

INSPECTION REPORT

SPITTAL FIRST SCHOOL

Berwick-on Tweed

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122815

Headteacher: Mr R Curry

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 20-23rd May 2002

Inspection number: 196617

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Street Spittal Berwick-on Tweed Northumberland
Postcode:	TD15 1RD
Telephone number:	01289 307413
Fax number:	-
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Baxter
Date of previous inspection:	7 th July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3639	A C Davies	Registered Inspector	English Science Art and Design Design and Technology Information and Communication Technology Physical education	How high are standards? <i>The school's results and children's achievements</i> How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9214	J Garland	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Children's Attitudes, Values and Personal Development</i> How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30781	W Richardson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music Religious education Special educational needs Foundation Stage of Learning Equal Opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to their pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Focus Education
113-115 High Street
Uppermill
Saddleworth
Oldham
OL3 6BD

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-10
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Children's attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11-13
The school's results and children's achievements	
Children's attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?	14-15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16-17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17-19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19-20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20-21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23-26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27-42

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small school situated on the outskirts of the coastal town of Berwick-on-Tweed. There are 126 children, aged between 4 and 9, attending. All children speak English as their main language. The percentage of children entitled to school meals free of charge is about the same as that seen nationally. There are fewer children than average on the special educational needs register. The school draws children from an area where education has not traditionally been given a high priority. When children first start school their communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills match those expected for their age. In other areas, such as creativity and physical development they are not as skilful and are attaining below the level expected for their age. At the time of the previous inspection the school was deemed to have serious weaknesses.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school that is improving but there are still important issues to deal with. At present, the strengths do outweigh the weaknesses with particularly good provision for the youngest children being one of the highlights. The teaching is having an appropriate impact on children's learning and standards in reading are particularly good. The headteacher's leadership is beginning to have a greater impact on the standards being attained. The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children read with fluency and accuracy and use a range of strategies to help work out unknown words.
- Children are helped to become confident communicators and are happy to offer a point of view during discussions.
- The start provided for the children in the reception class is good.
- Each teacher explains to children what it is they are going to learn in each lesson and then they check if they have met their targets.
- The school makes good use of the immediate area to help provide an appropriate curriculum for the children.

What could be improved

- Not enough consideration is given to the needs of children of different ability, especially the more able, when planning work in all subjects.
- Children's writing lacks creativity and flair.
- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough.
- Staff have not participated in statutory child protection training and the arrangements for child protection are unsatisfactory.
- There are no formal procedures in place to check on the quality of teaching and learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997 when many serious weaknesses were identified. It has made satisfactory progress since that time but there is still some way to go before the school is

providing well for all its children. There have been improvements in many areas especially the teaching and learning. Standards are better than at the time of the previous inspection. The school recognised that there was much to do after the previous inspection and has had help to put in place systems that have had a positive impact on teaching and learning. The school has focused on the main issues identified but work remains to be done on some of the issues identified. Standards in all subjects have improved. Although teaching has improved there remain issues about meeting the needs of children of different ability. Child protection arrangements continue to be unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by children at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	C	E	A	A
writing	A	D	B	A
mathematics	A	E	A	A

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

Standards in reading are good with children reading with fluency and accuracy. However, many lack expression when reading aloud. In writing, most children use appropriate punctuation and grammar and their spelling standards are satisfactory. However, many children lack creativity and flair in their writing and this results in their stories being uninspiring to read. Children are competent when it comes to dealing with mental and oral work in mathematics but are less secure when using their knowledge of number to solve problems. In science, children have a sound knowledge base and can work out what is happening when they are involved in investigations. However, they are less secure in setting up their own experiments. Children do not have the range of skills in information and communication technology to enable them to make effective use of this resource throughout the curriculum. In all other subjects children attain the levels expected for their age but the lack of creativity hinders the quality of their finished work.

The National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds fluctuate greatly on a year-by-year basis. The 2001 results were good but the present Year 2 has not been able to maintain these standards. Standards in reading are now more consistent and this is an area that the present Year 2 has continued to do well. The picture is quite similar for Year 4 pupils. The voluntary national tests they take at the end of Year 4 show that reading is better than their writing and that they are not applying their mathematical skills as effectively as they should in problems solving.

When children start school the majority have appropriate skills in communication and mathematics. However, their social and creative skills are below the levels expected for their age. Children of different ability achieve well in the reception class. This results in the vast majority making good progress and meeting the learning goals anticipated by the time they finish the reception year. As children move through the school there is good attention to the needs of children with learning difficulties and most attain the levels expected for their age by the time they finish Year 2. However, there are occasions when more able children are not achieving to their full potential because there is a lack of challenge provided for them.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of children enjoy the school and eagerly participate in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. There are several children in each class who look for opportunities to disrupt the work and concentration of the vast majority who want to, and do, behave appropriately.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Children show responsible attitudes when given a task to do. However, they are not expected to take on many extra responsibilities.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
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.

The teaching is good for children in the reception class. There is very good attention given to encouraging children to show independence and to work to their potential. The range of activities is good with appropriate attention given to basic literacy and numeracy skills. The teacher is able to make learning interesting by involving children in as many 'hands-on' experiences as is possible. The lack of appropriate access to an outdoor area is hindering opportunities for children's creative and physical development.

In the rest of the school the teaching is satisfactory overall. Each teacher takes time to explain to children what it is they are going to learn in each lesson. This helps children to focus on what they need to do in order to achieve the target they are set. There are too many occasions, however, when the needs of children of different ability are not taken into consideration. This is especially the case in the foundation subjects. The most able children are therefore not extending themselves and are not being challenged. The teaching of English and mathematics are both satisfactory with appropriate attention given to helping children develop their basic skills in reading, writing and number. There are good examples of teachers planning to provide children with opportunities to use these skills in other subjects.

