water is used 'to wash away the bad things'. Many also understand that the lighted candle represents moving from the darkness into light. Pupils have opportunities to write their own prayers, thanking God for springtime, and these are made into class prayer books.

121 Year 2 pupils have appropriate understanding of the stories of the Creation of the World and recall well the miracles performed by Jesus and the stories that he told his followers. Pupils show a sound knowledge of his death on the cross and also of his resurrection. They know the stories of The Good Samaritan, Jairus' Daughter, Zachius and the Lost Sheep. Pupils have a sound understanding of the morals in these stories and are beginning to appreciate how these relate to how they live their own lives. For example, when listening to the story of 'Jairus' daughter', they quietly reflected on the feelings of Jairus when he heard about his daughter's death and related this to how they would feel if they lost someone in their own family. In a very well taught lesson, pupils were encouraged to think about how Jesus used His hands to heal people and how they could use their hands to help others.

122 Pupils know stories from the Old Testament and understand that these were written before the birth of Christ. They make sound progress in their study of Judaism. They understand the Shabbat celebration and create their own Torah to include on a display in the hall. However, they do not have opportunities to visit a synagogue or talk to someone of the Jewish faith and this impedes their understanding and progress. Pupils show some understanding of Islam and the meaning of hand decorations when celebrating marriage. However, they do not have enough time to consolidate their learning and some topics are covered at a superficial level because of the limited time available. They have some opportunities to develop their literacy skills through extended writing when re-telling Bible stories but these are too few and their presentation and handwriting are poor.

123 Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. In the best lessons pupils are challenged, both in using time well and in the amount of work they are expected to achieve. When this is not the case, pupils lose interest, they are presented with unchallenging tasks and the focus of the lesson is lost. Learning opportunities are missed and little progress takes place. Pupils' writing in religious education is limited and it is hard for them to see the progression of their work, as it is included with many other subjects in one book. There are inconsistencies in the teaching approach to this subject across the three parallel classes in each year group. This is also evident in the marking of pupils' work. For example' in one lesson seen, the teacher lost the thread of the lesson, no questions were asked to link the story of John the Baptist to the pupils' earlier work on baptism and they were given a simple drawing task to complete. This resulted in pupils making very little progress. Teachers do not always focus clearly on the aims for learning set for each lesson or ensure that these are achievable in the time given and that pupils clearly understand what it is they are going to learn.

124 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has attended a number of courses and has a clear understanding of her role. She monitors half-termly planning and has ensured that the quality of resources has improved since the last inspection. These include more artefacts to support the teaching of Judaism and Islam. However, the many staff changes in the school over the past two years have made it difficult to provide sufficient opportunities to check on lessons and this has had an impact on pupils' progress. The school is aware of the limited time available to religious education and the resulting impact on standards. It is reviewing the organisation of the curriculum to resolve this imbalance.