

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Durham Gilesgate Primary School**

Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114211

Headteacher: Mr M Turner

Reporting inspector: Ms K Manning  
20267

Dates of inspection: 15 - 18 April 2002

Inspection number: 196448

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kepier Crescent Gilesgate Durham
Postcode:	DH1 1PH
Telephone number:	0191 384 7284
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Dunn
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20267	Ms K Manning Registered inspector	English Art Design and technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1165	Mr P Dannheisser Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19916	Mrs D Kerr Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	
17857	Mr D Walters Team inspector	Science Physical education Religious education	
25376	Mrs L Alvy Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Provision for children in the foundation stage Equal opportunities	
21666	Mr A Margerison Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Yorkshire Educational Services Ltd  
16 Burn Hall  
Darlington Road  
Croxdale  
DURHAM DH1 3SR

Tel/Fax: 0191 378 4031

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# **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Durham Gilesgate Primary is a large school with a nursery that has a number of places for children with special educational needs or who have impaired hearing. The school's pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds although the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average. A higher than average number of pupils start or leave the school part-way through their education because their families move into or out of the area. Almost all of the pupils are of white ethnic origin and only a small number do not speak English at home. The school receives some additional funding to help these pupils learn English. There are 109 girls and 107 boys in classes from reception to Year 6. Some of these classes have pupils from more than one year group. In addition, 31 girls and 39 boys attend the nursery part-time. Many children have limited experiences of books and numbers when they join the nursery and their attainment on entry to the reception class is below what is typical of four-year-olds. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is higher than in most other schools. Eighty-nine children are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, five children in the nursery and five pupils in the main school have Statements of Special Educational Needs.

There has been a change of headteacher and deputy head teacher since the previous inspection. They have initiated several changes; a number of teachers now teach a different year group and some have different responsibilities for leading and managing subjects and aspects of the school's work.

## **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Durham Gilesgate Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Although standards in English, mathematics and science remain below average by the end of Year 6, most pupils learn at a steady rate and pupils who have special educational needs make good progress when they are given extra help from support staff. There are strengths and weaknesses to the teaching, though most of it is satisfactory. The headteacher is a good, strong leader, who is determined to move the school forward and raise standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### **What the school does well**

- Good teaching in the foundation stage means that children get off to a fine start.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' social and moral development.
- Strong leadership and effective management by the headteacher provide the school with a good basis for development and improvement.
- Teachers and pupils like one another and as a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they behave well.
- Good provision for pupils who have special educational needs ensures they make good progress.

### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are not high enough by the end of Year 6.
- The way that some co-ordinators keep a check on teachers' planning and on pupils' work.
- Standards in geography, history, music and religious education are not high enough by the end of Year 6.,

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school did not improve at a fast enough rate in the first years following the previous inspection in 1997. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, the rate of improvement has increased and all of the key issues identified in the previous report are now being tackled systematically. Standards in design and technology are now typical for pupils' age and standards in writing are improving. Teachers are much better at planning work and now have the guidelines they need to ensure that geography, history, music and religious education are taught in the depth needed to raise standards. The headteacher has implemented a good system for keeping a close check on the quality of teaching and for helping teachers improve their work. This is beginning to have an effect in literacy and numeracy. There have been some setbacks. The greater emphasis given to literacy and numeracy over the past few years has resulted in a decline in standards in geography, history, music and religious education.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E*	E	E	B
mathematics	E*	E	D	B
science	E*	E	E	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

From a low start, children in the nursery make good progress. Not all children attend the nursery before they start in reception class. Consequently, despite making good progress, standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world are below what is typical for their age by the end of the reception class. Standards in personal, social and emotional development and children's creative and physical skills are typical for their age by the end of the reception class.

In last year's National Curriculum tests, pupils at the end of Year 2 achieved standards that were average in reading and mathematics. In writing, standards improved for the second year running but were still below average. In science, almost all pupils reached the level expected for their age and almost half achieved a higher level. Inspection findings are that most pupils are working at levels that match what is expected for their age in reading, and science but that standards are below average in speaking and listening, writing and mathematics. Two reasons for this are that almost a third of the pupils have special educational needs and a number speak English as an additional language. By the end of Year 2, most pupils achieve standards that are typical for their ages in all other subjects.

Standards in English and science are higher than those achieved in the 2001 National Curriculum results for 11-year-olds, though they remain below average. The results of tests in mathematics are a fair reflection of standards in the school. In all three subjects, pupils make steady progress from one year to the next and the school's results are rising at a similar rate to the national trend. However, a high proportion of pupils has special educational needs and they do not always reach the level expected for their age. In addition, an above average number of pupils join the school part-way through their education and have not always made the same steady progress in previous schools. The school matched the target it had set for raising standards in English but failed to meet its target in mathematics. Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs make good progress when they are given help in small groups or individually and steady progress at other

times. By the end of Year 6, standards are typical for pupils' age in art and design, information and communication technology and physical education. A success for the school is that standards in design and technology have risen and are now typical for pupils' ages. Standards have fallen in geography, history, music and religious education and are now below what is expected.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to work are good. Most try hard and thoroughly enjoy their work. They are enthusiastic about their favourite activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	When lessons are interesting, pupils behave well. Behaviour in the yard and at lunchtime is good.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and show initiative. They form good relationships with adults and respect themselves and other children.
Attendance	Attendance is well below average.

The main reason why attendance is so low is that a large number of parents take their children on holiday during term time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching is satisfactory overall and more than a third of the lessons were taught well. Teaching in the foundation stage is almost always good. The quality of teaching in design and technology has improved since the previous inspection as teachers have had training and become more confident with using tools and techniques. It is now satisfactory. On the other hand, the teaching of geography, history, music and religious education has not been strong enough to prevent standards from falling. During the inspection, a number of lessons were taught unsatisfactorily.

Teachers make effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to teach English and mathematics and the system of teaching pupils in groups of similar ability is generally working satisfactorily. Most pupils acquire skills and knowledge at a steady rate and put sufficient effort into their work. In general, teachers ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to make progress and teaching meets the needs of pupils of different abilities. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress when given extra help. Pupils who join the school part-way through their education and those who speak English as an additional language are given the help they need to make steady progress. A weakness of the teaching is that some teachers have low expectations of what pupils can do and do not insist on their work being neat or complete.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and strong links with the local community and nearby schools.



Provision for pupils who have special educational needs	The provision for these pupils is good and they are given plenty of help from teachers and classroom assistants. Consequently they make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school does all it can for pupils who speak English as an additional language and they make steady progress in all subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school places a lot of emphasis on developing pupils' personal growth and individuality. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are promoted satisfactorily. The school makes good provision for their moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. More work needs to be done to improve the way that teachers assess and record pupils' academic performance in some subjects.

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents and the headteacher has already begun to take account of their concerns.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a strong leader who provides firm educational direction for the work of the school. A competent and enthusiastic deputy headteacher plays a significant role in moving the school forward. The leadership and management of co-ordinators vary from good to unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors fulfil all statutory responsibilities and are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensure that the headteacher has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Most co-ordinators know what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes efficient use of all available resources. The school's financial management is sound and governors ensure that all goods and services represent best value for the pupils.

There are sufficient teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum. Accommodation is good and there are enough resources to teach all subjects in Years 1 to 6 and the areas of learning for children in the foundation stage.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They believe that the teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• Teachers help their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of parents feel that they do not get enough information about how their children are doing.</li> <li>• Several parents feel that their children are not getting the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with most of these views. The school is led and managed well by the head teacher, though the leadership and management of some co-ordinators has not been strong enough to prevent standards from falling. Most of the teaching is satisfactory and teachers help pupils to become more mature and responsible as they get older. Though most teachers expect pupils to work hard they do not always expect them to do their best work. Although the information provided for parents is generally satisfactory in quality and quantity, annual reports include only limited information about some subjects. Teachers do not always follow the school's policy for giving homework and some set more than others.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The school's results and pupils' achievements are affected by several factors. A high proportion of pupils have special educational needs. These pupils make good progress when given extra help and generally achieve the targets that have been set for their attainment. However, their special educational needs often prevent them from achieving the standards expected nationally. The proportion of pupils who move into or out of the area is above average and means that comparisons with prior attainment cannot be wholly accurate because the pupils who were in last year's Year 6 were not the same group of pupils who were in Year 2 in 1997. In addition, several of the pupils who start at the school after the reception class have some catching up to do and one or two do not speak English at home. Finally, a small number of pupils speak English as an additional language, which has an impact on how well these pupils achieve in English. With this school it is important to take into account the school's own records, which show clearly that most pupils make steady progress in English and mathematics from one year to the next.

2. When children join the nursery, their attainments vary but most do not have the skills and knowledge typical for their age. Many are unfamiliar with books and numbers and they are shy with adults and other children. In addition, a number of children are learning to speak English. A small number have impaired hearing and several have special educational needs. They get a fine start in the nursery, but not all of these children transfer to the reception classes. Most of the children who transfer to the reception classes do well. Many of the children who join the school in the reception classes have quite a bit of catching up to do. By the end of the foundation stage, most children achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in their creative and physical skills. Despite making good progress they do not achieve all of the early goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

3. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are below what is expected for pupils' age. Pupils in Year 2 are often inattentive and do not listen to what their teacher says. When answering questions they speak clearly but often answer in single words and give little detail in their responses. Older pupils listen to teachers, but not to other pupils. Many need coaxing to answer questions or give opinions and by the end of Year 6, few pupils are confident or articulate speakers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their first years at school. Although they speak English fluently by the end of Year 6, they are often reluctant to take part in class discussions.