Teachers are well prepared and organised. However, there are far too many occasions when teachers are too directional. They do not allow children to develop their creativity but ask them to follow a set of instructions. This cuts down on the opportunity for children to learn through finding out for themselves. This is in contrast to the good opportunities provided for children to express their ideas and thoughts during philosophy lessons. Although there are examples of children being provided with targets for literacy and numeracy in some classes this has not been established through the school. This, together with marking that is not helping children to move to their learning forwards hinders the rate of progress being made by the children.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school makes good use of the local environment and local initiatives, such as the healthy eating project, to enrich the curriculum. However, a lack of creativity is stifling the breadth of the work being produced.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Most children with learning difficulties attain to the level expected for their age by the time they are in Year 4. The individual plans are not specific enough with targets being too broad to help staff plan effectively for their needs.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. There are positive features, such as the use of the golden time and the golden child to promote moral and social awareness. However, there are many lost opportunities to think about spiritual development and multi-cultural issues. Assemblies make limited contribution to spirituality and there is little opportunity for children to consider the issues of living in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Unsatisfactory. Child protection arrangements are unsatisfactory with staff not being appropriately trained. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory with the school having developed appropriate systems to help track the progress being made by individuals.

Parents are broadly happy with the school. The vast majority appreciate that the teachers work hard. The reception teacher in particular is well regarded and parents appreciate the links made with them before their children start school. Information to parents about future events and about the curriculum in general is appropriate. There are useful tips about how parents can help their children with their English work. However, a significant percentage feels that they are not able to work closely with the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The school has moved some way since the previous inspection to put in place many procedures that were missing at that time. There is now appropriate emphasis placed on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are frequent visitors to the school and they do have appropriate systems in place to check on the school's performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The staff analyse test results effectively and take action to deal with any shortcomings. There is still no formal process in place to check on the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The priority has been to keep five single-aged classes in the school despite the pressure this has put on the budget. This is understandable but it does put pressure on the school's ability to plan

	strategically to improve standards.
--	-------------------------------------

The teacher/ child ratio is good although there are fewer hours available for classroom assistants as a result. The accommodation is spacious and more could be done with a potentially exciting outdoor environment, especially in respect of the needs of the youngest children. There is a lack of learning resources for information and communication technology and physical education equipment is old.

PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy coming to school. • There is a friendly atmosphere and relationships are good. • Everyone knows everyone else. • The good start that children have in the reception. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of after school activities available to the children. • More involvement from the parents in the work of the school. • Better information about the progress made by the children. • ICT provision.

The parents have made many perceptive points. The inspection team broadly agrees with all the positive points made. There are too few activities provided for children after school and provision for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and children's achievements

- 1 The school's test results in both the National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds and the voluntary national tests for 9-year-olds indicate that standards have improved over the past few years. When compared with the position reported at the time of the last inspection there has been good improvement in standards. Children are able to express themselves with confidence and do so regularly. This is seen at its best during 'philosophy' lessons when children listen attentively to the views of others and then respond with maturity and consideration. There were occasions when this good level of communication was not as evident but they were confined to lessons led by temporary teachers.
- 2 Standards in reading are now good with test results and on-going work in classrooms showing that the vast majority of children read fluently and accurately. In the 2001 National Curriculum test the reading results were well above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. The present Year 2 has maintained at least an above average position although comparative results are not yet known for this group. There are still concerns with the children's use of expression in reading, especially when reading aloud in front of the class. This is despite children showing confidence in their reading and a good number of children reading at levels that above those expected for their age. There is appropriate use of reading for the purpose of research with children being able to use a range of skills to get to the information they require quickly. More able readers are able to talk with authority about a range of authors that they have studied. Children who struggle with reading are able to read at the levels expected for their age by the time they are in Year 4.
- 3 Standards in writing are not as good. Although the Year 2 National Curriculum test results for 2001 and comparisons to similar schools were above and well average respectively, many children do not have a creative flair in their writing. Most children write well 'mechanically', that is, their grammar, punctuation and spelling are usually good. However, there is a lack of flair in their creative work and this hinders the progress they are able to make. In the main, children do not apply their fluent oral skills to their writing. There is also a great difference between the presentation skills of Year 3 and 4 children compared with the Year 1 and 2 children. Year 3 and 4 children use a distinct cursive style of writing which is invariably neat and legible. In contrast, the Year 1 and 2 children's handwriting is poor, usually of a large print style. There are appropriate examples of children using a range of writing skills in other subjects, for example, recording their work in science or to write about different issues in relation to their design and technology work. Although there are examples of children using word processing this is usually just as a means of copying up work that has already been produced using pen and paper. Children do not have the necessary keyboard skills that help them to compose and edit on the screen.
- 4 In mathematics, there has been great variation in the National Curriculum test results over the past four years. In two of the past four years, results have been well above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. However in 2000 the results were well below average. The present Year 2 is working in line with the levels expected for their age. The voluntary national test for Year 4 children shows that standards have been above the levels expected for their age. The vast majority of children cope well with mental and oral work. They quickly and efficiently work out methods to add, subtract and multiply

numbers. They have good understanding of different methods that can be used to deal with these number facts. However, when it comes to applying their knowledge of number to problem solving situations the children are not as competent and lack confidence in handling problems in a written form. On too many occasions the work covered by the more able children is exactly the same as others in their class. Children with learning difficulties are making good progress with only a few not attaining the expected level for their age by the time they finish in Year 4.

- 5 In science, most children have a satisfactory knowledge of scientific facts. They can, for example, give reasons as to why a parachute is likely to take longer to fall to the ground than a piece of material that is tied in a bundle. They also know about the way plants grow and the importance of the sun to daily life. They are able to deduce what has happened after participating in experiments. However, they are less secure in setting up their own investigations because they lack experience of doing so. The teacher assessments undertaken with children at the end of Year 2 shows that standards are good with most children attaining the level expected for their age and approximately a third attaining the higher level (level 3) at this stage.
- 6 Standards are low in information and communication technology (ICT). Children do not have the range of skills in ICT to enable them to make effective use of this resource in other subjects. Keyboard skills are not developed sufficiently and children take a long time over tasks such as word processing. This is hindering their progress and they are not therefore able to see the benefit of using ICT as a vehicle to help them improve work in other subjects. In all other subjects children attain the levels expected for their age but the lack of creativity is hampering the quality of their finished work.
- 7 When children start school the majority have appropriate skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. However, their social, physical and creative skills are below the levels expected for their age. Children of different ability achieve well in the reception class. This results in the vast majority making good progress and being on course to meet the learning goals anticipated by the time they finish the reception year. This is a significant improvement as before the current year only half the group was attaining the learning goal for knowledge and understanding of the world, personal and social development, physical development and creative development. Good, challenging teaching has been responsible for this improved position.
- 8 As children move through the school the vast majority make satisfactory progress. Again this is an improvement compared with the position outlined at the time of the previous inspection. The progress is much better for knowledge-based activities. For example, the children are good at acquiring new facts and remembering them. They are more insecure in adding their own creative thought to the learning that is happening. Their progress in creativity is therefore disappointing and holding back the progress they are making.
- 9 There is good attention to the needs of children with learning difficulties and most attain the levels expected for their age by the time they finish Year 2. There are problems, however, related to the individual plans of children with special educational needs. The steps they need to take in order to improve are not specific enough and their targets are too broad. This is not helping them to focus on the areas they need to address in order to improve. There is not enough attention given to the needs of children of different ability in lessons. This is resulting in needs of the more able children in particular being compromised. Too frequently, the tasks set

are the same for the whole class. More able children are therefore not achieving to their full potential because there is a lack of challenge provided for them.

Children's attitudes, values and personal development

- 10 Children have good attitudes to school which is an improved position compared with the previous inspection. The vast majority come prepared to work hard and enjoy their lessons. They can sometimes be a little restive in assembly but listen carefully to well-chosen stories, especially when they have a moral and captivating theme. There are occasions when there is a lack of respect shown towards the spiritual intentions of an assembly, especially when it comes to time for reflecting. In other respects children are keen to answer questions and are quick to offer views about the work they are engaged with. They do, however, lack a spark or enthusiasm when reading aloud in class. The monotone manner they read could easily be interpreted a lack of enthusiasm for reading as a whole. This is not the case because the vast majority are able to talk about a range of authors they have studied.
- 11 Reception aged children show a great deal of interest in their work. They are swept along with the teacher's enthusiastic manner. Children in this class are quick to talk to adults who visit their class and are able to engage people about the work they have been involved with. These children frequently work in pairs and show great concentration when observing insects as part of their work. Throughout the school children are great conversationalists and are quite prepared to talk to visitors. They play well together at lunchtimes, using skipping ropes and other toys. The use of 'Golden Time' and the nomination of the 'Golden Child' every week evokes a strong response in children of all ages, who are keen to earn privileges for good behaviour. Children have never been excluded from the school but in each class there are children with the potential to be disruptive. Staff have to work hard to manage these children and whilst there has been improvement in behaviour since the previous inspection there are still occasions when children's disruptions cause the school concern. This was most evident in the class taught by a temporary teacher when the negative behaviour of a significant few caused the rest of the class some disruption. This resulted in much time being wasted and in the lesson failing to help the children make the necessary gains in their learning. In contrast to this, inspectors saw good behaviour during a genuine fire evacuation, which took place during the inspection. Children lined up outside the school and all, from reception to Year 4, behaved with forbearance and discipline as they lined up outside for a long time in conditions that were not helped by a chilly wind blowing in off the sea.
- 12 Children show that when they are given the opportunity, they will gladly take on responsibility. However, there are limited opportunities for them to do so. Year 4 children say that they feel responsible for younger children but there are not many opportunities for them to fulfil a helpful role at the moment. There is no school council or any other formal way for them to voice their opinions. However, older children show in their philosophy lessons that they can respect the point of view and beliefs of others, showing remarkable self-restraint and an ability to listen to their fellow classmates' opinions. In these situations they respond to them carefully and rationally. This is an excellent example of children displaying mature, sensitive attitudes and helps the development of really useful personal skills. This was also displayed in a literacy lesson when Year 4 children talked about issues of fairness and poverty as they considered aspects of a book they were looking at.
- 13 Attendance is good, and above the national average. This is an improved position compared with the previous inspection.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 14 Teaching is satisfactory overall with strong features evident in the impact that it is having on the learning of the youngest group of children in the reception. This is a much stronger position than reported at the time of the previous inspection when nearly one in three lessons were unsatisfactory. The teaching during philosophy lessons, introduced as part of the school's involvement in the RAIS project, is also a very positive feature.
- 15 The teaching is good for children in the reception class. The teacher has good knowledge of the foundation stage of learning guidance and implements it well in ensuring that there is a balance struck between practical and more formal activities. From very early on children show good levels of independence with a great deal expected of them in terms of clearing up and working independently. The learning is made interesting for the children with the teacher using topics that have captured their interest to develop work in literacy and numeracy. For example, during a topic on ladybirds tasks were organised with a ladybird theme to help children with ordering and counting numbers. There is very good attention on books. The teacher's own expression in reading is helping to stimulate the children's interest in literature. The organisation within the reception class is also very helpful in aiding children's independence. The 'continuous' tasks such as water and sand play and the café are organised in such a way as to ensure that children can participate in activities without the need for an adult to be supervising at all times. The planning takes full account of the needs of children of different ability and there is good sharing of the learning intentions with the children at the beginning of the lesson. There is a particular strength in the way the one child with a statement for special educational needs is fully integrated into the class activities. The support provided by the classroom assistant who works with this child is very effective. The one negative feature of the provision within the foundation stage of learning is the lack of appropriate access to an outdoor area. This is hindering opportunities for children's creative and physical development.
- 16 In the rest of the school the teaching is satisfactory overall. However, there were strengths apparent in the way children are helped to express themselves. This is in contrast to the lack of opportunities provided for children to gain 'first hand' experiences in tasks related to problem solving and investigations. During the inspection teaching was unsatisfactory only in one class, which was taught by a temporary teacher. In this class the behaviour of children was sometimes disappointing with a few children causing disruption to others in the class.
- 17 The school has recently been involved with a project organised by the Local Education Authority on improving children's confidence in oral response. This has resulted in the subject of philosophy being introduced to Years 2 and 4. During these sessions children are expected to think deeply and to come up with ideas and views to be debated by others in the class. The focus of the debate often has a moral issue and children respond very positively. It is during these sessions that teaching is at its strongest. The management of children is very effective at this time as an atmosphere of respecting each other's point of view is developed. During this session Year 4 children show that they are able to develop the ideas of others and build on the points raised. There is an added maturity about the way the children work during this time.
- 18 At present, the advantages gained in these sessions are not being fully transferred to other lessons. On too many occasions children are not expected to develop their own creative thought. This is most prominent in science lessons where Year 3 and Year 4 children have to follow instructions rather than work out for themselves what they could do. This is also the case during a design and technology lesson for Year 4. The designing and planning stages were very brief as children followed careful instructions to make a photograph frame.