4. Last year, the results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds showed that standards in reading were average. Almost all pupils reached the level expected for their age and a third achieved a higher level. Standards are about the same this year. Satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils in infant classes learn at a steady rate and, by the end of Year 2, most read at the level expected for their age. Tests in writing showed that standards had improved in each of the last two years but remained below average. An analysis of the results revealed weaknesses in spelling and handwriting. This year, teachers have placed greater emphasis on both of these aspects of writing but the changes they have made have not had time to raise standards.

5. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds showed that standards in English were well below average. Far fewer pupils than in most other schools reached the level expected for their age and fewer achieved a higher level. The main reason for this was that almost a third of the pupils in Year 6 had special educational needs. The picture is more heartening this year and inspection findings are that standards are rising but, because more than a third of pupils in the current Year 6 have special educational needs, they remain below average. The school's detailed assessments of pupils show that most learn at a steady rate. Pupils who have special educational

needs and those who speak English as an additional language benefit from the extra help they are given with literacy and often make good progress.

6. In mathematics, the results of last year's tests for seven-year-olds showed that standards were average. More pupils than in most other schools reached the level expected for their age though fewer achieved a higher level. Inspection findings are that, this year, most of the pupils in Year 2 are working at a level below what is expected, reflecting the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds showed that standards in mathematics were below average. Far fewer pupils reached the level expected for their age though the proportion who achieved a higher level was about the same as in most other schools. A thorough analysis of test results revealed gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of applying their mathematics to solve problems and handling data. Teachers have given greater emphasis to these areas in the last year and expect standards to improve.

7. The school sets realistic targets for raising standards in English and mathematics. These are based on the results of tests carried out at the end of Years 3 to 5. Last year, the school matched the target it had set for raising standards in English but failed to meet its target in mathematics because some pupils were absent on the day of the test.

8. In science, the results of last year's National Curriculum tests showed that more seven-year-olds than in most other schools reached the level expected for their age and far more achieved a higher level. Inspection findings are that most of the pupils in Year 2 are working at the level expected for their age. Test results showed a different picture for 11-year-olds. Standards were well below average. Far fewer pupils than in most other schools reached the level expected for their age or achieved a higher level. Once again, this was due to the high proportion of pupils in the year group who had special educational needs. As with English and mathematics, teachers analysed the results in order to highlight gaps in teaching and learning. As a result, more time was given to investigative science in order to help lower and average attaining pupils gain first-hand experiences. Inspection findings are that this is beginning to have an effect though standards remain below average.

9. Comparisons of the school's performance with that of similar schools are generally favourable. Seven-year-olds performed far better than those in similar schools in reading and mathematics and at about the same level in writing. Eleven-year-olds performed better in English and mathematics tests but did poorly in science tests. Over the last five years, there has been some pattern to the performance of boys and girls. Seven-year-old girls consistently outperform boys in writing tests while 11-year-olds boys generally do better than girls in mathematics and science tests. The school is aware of this pattern but, because the gap is relatively small, the co-ordinators do not view it as a priority for development.

10. Pupils who have special educational needs attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are lower than expected for their age. However, from a lower than average starting point they make good progress as they get older. The proof of this is in the way that several pupils in Year 2 reached the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, despite their special educational needs. Of the pupils who were in Year 6 last year, those with special educational needs made good progress in English from the age of seven so the attainment gap between them and the rest of their class narrowed. In mathematics they made satisfactory progress. The difference between the two subjects reflects the school's careful analysis of reading test information and the subsequent action taken to work with specific pupils. Current pupils in Year 6 are making good progress in learning the new skills, knowledge and understanding needed to achieve the targets in their individual education plans. In the nursery, children who have impaired hearing, make good progress in learning to communicate with adults and other children and in their personal and social development.

11. Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally make steady progress in the first years in school. By the time they are in junior classes, only those who start the school part-way through their education need extra help with speaking English.

12. Improved teaching and increased resources have helped to raise standards in design and technology. They are now typical for seven and 11-year-olds. Standards have been maintained in information and communication technology, art and design and physical education. In these three subjects they match those expected of seven and 11-year-olds.

13. In geography, history, music and religious education, seven-year-olds achieve the standards expected for their age. However, weaknesses in teaching and learning in junior classes mean that standards have fallen by the end of Year 6 and they are now below what is expected for 11-year-olds. There is little challenge for pupils in tasks set in some lessons and teachers do not always have high enough expectations of how well pupils can show what they have learned. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge in geography, history and religious education and they have only limited skills in researching and finding things out for themselves. In music, pupils sing and play reasonably well but many are unsure how to compose or create music.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. Pupils of all ages show good attitudes to their work and their life in school. This is a similar picture to the time of the previous inspection. Children in the foundation stage are eager to explore new activities, especially when they are exciting, such as making clay spiders. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are keen to get on and settle down quickly to their work. When prompted, pupils in Years 3 to 6 talk about their favourite lessons and subjects. They are particularly enthusiastic about taking part in the sporting and drama activities that take place after school. In lessons, when their teachers' expectations are high and they are clear about what they have to do, pupils are eager to take part and work hard. For example, in a design and technology lesson, groups of pupils in Year 4 used card and rolled newspapers to investigate how different shapes vary in their stability and strength. They worked well together, shared equipment and tools sensibly and enjoyed the lesson.

15. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language have positive attitudes to learning because of the extra support they get and the success they enjoy from activities planned to match their needs. Pupils who join the school part-way through their education are helped to settle quickly into the school's routines and as a result, they do not lose any ground by changing schools.

16. The school has been successful in maintaining the same good standards of behaviour that it had at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils behave well in class. They settle quickly, listen attentively and do as they are told without fuss. When lessons fail to interest them pupils' attitudes and behaviour deteriorate. Those in Year 2 begin to call out and stop listening to what the teacher has to say. Older pupils stop concentrating although they often remain polite and passive. Pupils who have special educational needs related to behavioural problems are helped to play a full part in lessons and they respond by following instructions. Outside in the playground, pupils' behaviour is also good. They generally play and get on well together and any bullying or harassment is handled firmly by the school. There were no exclusions during the last school year, but there have been a small number since September, as the school has followed the sanctions outlined in its behaviour policy.

17. Pupils' personal development remains good. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and form the basis of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils are generally positive. They are aware of the results of their actions upon others but there are occasions when they react unthinkingly, for example, by laughing at others when they make a mistake.

18. Pupils are willing to take responsibility for tasks and routine jobs, such as helping at lunchtime and being a playtime 'buddy'. When they are given the chance to show they can behave in a mature way, they are pleased to be asked and take the task seriously. Representatives to the School Council are proud to have been elected by their classmates and are sensible about dealing with issues, such as litter in the playground or asking for opportunities to use a digital camera. In

assemblies, pupils reflect on the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This happens to a limited extent in religious education lessons.

19. Although pupils say that they enjoy school, attendance is well below average. The main reason for this is that families take their children on holiday during term time. Last year 92 pupils were away for a holiday during term time and inevitably this has an impact on pupils' learning. Punctuality is satisfactory. Most pupils arrive on time each day so that the morning session can begin promptly.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

20. Teaching is satisfactory overall and more than a third of the lessons were taught well. However, there was unsatisfactory teaching in a significant number of lessons and there are some important weaknesses that prevent pupils from learning at a faster rate. The quality of teaching in design and technology has improved since the previous inspection as teachers have had training and become more familiar with the programme of work. It is now satisfactory. The teaching in geography, history, music and religious education has not been strong enough to prevent standards from falling. This is predominantly because teachers have, in the past few years, given more emphasis to literacy and numeracy.

21. Teaching in the foundation stage is almost always good and children get off to a fine start to their education in the nursery and reception classes. This is because teachers ensure that the curriculum is suitable for young children and that activities are of a practical nature and help children find out for themselves. A strength of the teaching is the emphasis on personal and social development that helps children gain self-esteem and confidence. A further strength is the way the way that teachers constantly talk with children. This has a marked effect on those children who have impaired hearing and those who are just learning to speak English. As a result of the many opportunities they get to talk to adults they make good progress.

22. Teachers use a wide enough range of methods in their teaching. In the past two years, teachers' planning has improved tremendously and they now make effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to plan work in English and mathematics. This is one of the reasons why standards are beginning to rise. Teachers are also making far greater use of analyses of national tests in English, mathematics and science. This has helped them identify and begin to remedy gaps in teaching and learning, which is also beginning to have a positive effect on standards in these subjects.

23. Pupils are challenged when teachers share the aims of the lesson with them and they know that they have done well by the end of the lesson. Most teachers make satisfactory use of homework to help children learn. Right from the foundation stage pupils are expected to read at home and as they get older pupils are generally given more frequent and difficult homework in English and mathematics. Some teachers follow the school's policy more closely than others and parents are right to think that there is some inconsistency in the school's approach. Teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Very often, computers are left standing idle during lessons.

24. In general, teachers ensure that pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress. In English and mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in classes of similar ability and this approach is working satisfactorily. Lower attaining pupils are taught in smaller groups and are given the help and support they need to make steady progress. The most able pupils also benefit from working in groups of pupils of similar ability. The work they are given is more challenging and a small number of pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve a higher level in national tests at the end of the year. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are given the extra help and support they need to make steady progress. For example, in many lessons, teachers ask them questions in order to ensure that they understand new or

technical terms. They benefit from having many opportunities to talk with adults. In this way they gain confidence in speaking and consolidate or widen their knowledge of the English language.

25. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. When they are in main school classes teachers' high expectations of behaviour help them behave well and teachers' expedient use of individual education plans to plan group activities in literacy and numeracy make sure that work is generally at the right level. Planning for pupils who have special educational needs is good overall. There are some references in teachers' planning to specific pupils and the support they will receive, but this is supplemented by additional sheets for pupils with special needs so it is very clear how their needs will be met. Support staff make a very good contribution to the good progress pupils make. They are always briefed before the lesson and in some cases are involved in planning so they are able to provide good help for pupils in all parts of lessons. In addition, they make notes on the contribution of the pupils they work with and make teachers aware of any outstanding issues. This good teaching is one of the reasons why a number of seven-year-olds did well to reach the level expected for their age in last year's national tests.

26. In the foundation stage, pupils who speak English as an additional language are given all the help they need to succeed and make good progress. Teaching of children in the nursery unit for hearing impaired children is also good. The specialist teacher and the support assistant work together very well and use visual, auditory and signing cues very effectively to develop children's ability to communicate with adults and each other. They use an extensive range of resources and approaches to stimulate children's interest so they are very attentive and try hard to understand what they are being asked to do.

27. The main weakness of teaching is that teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. For example, in some lessons pupils are given work that is at a simpler level than that given to younger pupils who are covering the same topic. This is because, although considerably improved, there are still weaknesses to the way that teachers plan work. They have only very recently been given good quality medium-term planning by the local education authority and are not yet using this effectively to ensure that work gets harder from one year to the next. Low expectations are also evident in the quality of pupils' work. In some classes, teachers accept work that is untidy and incomplete.

28. In the best lessons teachers work very hard to keep pupils' interested in their work and to maintain discipline. Their efforts ensure that pupils concentrate and generally try to do their best. The lessons planned for pupils are always interesting and well prepared. No time is lost getting down to work and this minimises any opportunities for pupils to be bored. In good lessons the pace is always brisk enough to keep pupils working at a fast pace. For example, in a good design and technology lesson pupils in Year 3 spent no more than five minutes listening to the teacher describe each of the carousel of activities before they set to work. Their enthusiasm was evident in the results they achieved and the sensible way they got on with mixing paint and making papier-mâché masks.

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

### **The curriculum**

29. The school offers a reasonably broad and balanced curriculum to the pupils in its infant and junior classes. Shortcomings in the provision for design and technology, noted in the previous inspection report, have now been put right. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been used for some time and are now beginning to have an impact on standards across the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by a number of educational visits and by visitors to the school. These help to bring subjects, such as art and design, to life and are a factor in why pupils' attitudes to learning from practical and first-hand experiences are so positive.

30. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is appropriate and reflects the spirit of new national guidelines. Children in the nursery and reception classes are provided with stimulating activities and experiences that cover all recommended areas of learning and enable them to move easily to work in the National Curriculum.

31. The school still offers pupils a good range of extra-curricular activities, as it did at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have access to sporting, computer and drama clubs, which give them the chance to develop their skills and their confidence. These clubs are popular with boys and girls and are well attended.

32. The school has maintained its good links with the community since the last inspection and these contribute well to pupils' learning. For instance, the strong links with the local parish church enable pupils to gain first-hand experiences of religious ceremonies. This happened when pupils in infant classes acted out a wedding as they learned about important Christian ceremonies. Everyone dressed up and pupils were asked to think about how they felt during the service and afterwards. The school's links with local partner institutions are also good and serve to increase pupils' learning at the same time as they help smooth the way for the transition to secondary school. For instance, pupils gain considerable benefits from the opportunities they have to use the science and computer labs in a nearby secondary school.

33. The school pays close attention to equal opportunities and the inclusion of all pupils. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs has been maintained at a good level since the previous inspection. Although the current policy needs some revision in the light of the new Code of Practice, the provision does reflect the aims of the school outlined in the policy. The steps taken by the school, to ensure that all pupils on the register have an individual educational programme, puts it in a good position to make a smooth transition to the new graduated system. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly with class teachers and support staff fully involved. Targets are generally detailed enough to help support staff and class teachers to plan activities aimed to teach pupils specific skills or knowledge although there is some inconsistency across the whole school in how well targets in the plans are linked to the teaching methods used. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in all school activities and have equal access to the full range of the opportunities and experiences offered to pupils.

34. It is a similar picture for pupils who join the school part-way through their education and for those who speak English as an additional language. In the nursery, children who have impaired hearing are helped to access all of the areas of learning and they make good progress in acquiring skills and understanding in each area.

### **Opportunities for personal development**

35. The school's provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Sex and drugs education are carefully planned into the curriculum and lessons in personal, social and health education are timetabled for all classes. In addition, many moral, social and cultural issues are talked about during assemblies.

36. The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to establish an ethos in which all pupils can grow and flourish and where pupils' thoughts and ideas are valued by staff. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own values and beliefs in assemblies. In the day-to-day life of the school, pupils are encouraged to consider how they can make a contribution to school life. Although there is time for prayer and listening to stories, pupils' spiritual development is not promoted often enough through art or music.

37. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection and is now good. A particularly successful feature of this is the way that teachers encourage pupils to think about what is right and wrong and consider the impact of their actions on others. This is often done through assemblies, when pupils consider wider moral



issues, such as fairness and helping one another. Teachers' good relationships with staff and pupils make them good role models and the school promotes the values it holds as being important in displays. For example, there is a large display of painted portraits in the hall, emphasising the school as a community. Following on from this, staff and governors have made a good start at agreeing and implementing anti-racist policies that are intended to further increase racial harmony and promote pupils' sense of citizenship.

38. Teachers have introduced several good strategies for promoting pupils' social development. New initiatives designed to boost pupils' self-esteem and to increase their consideration of others, such as playground 'buddies' and the school council are working well and pupils are very proud of their association with either. Social values are well promoted by adults throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to care and take responsibility for others. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given opportunities to gain self-esteem and social skills through the 'getting along initiative' for which staff have had special training. Finally, in taking part in local sports tournaments pupils gain a sense of fair play and a competitive spirit.

39. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There are many good features, such as signs on doors and information for parents in more than one language. Pupils are taught about other cultures in history, geography and religious education but what they learn is limited. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss the similarities and differences in the religions and cultures they study. A weakness of the school's provision is that some teachers fail to think in a multicultural way; they refer to 'we' and 'our' when talking of Christianity or traditions that are English and do not realise that there may be pupils of other religions or cultures in the class. Teachers have begun to use a wider range of resources to extend pupils' cultural awareness. For example, pupils in Year 3 studied the form and features of a wide range of masks from around the world before they produced their own.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

40. The quality of care that pupils receive in school has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Health and safety procedures, including risk assessments, are well established and form the basis of setting priorities for the repairs and maintenance of the school building and grounds. The caretaker and cleaning staff take good care of the building and grounds. Procedures for child protection are in place and the high level of understanding and experience of the member of staff with designated responsibility for this area of the school's work ensures their effectiveness. All teaching and support staff understand the procedures but midday staff have yet to be trained.

41. The school makes good use of computer technology to monitor pupils' attendance. However there is no attendance policy in place and there are no rewards or incentives to encourage the pupils and their families to work towards better attendance. Holidays taken in term time contribute significantly to the poor attendance figures, and this is an area that the school has not fully addressed. Although the proportion of latecomers does not appear to be significant, the school is not accurately recording and analysing punctuality and has not clearly defined its policy. For example, it is not clear how long registers are open and when pupils are marked late. The school has good links with the educational welfare officer who visits regularly and follows up individual cases.

42. Most teachers manage behaviour well. They have a positive approach, and set good examples to pupils through their own behaviour and relationships. Their standards are clear and consistent, so that pupils know what to expect. Rewards and sanctions are fair, and pupils understand the systems. Teachers monitor and assess pupils' personal development. There is a range of rewards which pupils are proud to win. They are keen to contribute to house-points and each week there is a competition to win a coveted award. Teachers keep a close eye on pupils who have special educational needs linked to emotional or behavioural problems and their behaviour is tracked and recorded. Parents are asked to cooperate and are kept well informed. In

addition the school has access to advice and expertise from the local education authority. This service has proved fruitful and has had a significant impact on pupils' achievements.

43. The school has improved its procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do in English and mathematics and they are now good. In these subjects, teachers use standardised and national tests to check and record pupils' attainment and have begun to keep track of their progress using a computerised system. These records are then used to set realistic targets for each pupil and to predict how well they are likely to achieve in the next year. In science, teachers have similar systems but do not track pupils' progress in the same way. Co-ordinators of other subjects have rightly identified assessment as a priority for development and set this as a target for improvement in the coming year. In some subjects, such as art and design and music, there are no agreed systems for assessing or recording what pupils can do. In other subjects, co-ordinators have developed systems but they are still at an early stage of being implemented or are being tried for the first time. None have been in place long enough to have an impact on standards.

44. The use of assessment to identify those pupils who have special educational needs is good. All pupils are tested regularly to measure their reading ability. Since this system was introduced just over a year ago, the progress pupils who have special needs make in English has improved significantly. Support staff have good relationships with pupils and this has a positive effect upon the progress they make. Procedures for monitoring their progress are good. The school makes good use of outside agencies to support pupils who have special educational needs and those children in the nursery who have impaired hearing. Teachers keep their own records of how well pupils who speak English as an additional language are doing and these pupils are given some additional support from the local education authority.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

45. Parents have positive view of the school and feel that it does a good job for their children. The closer partnerships developed by the school in the last couple of years are beginning to have a helpful impact on pupils' achievements.

46. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Parents are well informed about happenings in the school. Newsletters keep them up to date with events and educational visits. Governors ensure that the prospectus is of good quality and provides plenty of useful information regarding school routines. Nursery teachers provide parents with information about the topics their children will be covering during the half term but similar information is not provided for the rest of the school. Annual reports have improved but are still too brief to give parents a clear view of what their children can do in all subjects. In addition, they detail what work has been covered rather than what the child has done well or where there is room for improvement. Reading and homework diaries provide a helpful channel of communication between parents and teachers. However, not all parents use these and some teachers are more consistent in their responses to parents' comments than others.

47. The school is working hard to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning. It provides workshops that inform parents of new initiatives and changes to the curriculum. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are involved in developing their children's educational plans. The school informs them about activities that include their children and any changes in provision. After seeking parents' views over the past two years, the school shows that it values their opinions by implementing good ideas. Parents appreciate the welcoming atmosphere of the school and take advantage of opportunities to speak informally with teachers and to share their concerns. A very small number of parents, who attend school regularly to help in classrooms, make a good contribution to teaching and learning.

48. A small but active parent, teacher and friends' association makes a valuable contribution to

the social life of the school by organising events, such as Easter and Christmas fairs and discos. Parents also respond enthusiastically when asked for help and raise money for the school that is used to buy resources for teaching and learning.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

49. The headteacher leads and manages the school well and has ensured steady progress in tackling the key issues identified in the previous report. Prior to his appointment, progress had been slow and most of the changes have taken place in the last two years. This is one of the reasons why the school is not further forward than it is.

Strong leadership is based in the headteacher's determination to raise standards by:

- motivating and securing the commitment of teachers, governors and support staff;
- maintaining close partnerships with parents and governors that have a positive impact on pupils' learning; and
- creating a positive ethos where pupils enjoy school and make steady progress.

Good management results from the headteacher's ability to coherently plan improvements to standards by

- addressing issues raised from the monitoring of teaching and learning;
- maintaining a rigorous programme to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision;
- laying strong emphasis on improving standards in English and mathematics;
- helping teachers improve the quality of their work and, at the same time raising standards;
- prudently managing the school's finances to get the best value from the school's resources; and
- delegating responsibilities so that teachers gain expertise in different year groups.

50. Not all of these initiatives have been in place long enough to have a positive effect yet. For example, the monitoring of teaching in English and mathematics highlighted gaps in those subjects but meant that teachers' low expectations in other subjects were not identified.

51. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Since the appointment of the headteacher, members of the governing body have increased their involvement with the school. They are now far more involved in determining policy and monitoring the curriculum. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met and that parents are kept well informed about the work of the school through their annual report. Governors are responsible for setting goals for the work of the headteacher and are involved in setting realistic targets for raising standards in English and mathematics in National Curriculum tests.

52. The headteacher and governors are rapidly coming to terms with the principles of best value. They use information from analysing the results of National Curriculum tests and comparisons with other schools to guide financial decisions. Spending is beginning to be targeted to where it will have the best impact on standards. For example, governors have decided to spend money on providing support staff who work with pupils who have special educational needs. This is beginning to pay dividends and these pupils often make good progress when working in small groups.

53. Financial planning is satisfactory. The finance committee examines and discusses budget proposals before the full governing body approves and sets the final budget. After identifying priorities, governors allocate funds towards planned improvements to ensure they are achieved. Through their finance committee they keep a close check on spending and ensure that grants for specific purposes are used fittingly and the budget for pupils who have special educational needs is spent productively on staff and resources. Administrative systems are computerised and through the conscientious work of the school's secretary, financial administration is efficient and unobtrusive.

54. Not all subject co-ordinators manage their subjects well. Those who do a good job have a firm understanding of their responsibilities and contribute to the management of the school. They have good systems in place for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do in their subjects and analyse information from these to identify gaps in teaching and learning and to measure the progress of pupils. Where the management is weaker, there are no agreed procedures for assessment, making it more difficult for teachers to know what to write in the annual reports to parents. Similarly, in those subjects where the leadership and management are good, co-ordinators monitor the quality of teaching and keep a close check on standards by looking at pupils' books. In some subjects, co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning at the end of the term, which means that they have a check of what has been taught but cannot alter or amend the planning in order to improve the quality of teaching. All co-ordinators have worked hard to ensure that policies and programmes of work have been reviewed and updated to take account of amendments to the National Curriculum.

55. The management of special educational needs remains good and has been instrumental in improving the school's provision in the last few years. The co-ordinator carries out all duties conscientiously and maintains close contact with staff, parents and outside agencies. The school regularly supplements the budget for special educational needs to buy in extra support from the authority's Learning Support Services. This funding is spent wisely and contributes effectively to the progress made by pupils who need help with their learning or personal development. Training to implement the new Code of Practice is in the pipeline.

56. There is a satisfactory match between the numbers, experience and qualifications of teachers and education support staff and the needs of the planned curriculum. The school has a good system for helping teachers improve their work. Every member of staff has agreed objectives for professional development and these are linked to the school's priorities for improvement. The school has helpful systems in place to support newly qualified or newly appointed teachers. They are given a mentor to act as an adviser and a staff handbook provides useful information about the school's routines and procedures.

57. The school has good, spacious accommodation. Classrooms are sufficiently spacious for the number of pupils in each class. The buildings are well maintained and clean. Displays are not of such a high quality as they were at the time of the previous inspection and, in some classes, there is little evidence of pupils' work. The grounds are extensive, with a good-sized field for sport and play. At present the school is on two sites, with the nursery separated from the reception children. Although reception children go across the road to use the resources for physical development, the situation is not ideal but will be much improved when the current building plans come to fruition. The present accommodation for the nursery is well equipped and provides a pleasant and attractive environment both indoors and out. Though there is no sheltered area outside, children can use the spacious hall if the weather is unsuitable.

58. The school has sufficient resources to teach all subjects and uses them to satisfactory effect on pupils' learning in most subjects. It makes good use of visits to places of educational interest in the local area to increase pupils' understanding of subjects such as geography and history. Visitors to the school help stimulate pupils' imaginations by telling stories, dancing and playing musical instruments.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. Governors, the headteacher and staff should:

- (i) Raise standards in English by,
- planning more opportunities for pupils to speak in lessons;
  - agreeing and implementing a more consistent approach to ensure that pupils listen attentively;
  - teaching topics in greater depth so that sufficient time is given to reading and writing skills;
  - insisting that work is neat and completed.

*(paragraphs 81-92 of the commentary)*

- (ii) Raise standards in mathematics by,
- providing more opportunities for pupils to work on handling data;
  - planning more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics to solve problems;
  - ensuring that pupils' work is marked regularly;
  - insisting that work is neat.

*(paragraphs 93-98 of the commentary)*

- (iii) Raise standards in science by,
- ensuring that work builds on what pupils already know;
  - teaching experimental and investigative science in greater depth;
  - ensuring that work is pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities;
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do.

*(paragraphs 99-107 of the commentary)*

- (iv) Raise standards in geography, history, music and religious education by,
- giving greater emphasis to each subject;
  - ensuring that work gets harder from one year to the next.

*(paragraph 121-125, 134-139 and 145-148 of the commentary)*

- (v) Improve the effectiveness of monitoring by subject co-ordinators by,
- agreeing and implementing procedures for checking teachers' planning;
  - checking pupils work regularly in order to track pupils' attainment and learning.

*(paragraphs 54, 113, 125, 139, 148 of the commentary)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	24	28	5	0	0
Percentage	0	5	40	47	8	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	35	216
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		80

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	80

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
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	16	12	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	13	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	27	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (88)	89 (81)	96 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	25	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (88)	86 (81)	96 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	13	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	15
	Girls	7	6	8
	Total	21	19	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (59)	56 (54)	68 (71)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	13
	Girls	7	7	5
	Total	19	21	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (66)	62 (63)	53 (71)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	171
Any other minority ethnic group	7

*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 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115.25

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35
Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146.25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	511,955
Total expenditure	499,650
Expenditure per pupil	1,945
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,167
Balance carried forward to next year	23,472

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	286
Number of questionnaires returned	115
Percentage response rate	40

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	30	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	49	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	57	4	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	46	17	2	2
The teaching is good.	51	48	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	48	15	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	39	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	48	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	54	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	50	45	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	52	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	47	6	4	11

## **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**

60. Standards and the quality of teaching have remained similar to what they were at the time of the previous inspection. Most of the teaching is good and children achieve well during their time in the nursery and reception classes. However, one of the characteristics of the school is that not all of the children who attend nursery go on to join the reception classes. This is because a significant number of parents from outside the local area use the nursery for their children. In addition, the nursery caters for a number of children who have impaired hearing and it is also a designated nursery for children who have special educational needs.

61. When they start in nursery, children's skills and knowledge vary considerably. A small number of children have the skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. However, a greater proportion have difficulties with speech and hearing, or have other special educational needs and a significant number of children are just learning to speak English as an additional language. This means that, on balance, children's attainments are below what is typical for their age. Standards are equally low at the start of the reception class. This is largely because many of the children who have attended nursery go on to join other schools and not all of the children in reception classes have benefited from time in the nursery.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

62. When they start nursery, many children lack the confidence and independence that are typical for their age. Good teaching ensures that, by the end of the foundation stage, children achieve well and gain many of the early skills and attitudes expected for their age. Staff are well trained to help children who have special educational needs, those who have impaired hearing and children who are just learning to speak English. Each group of children are given the specific help that they need to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

63. Throughout the foundation stage, teachers promote children's personal development well. They do this by encouraging them to be independent in their day-to-day activities; for example, in getting their own aprons in the nursery and in finding the equipment they need to complete a task in the reception classes. Having instructions and posters in more than one language helps children who speak little English to settle into the routines of the foundation stage.