- 19 The teaching of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory and staff follow the guidance provided through the national strategies. There is good attention to teaching basic skills in reading with examples of teachers giving good attention to similarities and differences in author's styles. In one lesson a Year 4 teacher guides children to consider the 'gripping part' and later the 'climax' of the story as he probes with his questions until the children are fully engaged. In the same lesson he considers two books written by the same author and contrasts the differences between the two main characters. He has good knowledge of his subject because he doesn't let children get away with simple answers but gets them to look deeper at what he wants the children to focus on. This is again in sharp contrast to another literacy lesson with the same group when there is little teacher input during the 'guided reading' part of the lesson. The teacher listens to readers rather than use the opportunity to promote new learning, especially when the opportunity to help develop their expression in reading became apparent. In numeracy lessons the children have secure mental and oral skills but are not as confident in applying these to problem solving. The pace of the openings of majority of lessons is good and helping children's mental and oral skills. However, the tasks that follow the opening session do little to help children's investigative skills. The more able children for example are not provided with challenging activities that would take on their learning. The lack of staff confidence in teaching information and communication technology is hampering the progress that children are making. The main reason for their limited confidence is due to the limited number of computers available in each classroom. This is a concern for staff and one that is slowly being addressed.
- 20 There are however good examples of children applying their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. This is evident when children record work in science or when they measure during design and technology lessons. This is not the case for information and communication technology with many missed opportunities for children to use this facility to help them in their writing, art and design and to carry out research in history and geography. There is not a clear plan to help children develop their skills in ICT and this is resulting in their skill level being inadequate to enable them to make the most effective use of ICT in their work.
- 21 At the beginning of each lesson teachers take time to explain to children what it is they are going to learn. This is helping the children to focus on what there are expected to do in each lesson. There are examples of children being provided with specific learning targets in literacy to help them to be very clear about what they need to do in order to improve. This practice is at its best in Year 2 and is not consistent throughout the school. The marking of children's work is not as useful as it could be in helping children to be clear about what they need to work on to improve. There is again some inconsistency in this aspect of the provision.
- 22 There are too many occasions, however, when the needs of children of different ability are not taken into consideration. Too frequently the tasks that follow the opening introductions are the same for all children. This is especially the case in the foundation subjects. The most able children are the ones that are losing out because they are not being extended or challenged. Children with special educational needs are well supported in lessons but their individual education plans are not always specific enough and not helpful to the individual teachers as they prepare and plan for them. In some cases the plans outline exactly the same targets for different children.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO CHILDREN OR STUDENTS?

- 23 The curriculum provided for the children in the foundation stage of learning (the reception class) is good. All six areas of learning are covered through an appropriate range of activities with good attention being given to communication, language and literacy, mathematics, personal, social, emotional and creative development. When appropriate the relevant sections of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are introduced.
- 24 The curriculum for children aged 5 to 9 is satisfactory. It complies with the National Curriculum, which is an improvement since the last inspection and though appropriately balanced between subjects lacks breadth. Religious education is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, using nationally agreed guidance to assist teachers' planning. This is also an improvement since the last inspection although the curriculum could be further enriched with more first-hand experiences to enliven children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and that of other cultures and faiths.
- 25 The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These are having a positive impact on children's learning enabling them to achieve satisfactorily. However the lack of challenge for the more able prevents them achieving even higher levels. There are appropriate programmes of work in place for all the other subjects of the National Curriculum, providing sound guidance for teachers in their planning. The school includes in its planning system nationally agreed schemes of work that are available to schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers lesson plans set out clearly what they want children to learn and the standards needed for success.
- 26 The provision for children's personal, social health and citizenship education is good. There is an appropriate written policy in place and opportunities are built into lessons to promote children's development. Good examples are in whole class discussion time and 'philosophy' lessons that form part of the RAIS project to raise aspirations and self-esteem. Local visits, for example to the lifeboat station or church and visitors to the school make a valuable contribution to personal and social development. The involvement in the production of 'A children's guide to Spittal' also provided extended opportunities to enrich the curriculum. Children are helped to develop their knowledge of sex education and a healthy, safer lifestyle through work in science. The danger of misusing drugs and other substances are taught as part of the personal, social and health education programmes of work. Talks on railway and water safety help highlight possible dangers in the immediate community and are a positive contribution.
- 27 The school does not provide an appropriate range of extra curricular activities, which is unsatisfactory. There is a small art club that meets regularly but children do not have the opportunity to develop expertise for example in sport or musical activities, this is a worse position than at the last inspection and restricts opportunities for personal and social development outside of lessons.
- 28 Provision for children with special educational needs is satisfactory. The children's needs are usually identified and targets set in individual education plans to support these children. However, those children with learning difficulties often have targets that are too broad. They are usually related to the National Literacy or Numeracy Strategies but do not successfully identify individual, specific small steps in learning, which will help them improve over relatively short periods of time. Those with behaviour difficulties have better plans matched to their exact needs and where plans are at their best, parents, class teachers and the special

educational needs co-ordinator have worked together to identify the best way forward enabling children's academic or behavioural improvement. Higher ability children are not identified individually and are not sufficiently challenged as the work set in lessons is often matched to those of average or lower ability. This does not offer opportunities for more able children to be creative, problem solve or be extended in their learning and thinking.

- 29 The school has developed links with the local community and these make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning. The schools involvement in the 'Explore and Enjoy' project, and the published guide to Spittal promotes local knowledge and appreciation of the town in which they live. The school works well in partnership with the middle school to which Year 4 children transfer to ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 30 The provision for children's moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall but there are significant weaknesses. Assemblies provide a short time for prayer but make limited contribution to spirituality as there is little time for reflection and there is not always a consistently quiet, respectful atmosphere conducive to worship. Also in lessons there are very limited opportunities for silent reflection, this restricts spiritual development.
- 31 The provision for moral development is satisfactory. The staff act as good role models and school rules are referred to in order to praise positive behaviour. Children are taught the differences between right and wrong and to show a respect for people and property. The use of 'Golden Time' and 'Golden Child' helps to instil in children that positive attitudes and behaviour will be rewarded; this helps their moral development. There are opportunities for children to be involved in discussions about moral issues. This is evident in philosophy lessons and it was particularly apparent in a Year 4 literacy lesson focusing on poverty and fairness.
- 32 The provision for children's social development is satisfactory. The majority of children collaborate during group work and co-operate willingly with others. There are a minority of children whose social skills are less well developed and who indulge in low level disruption with the aim of preventing other children from learning successfully, however the majority of teachers manage to control unsatisfactory social behaviour in their lessons, children show responsible attitudes when given a task to do, for example, looking after younger pupils. However too few opportunities are made for older children to take on real responsibilities or to be involved in decisions about the daily life of the school, as for example in a school council. This is a similar position to the last inspection. Children's social development is enhanced when opportunities are made for them to make visits outside school and initiatives to help others for example 'Operation Christmas Child'. The lack of extra curricular provision restricts children's opportunities to make friends and socialise with children from other classes or to extend their cultural knowledge.
- 33 The provision for children's cultural development is unsatisfactory. Visits out of school, community links and visitors to the school are positive features and introduce children to their own culture and extend their learning. However there are extremely limited opportunities provided to broaden children's appreciation of other beliefs, faiths and cultures and children learn little about the range and diversity of cultures that exist in Britain today. This is an unsatisfactory situation.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 34 Overall the care of children is unsatisfactory which is a worse position than at the last inspection. However children are valued and their achievements celebrated. They are well known to their class teachers, relationships within the school are satisfactory and teachers provide a secure environment where children are happy. Procedures for child protection are still unsatisfactory and do not meet statutory requirements. Although there is now a designated person, which is an improvement since the last inspection, none of the staff have attended recent training or have been updated on new issues. Inspection findings are that the school still does not take its responsibilities for child protection seriously enough.
- 35 Day to day priorities affecting health and safety are notified to the caretaker but no formal risk assessment records are available. There is not a formal or systematic record keeping system for regular health and safety checks by nominated staff and governors. However one governor does undertake an annual check. This is a similar position to the last inspection. There are two members of staff with training for first aid and midday supervisors have also received training. The school keeps records of accidents but the governors do not monitor these in order to put right any possible causes of mishaps. The school is aware of those with ongoing medical conditions such as asthma.
- 36 Arrangements for helping children to settle into school in the foundation stage of learning are good. Children look forward to coming to school and feel safe and secure. Arrangements for meeting new children and their parents are effective and help children make a good start to their school life. Appropriate arrangements are also in place to ease the transfer of children to their next school. The new planning systems ensure that full assessment information is passed on to the middle school; this is an improvement since the last inspection.
- 37 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are unsatisfactory. The system used in the registers for identifying absence due to illness or other causes is unclear. There is no method of tracking using clearly recognised codes for different causes of absence; this means the school is unable to monitor absence successfully. In addition, some children have been given permission to take more holiday during term time than is legally allowed. This detracts from their education. There is also an incorrect definition of unauthorised absence in the governors' annual report that leads to confusion for parents as to their responsibilities regarding their child's attendance at school.
- 38 Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory, school and class rules are displayed and weekly celebration assemblies highlight good behaviour or achievement and make clear to children the meaning of the house point system. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has satisfactory arrangements for preventing bullying. The level of lunchtime and playground supervision is satisfactory although the school has not yet sufficiently developed the outdoor opportunities highlighted as an area for improvement at the last inspection.
- 39 Methods for monitoring children's personal development are unsatisfactory overall. However opportunities are taken to promote self-esteem and whole class discussion time and philosophy lessons used to develop children's confidence and self-awareness and their ability to communicate. This also helps to teach aspects of caring, moral and social development. Children with special educational needs are supported by individual education plans using broad targets selected from the literacy or numeracy curriculum. This does not address specific individual needs. Where improved behaviour is needed the targets identified are much more helpful to the child. Those children with special educational needs are fully included in lessons. They make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress, especially in numeracy

and literacy, in Years 3 and 4. The school has not identified any gifted or talented children these children are insufficiently challenged in their learning which is unsatisfactory.

- 40 The school has not addressed the concerns expressed by parents at the lack of wider provision for extra curricular activities. This is an unsatisfactory situation as there is now only one extra curricular activity offered; this is less than at the last inspection. Children do not have the chance to experience for example, sporting or musical opportunities outside lessons, similar to those offered in other schools.
- 41 The schools methods for tracking children's progress over longer periods of time are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All requirements for statutory assessment on entry to the school and at the end of Year 2 are carried out. Optional national tests for Year 3 and 4 together with information from a range of tests are used to keep track of progress, notably in literacy and numeracy. The school has improved its ways of assessing children's progress and makes good use of results from national and other tests. This information is used well in literacy and numeracy to adjust planning and teaching. Record-keeping is less well developed and this leads to the curriculum not always being matched to the needs of children especially those capable of reaching higher levels.
- 42 During the inspection there was a genuine fire alert. Children were evacuated from the building quickly and quietly, registers and visitors book were used to check that the building was completely evacuated. Children behaved well during the wait outside for the fire service to arrive to check the building and ascertain the cause. The schools procedures for fire were found to be satisfactory. However the use of the same alarm for school sessions and fire alarm is confusing and during lessons the high volume of the alarm signalling start and end of lessons is distracting to both learning and teaching.
- 43 The school's involvement with the healthy schools initiative is a strength. However attention to matters concerning children welfare and safety are not fully addressed by headteacher and governors who have a statutory duty to ensure that child protection, health, safety and welfare are rigorously monitored, that records of checks are kept and that procedures are fully understood by all who work in the school. This is an unsatisfactory position as children could be put at risk.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 44 The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. There was an average return of questionnaires, and most said that their children liked school, felt teachers were approachable and that their children made appropriate progress.
- 45 There were some negative replies. Twenty per cent said they felt the school did not work closely with parents. Fifteen per cent of parents said that they were not well enough informed about progress, and 48 per cent that there was not an interesting range of activities outside school. Curriculum information has greatly improved since the last inspection. It is being tackled by some good initiatives, such as a useful set of notes for parents to guide them to help in English over each year group. This could usefully be extended for other subjects such as mathematics and science and to explain the successful philosophy programme. Class newsletters set out what is going to be studied in the course of the term. Statutory information is correctly included in official publications such as the prospectus and the GARP.