64. Children are encouraged to make friends with one another and to be helpful to others. Consequently, by the end of the foundation stage, most children work and play together amicably. A good example of this was when a small group of children in a reception class made up a story about dinosaurs as they played in the sand.

65. Teachers are good role models for children. For example, children see the adults handling the guinea pigs gently and do the same. Children are taught the difference between right and wrong behaviour in a gentle way. They are reminded quietly that they need to share toys and equipment when exploring in the sand or engaged in imaginative play in the home corner. As a result, children behave well; they understand what is expected of them and everyone benefits from working in a calm and settled environment.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

66. This area of learning is taught well. However, several factors prevent many children from achieving the standards expected for their age by the end of the foundation stage. A number of children have impaired hearing or speech difficulties, an above average proportion have special educational needs and several are learning to speak English. In addition, many children have to

catch up from a lower starting point.

67. From a low start, children make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing because of the daily opportunities that they have to engage in each type of activity. Children who have impaired hearing and who are learning to communicate through signing, work successfully alongside other children as a result of the extra help they get from staff. Children who speak English as an additional language make good progress because staff take the time to ensure that they understand what is being said.

68. A good feature of the teaching is the way that staff plan activities carefully to ensure that there are many opportunities to develop language and widen children's vocabulary. For example, in the pet shop area, children are encouraged to engage in imaginative play and to talk, write and read about animals. On the other hand, teachers are quick to respond when children bring in anything of interest. For example, when a child brought some tadpoles to school, teachers were quick to get the books and pictures that would further stimulate children's discussions. Teachers are not always consistent in the way that they manage children who shout out answers and a small number of children do this often.

69. Teachers believe that language and literacy are of utmost importance and a good deal of time is spent on reading and writing activities. Children have daily opportunities to listen to and read stories and to write in a wide range of activities. Consequently, by the end of the reception year most children read simple sentences without help from their teachers and use their knowledge of letter sounds to write short sentences about the stories they have heard. A very small number of higher attaining children read fluently. Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to improve speaking in front of an audience. For example, during an 'I Spy' game children gave one word answers.

### **Mathematical development**

70. When they start in the nursery, many children do not have the mathematical knowledge or vocabulary that is typical for their age. Good teaching ensures that children achieve well but cannot overcome the difficulties experienced by children with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, by the end of the foundation stage, standards are below what is expected for the children's age.

71. Teachers ensure that children gain an understanding of number, pattern and shape through practical activities such as counting objects, playing games and sorting shapes into sets. This helps children make good progress in understanding numbers and concepts, such as adding and taking away. Although teachers encourage older children to record their mathematics as sums many still need help with this.

72. Teachers use every available opportunity to use mathematics and mathematical language. They do this through stories, songs, games and imaginative play. Mathematical vocabulary such as 'How long?' 'How many?' or 'Can you put them in the right order?' encourages children to practise their mathematical skills.

73. Teachers are good at assessing what children have learned. They do this by using simple tasks that are enjoyable to children. For example, in the nursery teachers used number jigsaws to assess how well children could identify numbers. After finding numbers to six one child asked if he could put the numbers in order.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

74. When they start in the nursery many children have limited experiences outside their own home and families. Good teaching widens their knowledge and understanding of the world but standards remain below what is expected by the end of the foundation stage.

75. A good feature of the teaching is the way that teachers plan many activities that are based

on first-hand experiences. For example, children find out about insects and plants by exploring in the wildlife garden. Visits to places of worship help children understand about religions and cultures and visitors to the school, such as nurses, ambulance teams and fire fighters widen children's knowledge of the community.

76. A strength of the teaching lies in the way topics are used to bring together and extend early learning in geography, history, science and information technology. Teachers ensure that children learn about their past through looking at pictures and objects. They explore using their senses and are encouraged to ask questions about what they see. Children are encouraged to use computers to draw, paint, write and play games. As a result, most use the mouse and space bar to move objects on the screen and enjoy using computers. Teachers encourage children to talk about their families and use stories to help children learn about the significance of special events, such as baptism and marriage. However, despite being very keen to find things out a significant number of children have difficulty talking about what they know because of their lack of confidence and limited vocabulary.

### **Physical development**

77. Regular opportunities to use the hall and outside area for dancing, games and gymnastics help children make steady progress in the development of physical skills. By the end of the foundation stage they have achieved many of the early learning goals and move with confidence and control. This was evident when children played outside and moved along planks, climbed up and down ladders and crawled through plastic shapes. They negotiated turns and pathways across the apparatus and judged the space they had to jump or swing into so that there were no bumps or accidents. Children who have impaired hearing or special educational needs that are linked to physical problems are given extra attention and help when working and playing outside and in this way they are helped to achieve as well as they can. They enjoy physical activities as much as other children and are keen to have their go on wheeled toys or play equipment.

78. When they start in nursery, many children lack dexterity with scissors and pencils. Teachers in the foundation stage make this a priority and ensure that children have daily opportunities to cut, paste, paint and write. In this way children begin to master the skills while in nursery. Continued practice ensures that by the end of the reception class they can use small tools and equipment such as glue sticks competently. In nursery and reception classes, teachers also plan plenty of opportunities for children to work with coloured plasticine or dough, which they roll, squeeze, push and knead into shape when making figures or models.

### **Creative development**

79. Good teaching ensures that children achieve well. Teachers provide many activities where children can explore colour, texture and shape and ensure that they learn skills, such as mixing paint. Using these skills, children in the nursery paint pictures of themselves that are vibrant with life and colour and their paintings of the guinea pigs include accurate details of colour and features and a number of children tried to reproduce the texture of the guinea pigs' fur. In the nursery, higher attaining children were helped by adults to produce some accurate and detailed pictures of irises. In reception classes, children extend their skills successfully and produced chalk drawings of daffodils that were of a good quality.

80. In the nursery, teachers provide many opportunities for children to experiment with sounds using a range of untuned percussion instruments as well as singing rhymes and songs. Children learn to hold percussion instruments properly and are taught the words and actions of traditional songs and rhymes. In the reception class, teachers plan more formal activities, when children are given the chance to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings through a variety of songs and music. By the end of the reception class, children have a wide repertoire of songs and enjoy singing. Once again, good teaching ensures that children achieve many of the goals expected for their age.

## ENGLISH

81. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read at the level expected of seven-year-olds. Their speaking and listening skills and writing are all below what is expected for their age. This is a similar picture to the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Year 6, standards in all aspects of English are below what is expected for pupils' age. Test results show a similar picture. Standards in Year 6 continue to be low because more than a third of the pupils have special educational needs. Teaching is satisfactory and there is some good teaching of the basic skills of reading and writing, which helps pupils learn at a steady rate. The school's records of pupils' attainment show that those who attend the school from Year 1 to Year 6 make steady progress from one year to the next. Factors such as the above average proportion of pupils who start the school part-way through their education make comparisons with prior attainment inaccurate.

82. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are below what is expected for pupils' age. There are several reasons for this. Many pupils have limited communication and language skills when they start in the nursery and in addition a small number speak English as an additional language. From this low start, pupils make steady progress as a result of the regular opportunities that teachers provide for speaking. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to listen but they are not always consistent in their approach to managing the small number of pupils who call out answers. Teachers generally make a point of asking questions of pupils who speak English as an additional language, to make sure that they understand the vocabulary being used. This helps them make steady progress in learning to speak English.

83. In junior classes, there are many times each day when pupils are required to listen to their teachers, and they do this politely. However, many pupils are reluctant to answer questions and often when they volunteer comments they are not related to the subject. For example, in a Year 6 class pupils were more interested in where the teacher hung his tapestries than in how they were used to tell a story. Teachers do not provide enough structured opportunities for pupils to listen attentively and think about what has been said or to engage in discussions in pairs or groups. This means that when they are asked to talk with partners they are generally shy and lack the confidence to share their views in a group. Pupils in Year 6 often need considerable prompting before they give their opinions and they rarely question the views of others in a lively way. By the end of Year 6, pupils who speak English as an additional language generally speak fluently and this is not the reason for their limited skills. Like other pupils, they lack confidence.

84. Pupils in infant classes are taught a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. They are taught to look at clues from pictures and to build up words by sounding out letters. This ensures that most pupils become capable readers by the end of Year 2 and that they are always able to have a go at difficult words. This is a real success for the school because almost a third of pupils in Year 2 have special educational needs. They are helped to succeed by the school's effective use of initiatives, such as the early literacy support classes. Volunteers who come into school regularly to hear pupils read also make a significant contribution and help pupils of all abilities make steady progress.

85. In junior classes, teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to read. Pupils settle down to quiet reading times at the beginning of some afternoons. They read to teachers, other adults and their families. Many lessons involve reading to find information and there is extra help for pupils who struggle to reach the level expected for their age and for those who have special educational needs. However, the emphasis given to writing in the past year, means that teachers do not spend enough time ensuring that pupils understand what they have read. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, average and lower attaining pupils do not always grasp the significant ideas and themes of the books they read. Higher attaining pupils make reference to the text when talking about their books but do not go beyond this to select phrases or sentences to illustrate their views.

86. The emphasis given to writing, and in particular spelling and handwriting is beginning to pay dividends and standards are improving. Teachers encourage pupils in Years 1 and 2 to write in a joined style, which means that more pupils are set to achieve a higher level than in previous years. Throughout the school, teachers have put a great deal of effort into raising standards in spelling. Pupils are given spellings to learn at home and are tested each week. This works best when teachers give spellings that follow a pattern; for example, words that end with *ing*. As a result, of all this, most pupils in Year 2 spell simple words correctly. By the end of Year 6, average and higher attaining pupils spell words with regular patterns correctly.