- 46 Parents with children who have special educational needs are appropriately consulted about their individual education plans and reviews and come into school to discuss progress. A small group of parents have responded with enthusiasm to invitations to discuss issues such as the drugs policy. Parents of the youngest children praised the 'Sure Start' scheme and the way they had been briefed about what to expect in the reception class.
- 47 There is one parental consultation a year, in March, which is well attended. Written reports come out in June. Reports are of satisfactory quality but need to have clearer targets and information about the progress, which has been made during the year. Since some parents feel that they do not have enough information about progress, there is room to consider expanding the opportunities for discussion about gains made during the year.
- 48 There is little voluntary help used in the school, apart from a few parents who are employed as classroom assistants. There is now a 'Friends Association' at the school, which fundraises and organises social events. Teachers make informal contacts with parents in the school playground in the mornings. Despite the school's avowed open door policy, parents do not often find it easy to approach the school with issues. There is a need to build on the goodwill, which the school evidently has already gained, in order to build a really effective partnership with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 49 The leadership and management of the school are now satisfactory which is an improved position compared to the previous inspection. There remain several important issues that need to be dealt with, particularly the formal monitoring of teaching and learning on a more regular basis. In addition, the school needs to give more attention to strategic management.
- 50 There is now much greater emphasis on raising standards and this has been successful because there has been a significant improvement in literacy and numeracy standards. This is confirmed by the national test results for the past few years. The school uses good procedures to help analyse its national and other standardised test results. It is helped in this process by the Local Education Authority's support team. The school's involvement with the RAIS project is one example of the staff responding to an identified need. The work in philosophy has done much to improve children's self-esteem and ability to give deep thought to key issues before presenting their thoughts to others in the class. This has helped the children's oral skills, which in turn has had an impact on written work. In this respect the headteacher is now giving greater direction to staff with regard to raising standards. There is still however a lack of clarity about 'how' to move children's learning forward. There is not yet a consistent approach to target setting, for example. There is also a lack of creativity in learning which can be directly associated with teachers being too directional and not giving enough time for children to think for themselves. This is contrasted by the opportunities provided in philosophy, which is not yet used in all classes.
- 51 Although the headteacher is fully aware of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and its impact on learning throughout the school, there are no formal procedures in place to check on the quality of teaching and learning. This means that teachers are not provided with clarity about areas that they need to work on to improve their own practice. In part, the problem relates to the headteacher's teaching commitment, which gives him limited time to check on the teaching. The arrangements within the performance management procedures have helped to some extent but there is still not enough formal information being provided for teachers to

help them understand what it is they could be doing to improve their teaching. There are not enough discussions taking place on teaching methodology, which gives emphasis on how children learn. This is partly responsible for the lack of creativity in children's learning and in teachers not varying their methods according to the needs of the subject.

- 52 A small core of governors is very dedicated to the school and ensures that there are satisfactory systems in place to help it understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. It gives its support in a range of ways, including regular visits to school. However, there are many other governors who are not able to give their time to the school. This has resulted in the procedures that are in place to help the governors to be clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses not being shared with all governors. The governors have not ensured that arrangements for child protection are in place, therefore they are not at present meeting their statutory obligations. Only a few governors are able to identify the school's successes and to work out what it needs to do to improve. Informally, the chair of governors is able to do a great deal to support the school. She is a regular visitor to school and knows the staff well and appreciates the areas that are being focused on with a view to improvement.
- 53 There has been a priority to keep single aged classes (five, from reception to Year 4) and this has been done despite falling numbers due to a drop in the birth rate. This is now putting pressure on other developments in the school, for example, few hours are available to classroom assistants. Whilst it is understandable that the governors have prioritised keeping staffing levels high to maintain this five class system it is now getting to the point where they are finding it financially difficult to do so. The pressures that this has put on the budget have made it difficult for the governors to plan strategically for the future. This is most noticeable in the area of information and communication technology where the lack of resourcing for the subject is adversely affecting standards in ICT.
- 54 The school improvement plan, while satisfactory in its content and procedures, is restricted by the lack of money available to plan more strategically. There is a good level of consultation happening with all staff feeling involved in prioritising intended developments. The coordinators have an impact on these developments but, as with many other small schools, most teachers are overseeing two, if not three, major areas. They have very little time, outside their normal teaching commitments, to oversee the work in these areas.
- 55 At present, the school is making limited use of information technology to help with management issues. The systems in place for tracking children's progress are mainly done by pencil and paper and there is little use made of the Internet. The school has not given much attention to developing a website. There is a general lack of awareness of the potential that information technology holds in helping the school give better information to parents and to track the progress of children. At the time of the inspection the school's administration officer was absent with a long-term illness and it was therefore difficult to assess the true impact of administration on the school's daily life. This was particularly difficult to assess because of the headteacher's teaching commitment.
- 56 The teacher/child ratio is good but, as already mentioned, this is at the cost of few classroom assistants being available to support in classrooms. The accommodation is spacious but the school is not able to make the most of it, this partly due to financial restriction. At present, there is inappropriate accommodation for outdoor play in the reception class. In addition, the large playground could be more interestingly resourced to meet the needs of all children. In most subjects the resourcing is adequate but there is a lack of learning resources for

information and communication technology. The physical education equipment is old and this restricts developments in that subject.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57 In order to ensure that the momentum of improvement is maintained, the governors, headteacher and staff need to:

- **Give more attention to meeting the needs of all abilities when planning work in all subjects. (Paragraphs 9, 22, 75, and 88)**
- **Pay particular attention to challenging the more able children in each class. (Paragraphs 9, 19, 25, 28, 75, 83, 94, 95 and 98)**
- **Improve standards in writing by giving more attention to creating writing. (Paragraphs 3, 8, 50, 51, 71, 72 and 73)**
- **Improve standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by:**
 - *increasing the number of computers available to the children; and*
 - *improving staff confidence in using ICT to support children's learning.* (Paragraphs 3, 6, 20, 55, 78, 91, 98, and 125-129)
- **Ensure that all staff are clear about child protection arrangements and provide appropriate training for them. (Paragraph 34)**
- **Develop formal procedures to check on the quality of teaching and learning on a regular basis. (Paragraphs 49, 50 and 51)**