87. Teachers provide interesting reasons for pupils to write. For example, in infant classes pupils write stories, poems, news and accounts of events they have studied in other subjects. However, standards remain below average because many pupils have a limited vocabulary. This reflects the above average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. By the end of Year 6, lower attaining pupils write short accounts but their vocabulary lacks imagination. Average and higher attaining pupils use a wider vocabulary and include phrases such as 'my favourite bit was when' and 'it was going rather fast'. In general, the work of higher attaining pupils is longer and they sustain and develop ideas in stories to a greater extent than other pupils. Pupils limited vocabulary is evident in the way that many fail to use Standard English in their writing, for example, writing 'werser' when they mean 'worse'.

88. The attention given to punctuation is beginning to raise standards. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use full stops and capital letters, though this is still something that is commented on by teachers in books in Year 3 and Year 4. By the end of Year 6, most pupils punctuate their work with speech marks and use paragraphs.

89. One of the reasons why standards are below average by the end of Year 6 is that teachers do not spend enough time on each topic before moving onto the next. Consequently, pupils learn the basic facts but do not get a good feel for the subject. For example, in learning about play scripts pupils read scripts and do work on plays, characters and settings but there is no evidence that they have written a script of their own or in collaboration with others.

90. Some teachers have low expectations of what pupils can do and accept work that is untidy or incomplete. The comments that teachers make on pupils' work do not often enough remind pupils of the need to be neat and consequently, they do not take sufficient care with their work. This is another significant factor in why standards are not higher.

91. Teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to help pupils make faster progress with their reading and writing. Though they have sound word processing skills pupils are rarely given the opportunity to draft or publish work using the computer, other than in information and communication technology lessons. Similarly, they rarely use the Internet or CD ROMs to research facts in other subjects. In contrast, pupils put their literacy skills to regular use in other subjects. They read texts and write accounts of their work in many subjects.

92. The co-ordinator is new to the job and has made a good start at leading and managing the subject. A thorough analysis of tests identified gaps in teaching and learning that have been remedied in the past year. This is one of the reasons why standards in writing are improving. The co-ordinator has a clear idea of what needs doing to raise standards and has set about the task in a rigorous and systematic way and with a considerable amount of enthusiasm. The monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work is thorough and has highlighted the weaknesses identified in this report. These initiatives have brought about improvements to the quality of teaching and are beginning to raise standards. All of this puts the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary to raise standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

93. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The main reason for this is the high proportion of pupils in Years 2 and 6 who have special educational needs and do not reach the level expected for their age. The school's records show clearly that most pupils make steady progress from one year to the next and that comparisons with prior attainment are not always accurate because many of the pupils' in last year's Year 6 classes were not the same pupils who were in Year 2 in 1997. There are some gaps in pupils' knowledge of handling data that prevent pupils from achieving as well as they should. However,

94. Teachers follow the guidance for teaching mathematics set out for them in the National Numeracy Strategy and this ensures that lessons provide the right balance of mental, oral and written work. Teachers find different ways of helping pupils to practise adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing numbers quickly and solving mathematical problems in their heads. Often they make it fun with quick-fire questions and answers and time targets and pupils try hard to beat the clock and improve their speed. These activities help pupils improve their mental agility and become more competent at working calculations out in their heads. For example, pupils in Year 1 practised their numbers by singing and clapping the 'doubles' song and 'Who Built the Ark?' This helped them double simple numbers and match them up in a dominoes game. Pupils in Year 3 practised adding coins together with a question and answer game against the clock. They made several mistakes on first attempt but second time around all pupils were able to give prompt answers to money addition problems and beat their time target. This practice helped some of them with the next part of the lesson in which higher ability pupils solved money problems based on shopping bills and lower ability pupils worked out what stamps they would need to buy for their letters.

95. Teachers are good at helping pupils to understand the concept of place value. In the higher attaining group in Years 5 and 6; for example, the teacher taught pupils to tackle difficult calculations by splitting a large number into its component parts, applying the calculation to each part and then combining the answers to arrive at the final result. Pupils understood the importance of aligning numbers correctly when recording and by the end of the lesson were proficient in multiplying two-digit by three-digit numbers.

96. Teachers ask pupils to tackle problems in different ways and often ask them to explain to the class how they have arrived at an answer. Pupils are willing to participate in this way and most are ready to have a go when asked to use the white board to demonstrate. For the most part pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and show enthusiasm for their work. Their interest invariably improves when they are given an opportunity to be actively involved rather than when they are expected to sit passively and listen to over-long teacher explanations. Teachers plan well for the range of ability within the class. They do this in most classes by grouping pupils of similar ability together and, in Year 5 and 6, by teaching pupils in groups of similar ability and through the provision of 'booster classes' for those pupils who need extra help. Pupils who have special educational needs receive the help they require and care is taken by teachers and helpers to include these pupils fully in lessons by adapting work to suit their capabilities.

97. There are some weaknesses in teaching that are preventing pupils from achieving well. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly but too few make written comments that will help the pupil improve further. Some unsatisfactory marking occurs in some books in Years 3 to 6. Where pupils' books had not been marked regularly the teacher had not picked up pupils' problems with understanding new concepts and nothing had been done to remedy them. These books had also become more and more untidy as pupils lost interest in their work. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy as a sound basis for their planning but in reality they spend more time on teaching number work and less on other aspects of mathematics than is recommended. As a result, older pupils do not have the opportunities they should to develop their understanding of handling data and working with tables and graphs. Some teachers do not make enough use of information technology in lessons and teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to carry out practical work which will help them apply their learning to real-life problems.

98. The management of the subject has improved since the last inspection. Some teachers have had their lessons monitored and have been given feedback on the quality of their teaching. The results of annual tests and national tests have been analysed to identify areas of the subject that require improvement. Although the systems in place for checking teachers' planning and pupils' work are not yet stringent enough to identify problems with teaching and learning such as unmarked or poorly presented work, nevertheless the school is now well placed to improve the subject and raise standards further.

## **SCIENCE**

99. By the end of Year 2, most pupils achieve standards that are typical for their age. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average. Pupils' progress is satisfactory, however and the lower standards reflect the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in the current Year 6 and the above average number of pupils who start the school part-way through their education.

100. Teaching in years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and ensures that most pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable. A good feature of the teaching is the way that pupils are taught to record their work. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, most pupils use a range of methods to record their work. These include using tick boxes, labelling diagrams, completing simple charts and writing descriptions of what they have observed. For example, pupils drew pictures and labelled the sounds that they could hear in the street. Some of these were very detailed. Many of the activities are of a practical nature and involve pupils finding things out for themselves. This method works well and pupils enjoy their science work. The first-hand experiences they gain from looking and feeling helps them classify objects into living and not living and to describe materials according to properties such as 'fluffy', and 'hard'. Teachers use the right scientific vocabulary and, as a result, the most able pupils use terms such as 'negative' and 'positive' to describe simple electrical circuits.

101. There are several reasons why standards are below average by the end of Year 6. There is a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 and an above average proportion of pupils who join the school part-way through their education. Both of these factors have a detrimental effect on standards. However, an important reason is that the teaching is not always good enough to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should.

102. One of the weaknesses of teaching is that teachers sometimes have low expectations of what pupils can do and pupils' work is not pitched at the right level. Too often, higher attaining pupils are given the same tasks as average and lower attaining pupils and as a result they are not challenged by their work. For example, pupils' books show that much of the work is copied from the board or books and consequently, everyone does the same thing. The co-ordinator has identified this as an area of teaching that needs improving but initiatives, such as monitoring teachers' planning, have not, in the past, been thorough enough to have a significant impact on raising standards.

103. Teachers use a limited range of methods and not enough emphasis is given to investigative and experimental science in some years. The exception to this is in Year 5 where the teacher provides more opportunities for pupils to learn through exploration and discussion. For example, in an experiment to classify materials as solids, liquid or gas, pupils were surprised that the results were not what their initial thoughts led them to believe. Pupils enjoyed learning in this way and, because the activities were exciting, they put a lot of effort into their work and behaved well.

104. A good feature of the teaching is the way that teachers provide opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to attend a local secondary school for science lessons. Pupils benefit from being taught in specialist classrooms and the visits also help them gain confidence for when they transfer to Year 7.



105. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously, often annotated with detail of the situation in which the pupil is working. This is an effective way of tracking pupils' progress and is an improvement on what was reported previously.

106. Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs are often given additional help in science lessons. When they work in small groups that are led by a classroom assistant or adult, these pupils often make good progress. This is because the careful questioning by adults helps pupils to deepen their understanding of scientific concepts.

107. In the past, leadership has not been sufficiently strong to maintain standards. Recent initiatives, however, show the school has recognised the need to improve science. A new, full-time co-ordinator will be in place for next year. Expertise from outside school has already been used to improve teachers' knowledge and analysis of test results indicates weaknesses in the curriculum, particularly investigative science. An equally important omission is the lack of opportunities for pupils to present their data with information and communication technology. These are the aspects that lead to pupils achieving the higher levels. The school has plans in place for extra training for teachers next year and "booster classes" are operating currently in Year 6. Planning is checked retrospectively, which dilutes the opportunity for the co-ordinator to have an impact on how or what science is taught. Although the subject co-ordinator checks pupils' books, the emphasis is on what areas of the curriculum have been covered, rather than the standards pupils are achieving. Again, this is a missed opportunity to have an impact on how standards can be raised. No time has been given for teaching to be monitored.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. Standards in art and design match those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6, though there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge of artists, designers and craftspeople working in different periods or cultures. Satisfactory teaching and sound leadership and management have ensured that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

109. Teachers establish a reasonable balance between using art to develop pupils' understanding of other subjects and work to increase their creativity, technical skills and knowledge of art itself. In most classes there are displays of paintings, pictures and collage work that illustrate pupils' work in science, history and geography. For example, pupils in Year 2 produced a bright display of the Great Fire of London as part of work in history and those in Years 5 and 6 used collage techniques to produce pictures in the style of Matisse as part of their work on movement and the body.

110. The methods that teachers use work well. In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan a suitable number of opportunities for pupils to work with a variety of media. Consequently, most pupils use pencils, pastels and paint to produce a range of work which is of a sound quality overall. Drawings and paintings of themselves incorporate many details and show that pupils mix colours well to capture the tone of what they see. However, when drawing flowers, a number of pupils in Year 2 did not pay close enough attention to their colour and consequently failed to produce a good likeness in their pictures. As they get older, pupils are taught to use a variety of specialist techniques such as printing and batik and they produce pictures of a reasonable quality. Pupils in Year 6 were keen to talk about how they had used potatoes as a printing block and built up picture using different colours and depths of paint.

111. Teachers ensure that pupils study the work of famous artists. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced a bright and lively display of paintings on fabric, in the style of Piet Mondrian. Despite this, their knowledge of famous artists is very limited and they do not compare the methods used in their own work with those used by the artists they have studied.

112. A good feature of the teaching of art and design is the use made of local artists to stimulate pupils' and help them work through exciting projects, such as creating clay models incorporating the architectural features of the buildings they had seen during a visit to a nearby abbey. The help and direction given by the artist enabled pupils in Year 6 to produce functional models of a very high quality with rich colours and textures. This additional, expert tuition helps pupils see what they can achieve and they are very proud of their work. This was obvious on their faces and in the way that they talked enthusiastically about how they had made their designs and paper templates and the difficulties they encountered in making their models.

113. The co-ordinators have rightly identified art and design as a subject for development in the coming year. Displays are not of the same high quality as they were judged to be at the time of the previous inspection and pupils' experiences of art and design are not always wide enough. For example, throughout the school, teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to teach art and design. Consequently, many pupils are unfamiliar with computer paint programs and older pupils say that they have had very few opportunities to research artists or craftspeople using the Internet or CD ROMs. There are no procedures for assessing what pupils can do and without a systematic approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning the co-ordinators cannot have a good enough overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

114. Standards match those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6. Improved teaching, a wider curriculum and good management by the co-ordinator have led to standards in Year 6 being higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

115. One of the main reasons for this success is the good leadership and management of the co-ordinator. Following criticisms in the previous report, the co-ordinator has successfully re-organised the curriculum and increased the range of tools and equipment available for pupils to use. Teachers now use a good quality programme to plan work and as a result, the curriculum meets statutory requirements.

116. A further reason for the improved standards in Years 3 to 6 is that teaching is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have benefited from training and their increased knowledge and confidence are evident in the way that topics now build on skills that pupils have learned in the previous year. This ensures that they learn at a steady rate. For example, in Year 2, pupils use the skills of gluing, cutting and measuring that they have learned in the foundation stage and Year 1, when they make stick and glove puppets. A good feature of the teaching throughout the school is that teachers have high expectations that pupils will try hard with their models and finish them to a good standard. This was evident in the good quality vehicles that pupils in Year 5 and 6 had decorated carefully.

117. Teachers incorporate knowledge and skills gained in other subjects into pupils' work in design and technology. In Years 1 and 2, pupils put their literacy skills to good use to label their designs of puppets and in Years 3 to 6 pupils go on to provide clear step-by-step instructions of how models should be made. Teachers also ensure that pupils use their mathematical skills in their work. For example, pupils measured pieces of wood accurately when they made window frames with moving parts. There are also opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge of science in design and technology. Last year, pupils in Year 6 put their learning about electrical circuits to good use to make battery-powered vehicles. Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to use digital cameras and other information and communication technology in their work on design and technology.

118. Teachers are good at teaching the skills of designing and making. As a result, pupils in Year 2 produce ideas that are realistic and plans that show what materials and tools they intend to use. As they get older, pupils make their plans more detailed and by the end of Year 6 pupils' plans

include step-by-step instructions about how to make models. They also make use of templates and rough models to work out how their model will look when it is completed.

119. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their models and to say what could be improved. In discussions, pupils talk about how they would change things if they were to make the same model. For example, pupils in Year 6 talked about making bread that was too salty and said that they would follow the recipe more closely another time. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to evaluate their designs and models as they make them. This prevents pupils from distinguishing how their methods could be improved at each stage of the process. For example, because pupils in the Year 3 class did not consider their plans closely enough, a number mixed colours that were only similar to those that they had planned to use.

120. Over the last two years, the subject has had a high priority because it was seen as a key issue for improvement. In that time it has fallen to the head teacher to give the lead to the subject but this is something that is likely to change in the future. The enthusiasm and willingness to work hard shown by the co-ordinator puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

121. In both subjects, seven-year-olds achieve the standards expected for their age. Eleven-year-olds achieve lower standards than they should in geography. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection because of the amount of time teachers have spent on teaching literacy and numeracy at the expense of other subjects. It was not possible to make a firm judgement about standards in history in Year 6 because history is not due to be studied until later in the term. Pupils make steady and often good progress in learning in Years 1 and 2 because both subjects are taught in sufficient detail. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve as well as they should because neither subject has been taught systematically in the past and teachers' expectations of what these pupils should learn are sometimes too low.

122. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and both subjects are taught systematically and in sufficient depth. Teachers follow the school guidelines for the subject closely and this ensures that pupils develop historical and geographical skills as well as gain knowledge. For example, in history, pupils in Year 2 have learned about Florence Nightingale. They have recorded some basic facts about her work, the conditions she worked under and how she tried to improve them. They described differences between hospitals then and now. Lower attaining pupils wrote simple lists while higher attaining pupils recorded their differences in clear, descriptive sentences. The work of pupils in Year 1, about the visits of Barnaby Bear to countries such as Japan, Cyprus and France demonstrates a developing awareness of place and some important features and landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower. Teachers use the subjects well to practise the basic skills of reading and writing and pupils' work is marked so they know how well they are doing.

123. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, although lessons seen ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Good features of the teaching are the way in which teachers encourage pupils to use maps in geography and historical documents, books and artefacts in history to find things out for themselves. They give clear guidance to pupils about the best way to research their subject and encourage them to ask questions and find answers. When they employ these methods pupils are enthusiastic about their work. For example, pupils in Year 4 made good use of a planning sheet to identify what they had already learned and what further information they needed about aspects of life such as crime and punishment and transport in their work on Tudor life. Their questions helped them search for the information in the right place in library books so that they could then report back to the rest of the class. These pupils worked together sensibly in pairs and concentrated well on their tasks. Teachers make good use of visits to places of historical interest such as abbeys and museums, and contrasting localities such as Seaham in geography. Pupils are enthused by the visits, which bring the subjects alive.

124. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers do not give enough time to the subjects to enable pupils to study them in enough depth and detail. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that in some classes only two or three pieces of work are produced a term, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and little account is taken of what pupils have already learnt. Some teachers teach in far more depth than others and have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. This was illustrated clearly in two geography lessons, taught in Year 3 and Year 6, on local area studies. Both classes were working with large-scale maps of the area around the school. The task for both groups was similar – pupils had to locate local shops and addresses on the map - but the way the task was presented for the younger pupils meant that it was more difficult than that given to the older pupils who merely had to cut out pictures of local shops and amenities and stick them to the map. In this lesson pupils wasted a lot of time cutting out and learnt little that they didn't already know. In general, teachers' lesson planning is weak and does not make clear the standards to which pupils should be working or what pupils of different abilities should achieve at the end of a lesson. Teachers have different expectations of how work is presented. Work done by pupils in Year 4 in particular is untidy and often unfinished and of a lower standard than work in Year 3. In Years 5 and 6, teachers do not take enough opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills. Written answers are brief and factual and pupils are rarely expected to describe or explain what they have learnt in any detail. Pupils have some opportunities to research the Internet in their studies and find information from CD ROMs but the lack of computers limits what they can achieve in the time available.

125. The school has given little time to these subjects since the previous inspection because they have not been a priority for development. There have been few checks on teaching or on the quality of pupils' work and this has led to a decline in standards. The policies and schemes of work that have been put in place since the previous inspection provide useful guidelines for teachers and should enable them to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the future.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

126. Standards in information and communication technology have been maintained since the last inspection, and remain typical by the end of Years 2 and 6.

127. Teaching is satisfactory, although one or two teachers lack confidence and are unfamiliar with using the school's computers and software. Although pupils learn at a steady rate, standards are prevented from being higher because computers are not used often enough and in many lessons they stand idle. This is an inefficient use of resources and one that the co-ordinator recognises as an area for further development if standards are to improve. The school has increased its resources for information and communication technology since the previous inspection and there is now a small suite of computers in the library. These have not been in the school long enough to raise standards.

128. The methods that teachers use generally work well. For example, in a lesson on graphical modelling the teacher used an overhead projector well to give pupils in Year 5 a clear explanation of the learning objective of the lesson. Following this the teacher provided detailed, written instructions that helped them carry out each step of the process and ensured that everyone succeeded in their task. Pupils responded well to the methods used and worked well with one another. However, a real problem for the school is that there are insufficient computers in the suite to enable a whole class to work at the same time. To overcome this situation, teachers generally give one half of the class work to do while they work on computers with the other half. This method of teaching information and communication technology is ineffective and slows the rate at which pupils learn, even when the work is linked to computer skills. Another effective method is that teachers often develop lessons from a clear starting point. For example, a lesson in Year 1 began with pupils looking at a range of toys that the teacher had collected to demonstrate that machines and devices must be controlled. Pupils were enthralled by this introduction and were highly motivated to get on with their work.