58 In addition to these main issues the following less pressing matters need to be addressed:

- **Improving children's expression in reading; (Paragraphs 2, 10, 19, 70 and 76)**
- **Increasing children's confidence when dealing with problem solving in mathematics; (Paragraphs 4, 86 and 89)**
- **Give more opportunities for children to set up their own scientific experiments; (Paragraphs 5, 18, 94 and 98)**
- **Create a consistent approach to target-setting throughout the school; (Paragraphs 21, 50 75 and 90)**
- **Ensure that assemblies help to develop children's spiritual awareness. (Paragraphs 10, 33 and 78)**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

31

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

63

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	7	19	2	1	0
Percentage	0	7	24	59	7	3	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 three, percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Children on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y4
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		126
Number of full-time children known to be eligible for free school meals		20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y4
Number of children with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register		26

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of children with English as an additional language	nil

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	9	13	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	7	9
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	22	20	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (64)	91 (64)	100 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	22	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (68)	100 (92)	100 (96)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	126
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to children of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of children per qualified teacher	
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of children per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of children per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	270,028
Total expenditure	254,630
Expenditure per pupil	2,024
Balance brought forward from previous year	-4,034
Balance carried forward to next year	11,364

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	126
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	42	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	50	3	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	60	10	0	0
The teaching is good.	48	43	0	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	53	10	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	30	5	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	38	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	47	20	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	30	60	0	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	58	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	33	43	5	6

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

- 59 Children start school at the age of four and enter the reception class. There is no nursery at the school. They are normally admitted to school in the September of the school year in which they become five. Currently there are 30 children in the reception class.
- 60 A nationally approved assessment scheme is used when children first start at school. This shows that children's attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is at the level expected for their age. Attainment in physical development, creative development and personal, emotional and social development is below the level expected nationally as children enter school. However in 2001 the majority of children had achieved the expected standard (learning goal) by the end of reception class in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Over half of the children had achieved the early learning goals in the other four areas of learning. The early years teacher wishes to improve this position and has set targets for 2002, planning the curriculum to address children's shortcomings in some of the areas of learning. Children in the reception class receive a good start to their education, which is a direct result of the good teaching and challenging and varied work.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 61 Teaching is good and emphasis is placed on a wide range of well- planned activities. As a result the children achieve well. By the time they leave the reception class over half of the children have achieved the expected learning goal for this area. This represents good progress when taking account of their attainment on entry to school. Children settle quickly into school life where a happy and secure atmosphere is created for them in the classroom. The majority of children play amicably, share resources and co-operate willingly with adults and each other. The teacher works hard to emphasise behaviour that is acceptable and that which is not. This has a positive impact on those children whose behaviour is more challenging and whose social skills are less well developed. Children's attitudes are very positive and the majority listen attentively and follow instructions given by the adults working with them. They can communicate thoughts and feelings and share toys together. The teacher provides good opportunities for them to become increasingly independent, looking after their own possessions, tidying up after tasks, dressing and undressing for physical education lessons with minimal help.

Communication, language and literacy

- 62 The children make good progress in this area of learning and the majority are on course to meet the requirements of the early learning goal by the time they leave the reception class. Some children are already working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum, which is beyond the learning goal, and the teacher provides appropriately for this. Teaching is consistently good with activities chosen appropriately to re-inforce what has been taught in the lesson. The teacher places a great deal of importance on teaching the basic skills of reading and writing and in giving the children play activities that have a direct impact on their speaking and listening skills. These skills are developing well and children speak confidently and can describe what they are doing and why. Children enjoy stories, read in class and respond well, talking about the book and expressing themselves clearly. They can retell simple stories they

have heard, suggest words for example that rhyme with 'cat' or 'van' and can spell them out. They are beginning to associate sounds with patterns, words and letters and to read familiar words with increasing accuracy. Children enjoy mark making and basic writing experiences making labels, miniature books and 'silly sentences', using rhyming words. The more able children are already writing sentences independently and reading simple stories. In their reading they can observe full stops and use picture, context or sound clues to make reasonable attempts at unfamiliar words.

Mathematical development

- 63 Children make good progress in their mathematical development and the majority are on course to achieve the level expected by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and with well-planned activities such as putting numbers to 20 in order, tracing or drawing numbers, doing number based jigsaws all contributing effectively to their progress. By counting, ordering and adding together the majority show a good understanding of numbers to ten, which they record in a variety of ways and consolidate through number rhymes. Less able children are effectively supported and work on their numbers from zero to five. More able pupils confidently work with numbers up to 20. These well-planned practical activities encourage the children to count and practise forming numbers. Garden centre, café, sand and water activities develop children's mathematical language as they encourage terms as buy, change, more than, less than, tallest, smallest, full and empty.

Knowledge and understanding

- 64 The children achieve well in this area of learning and the majority will achieve the level expected as they enter Year 1. Teaching is good with activities planned to stimulate children's curiosity and understanding of the world outside the school gates. The involvement of the community in visits for example from firemen, police officers, and lifeboat-men encourage children to ask questions and develop their knowledge of the world of work. Visits also extend their horizons; for example the visit to the park to test landing places for 'Humpty Dumpty' figures they had made in class. As children work on the termly theme of 'Insects' their scientific knowledge is developed. They grow plants for their garden centre and know that they need water, light and soil to grow. A range of topics has been covered which include 'Teddies and Toys' where children gain a sense of the past by comparing old and new toys. They show interest and enjoyment in all their practical activities which whilst making learning fun also contributes to their literacy skills and the other areas of learning.