129. Teachers ensure that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught the skills they need for word processing and understand the functions of the keys and mouse. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils use and name the functions of the keyboard such as which keys to use to produce capitals including the 'shift' key and how to erase their work, for example. They talk confidently about using the software programs to research information or to draw and paint pictures. There are however still gaps in their knowledge such as presenting tables of results or controlling devices by programming a set of instructions.

130. A good feature of the teaching is the way that pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught by a skilled teacher. This is working well and, when they have access to computers, pupils learn at a fast rate. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, pupils combine text and graphics and use databases and spreadsheets to communicate information. One or two of the higher attaining pupils use a range of formula functions to carry out more complex calculations after entering data into a spreadsheet.

131. Teachers are skilful at asking questions that prompt pupils' thinking. They use questions to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs are keeping up with the lesson and that those who speak English as an additional language understand the technical terms.

132. The activities that teachers plan are generally interesting to pupils and they respond well. They are keen to learn from computers and the after-school computer club is well attended by boys and girls. Those who attend benefit from the extra time they get to practise their skills and also from the opportunities it provides to socialise and work in co-operation with other pupils. Pupils' interest in computers is further evident in the pride with which pupils in Year 6 talk about their role as monitors. They willingly take on responsibility for setting up computers in the library and moving them around the school when necessary.

133. The subject is managed well because the co-ordinator has a very clear view of the improvements already made and those still to be tackled. Initiatives such as extra specialist support, a national scheme of work and an agreed system for assessing and recording what pupils can do, put the school in a good position to be able to raise standards further. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning thoroughly and the introduction of computer logbooks for older pupils gives a satisfactory record of individual achievement. With further training for teachers and the extension of the computer club to include infant pupils this is likely to provide a positive step forward in developing pupils' achievements further.

## **MUSIC**

134. Standards match those expected nationally by the end of Years 2. This is a similar picture to the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Year 6, standards are below what is expected for 11-year-olds. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection because the emphasis given to teaching literacy and numeracy has meant that music has not been taught in sufficient depth.

135. Some of the teachers have musical talents, and put these to good use to help pupils in lessons or accompany them in assemblies or hymn practice. This was evident in a hymn practice when the subject co-ordinator played piano to accompany pupils singing. Pupils responded well to the music and because the teacher could pause and go back over lines that they had not got right, by the end of the lesson, pupils' singing had improved significantly.

136. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to sing and play instruments. By the end of Year 2 they know how to hold percussion instruments correctly and are familiar with names such as guiro and maracas. They have a wide repertoire of favourite songs and hymns and enjoy listening to music and performing for others. When listening to music they use their hands and arms to follow a rhythm.

137. Younger pupils talk confidently about music. They readily name instruments that they enjoy playing such as tambourine, triangles and Indian bells. They eagerly describe how they make up

tunes that start off one way and end another way such as 'quite peaceful' and then 'louder at the end'. They know about using a range of sounds but less able pupils had some difficulty describing them using the correct terms such as fast, slow, high, lower or louder and quieter. Older pupils are less enthusiastic and sometimes self-conscious about performing although the teacher's pointed use of challenging vocabulary and a good sense of humour meant that pupils' co-operation and enjoyment increased as the lesson progressed.

138. The quality of teaching varies from good to unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. There is good teaching by a music specialist who teaches pupils to play a number of musical instruments. However, this is not provided for all pupils; only those whose families choose for them to have extra tuition. In contrast, some teachers do not have this confidence or skill and rely on a programme of work to plan lessons. Despite this, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise music. This means that 11-year-olds have a limited knowledge of famous composers or types of music, such as opera, jazz or classical. Another weakness to the teaching is that teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to compose music or to research about musicians. Because all the elements of the music curriculum have not been planned sufficiently rigorously in the past the pupils have significant gaps now in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

139. The subject has not been managed well enough to prevent standards from falling. One of the reasons why this has happened is because the co-ordinator is not monitoring the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly enough. The school does not provide the co-ordinator with opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and to gain a clear view of what training and resources are needed to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator recognises that this is a crucial target for next year.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

140. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in all aspects of physical education. This is similar to the judgements at the previous inspection. Since then the programme is wider and discussions with pupils show that sporting activities are popular and appreciated. Pupils with physical difficulties are given the help they need to achieve as well as other pupils in their class. The school has maintained its standards and improved its provision. It is well placed to improve standards.

141. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Teachers have a firm knowledge of how to teach gymnastics and games. They make good use of a programme of work to ensure that the skills they teach to pupils get progressively harder from one year to the next. They ensure that pupils warm up and cool down and impress on pupils the need to carry and store equipment safely. Pupils in Year 2 perform a particularly good warm down, based on yoga movements, after a vigorous dance lesson. Lessons taken by students from a nearby further education college are having a very good impact on the achievement and motivation of pupils and are often taught very well.

142. In most lessons, teachers give clear instructions and observe pupils working carefully, but often miss opportunities to use pupils to demonstrate skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making good progress in controlling the ball on their rackets and their jumping techniques in athletics because they have good coaching from students. Pupils in Year 2 keep time and pace well, while learning a new dance. Younger pupils' progress in understanding the effect of exercise on their heartbeat is good. When asked at the end of the lesson they know 'it beats faster' and know that is the reason why they must have a cool down activity.

143. Parents contribute to their children's learning by providing a high standard of kit for lessons as well as collecting tokens for equipment from various commercial organisations. Pupils make good responses to lessons, enjoying the awards for athletics and the competitions against other schools. Sporting activities are a prominent part of the school's extra-curricular provision. Adults

who organise some of the out of school activities report that pupils' enthusiasm and attendance is good. Consequently, the subject is making a significant impact on the social and cultural development of many pupils.

144. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator has a clear view of where the subject needs to go and the capability to make things happen. Cross-country running, basketball and netball have become regular features of the curriculum since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator and another teacher organise cricket and outdoor pursuits. Teachers plan their lessons based on the Durham scheme for physical education. This provides useful guidelines for areas of the curriculum where they lack expertise, especially in dance lessons. Swimming is included in the curriculum for Years 3 and 4, with most pupils leaving school able to swim at least the expected 25 metres. The school recognises that an area for development is the formalisation of assessment, but are at an early stage of development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145. At the previous inspection, attainment was considered to be satisfactory for all pupils. This is no longer the case for pupils in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils do not reach the standards expected in the locally agreed scheme of work. The exception is Year 5, where pupils do achieve the expected standards and have a range of opportunities to learn about religions and issues of faith. Satisfactory standards have been maintained in Years 1 and 2. Pupils know the main parts of the Christian festivals well and are given frequent opportunities to write their own accounts of the stories. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English have sufficient support and guidance to help them make the same progress as other pupils. Lessons about teamwork, friendship and bullying are reinforced in assemblies. As a result of this significant improvement in the school's provision for social and moral education, behaviour throughout the school is better than reported at the previous inspection.

146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Year 1 and Year 2, although in one lesson it was unsatisfactory. Lessons follow the Agreed Syllabus and good quality pictures and statues are used to bring lessons alive. All pupils have opportunities to listen to stories about Christianity and other religions. As a result, they understand some of the ways that the major faiths have similarities. Teachers ensure that pupils learn about symbolic ideas, such as Jesus as the 'light of the world'. Harvest is celebrated and pupils know what it is about in terms such as 'it is about crops'. In Year 2, pupils learn a lot about symbolism through their role-play of a wedding. Teachers plan for pupils to use their literacy skills in religious education lessons. As a result, pupils' understanding of sentences, full stops, factual detail and capital letters is improving through retelling stories and describing events. Good examples are the retelling of the Moses story and Jesus entering Jerusalem with 'people waving palm leaves'.

147. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall in Years 3, to 6 because lessons are not based on what pupils have already learned. Too much work covered in Years 3 and 4 is repeated in Year 6 without the expectation of higher standards. As a result, pupils are not making the expected rate of progress. Factual information learned earlier is not used for discussing deeper meaning or links with other faiths. Consequently, many pupils in Year 6 are poorly equipped to relate sensitively to fellow pupils whose ideas or religious beliefs are different from their own. In Years 3 and 5, teaching methods are open to involving pupils, who participate without fear of ridicule. A direct result of this mutual respect and co-operation is improvement in the quality of pupils' work and their interest in what they are doing. Religious education is not taught in sufficient depth in Year 4 and this slows pupils' progress. Pupils in Year 5 make good progress comparing Christian and Sikh attitudes to the poor in society. In one lesson, the teacher's pertinent suggestions led to a good discussion about how Christians and Sikhs help the poor. Challenging questions from the teacher, combined with good classroom relationships, enabled pupils to participate freely knowing their contribution would be treated with respect.

148. The leadership and management of the subject have not been strong enough to prevent

standards from falling. A modest budget is handled efficiently, providing adequate resources to help pupils learn. Although the co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning this is done at the end of the term not the beginning. While this means that the co-ordinator knows what topics have been taught it has not ensured that work gets progressively harder from one year to the next. Similarly, the co-ordinator has not monitored pupils' books closely enough to identify gaps in teaching and learning. Finally, there are no agreed systems for recording what pupils know and can do, which further prevents the co-ordinator from keeping a close eye on standards.