Physical Development

- 65 The children achieve a satisfactory level in this area of learning but the lack of access to an outdoor area is hampering children's physical development. There are insufficient opportunities for them to scramble, climb, crawl, balance, swing, use wheeled toys to push or pedal and thereby experience freedom of movement. The teacher has worked very hard to try to ensure that all the physical activities required by the foundation stage curriculum are covered in her physical education lessons. These however, are sessions directed by the teacher who has selected the physical tasks that suit the size of the hall and the physical apparatus. It does not allow for child-initiated activities or creative physical development where pupils use their imagination for example with large wooden bricks and planks to create ships or lorries in which to balance climb or scramble. Children do have sufficient opportunities to develop their manipulative skills by using scissors, holding pencils and brushes, threading, rolling, completing jigsaws and using small construction apparatus

Creative development

- 66 Children make good progress in this area of learning and at least half will reach the standard required by the early learning goals by the time they leave the class in the summer. The children are given many opportunities to draw, paint, and make objects using a variety of media. They make pictures to illustrate their 'silly sentences' or 'rainbow numbers'. The structured play areas encourage the use of imagination as, for example they play in the café, or garden centre. They enjoy dance and musical activities and in assembly join in songs with enthusiasm.

Curriculum and Teaching

- 67 The teaching is consistently good and is helping children to learn effectively. The curriculum is well planned to cover all areas of learning and particular emphasis is placed on communication, language, literacy, mathematics, personal, social and emotional development. The teacher plans well and the clear learning objectives provide an effective focus for the children. Detailed weekly plans and lesson plans show what work is to be covered in each area of learning and what skills the children are expected to learn through the well structured activities. Future planning is based on the weekly evaluations of what children have achieved. This good quality planning has a positive impact on the standards the children achieve. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures that the teacher has set up are thorough and enable her to monitor effectively the progress that each individual child makes in all areas of learning. Initial assessment is carried out appropriately and this information is used well to plan subsequent learning experiences. Regular targets are set to show the children the next steps in learning. There is effective involvement with parents. Children receive a good education in the reception class.

ENGLISH

- 68 The school's national test results for 7-year-olds were above average for reading and writing for 2001. Although there has been much fluctuation over the past few years there is a strong suggestion that there has been improvement in standards. When compared with schools in similar circumstances the results are well above average. This is an improved position when compared with the position at the time of the previous inspection. The early indications from the reading test results for 2002 suggest that the school's results will remain above the national average but are unlikely to be well above. This was expected and does not suggest a lowering of standards but acknowledges that the present Year 2 is not as strong a cohort as the previous cohort. The 2002 writing results were not available at the time of the inspection. The results of the voluntary national assessments for 9-year-olds have been good for the past two years. The overall position, taking account of these tests only, suggests good progress. However, when taking account of on-going work in classrooms this is a slightly flattering position with satisfactory progress from Years 1 to 4 being closer to the real position. Children with special educational needs achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress. However, the individual educational plans do not always make it clear exactly what it is they need to concentrate on. Too many of these plans are exactly the same for all children in a given year group.
- 69 Children make good progress in their speaking skills but their listening skills are not as strong. The work that has taken place within the RAIS project, which has introduced philosophy as a means of improving children's spoken responses, has had an important impact on standards in children's oral communication. Most children are able to express themselves with a degree of confidence and they are able to get across their point of view. However, many children still lack a full range of vocabulary when offering opinions. Many children currently in Year 3 do not listen as attentively as would be expected. The improved range of children's speaking skills is mainly promoted during philosophy lessons. Year 4 children are very clear when responding to a point of view expressed by someone else. They start by stating that they agree or disagree with the point. The school is building well on the good progress being made by young children in the reception class. In Year 1, for example, the children have to respond to the range of questions posed by the teacher. This is helping them formulate their answers and to give careful consideration to what they are saying in front of their friends. Listening skills vary considerably with good examples seen in the philosophy lessons when children listened with maturity and consideration. However, this is not the case throughout the school with Year 3 children, taught by a temporary teacher, finding it difficult to listen attentively and give respect to the person speaking, this includes the teacher.
- 70 Standards in reading are now good with test results and on-going work in classrooms showing that the vast majority of children read fluently and accurately. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds the reading results were well above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. The present Year 2 has maintained at least an above average position according to the 2002 national tests, although comparative results are not yet known for this group. The vast majority of children make satisfactory progress in this area and build on the good start provided in the reception year. Most children have a range of strategies to work out unknown words and either read on to work out the meaning or break down the word using reasonable phonetic interpretation when doing so. They are generally confident readers with more able children reading at levels that are well above those expected for their age. In the national tests for reading over the past two years more than a third of the children attained Level 3, which is above the level expected for their age. However, a number of children still lack expression when reading aloud in front of others or when reading quietly to

an adult. This is an area that the school needs to work on. There is appropriate use of reading for the purpose of research with children being able to use a range of skills to get to the information they require quickly. More able readers are able to talk with authority about a range of authors that they have studied. Children who struggle with reading are able to read at the levels expected for their age by the time they are in Year 4.

- 71 Standards in writing are appropriate by the time children reach Year 4 but there is greater variation in the standards being attained throughout the school. Children make satisfactory progress with strengths in their ability to write following a plausible sequence and to use appropriate punctuation, spelling and handwriting. However, there are weaknesses in the children's creative response and in the range of vocabulary used. In Year 1 the majority of children write using large block letters and average and lower ability children frequently reverse their letters. The more able can retell a known story but do not use much punctuation at this stage. They follow a sensible sequence but lack creativity. Average ability children tend to start their sentences in the same way usually with 'I got a.' In Year 2 there is evidence of improved use of adjectives by the more able children and they use a wider range of punctuation with some attempting speech marks. Average ability children find it difficult to sustain their writing beyond one or two ideas. Overall, the standard of written work by the end of Year 2 broadly matches that expected for their age, but there are weaknesses in creativity and in the range of vocabulary used.
- 72 There is improvement in Years 3 and 4 but the weaknesses remain the same. Creativity is still poor but the presentation, use of spelling and punctuation is much better. In Year 3 more able children write lengthy stories that have good sequence but they tend to ramble on rather than moving to imaginative ideas. There is more 'in-sentence' punctuation used but tenses are often mixed up with children inter-using 'was and 'were' or 'my' and 'me'. In Year 4 the stories follow a clear sequence but often lack clarity of the main storyline. Too often the stories, written by more able children, lack a good ending. They do, however, write for a range of purposes, including plays, letters and can write persuasively. More able Year 4 children are beginning to include more descriptive phrases and search for appropriate phrases in their poetry. For example, they contrast words such as delicate and soft with clenched and awesome when describing hands. By the time they finish Year 4 the majority are writing at levels expected for their age but weaknesses still remain in the area of creativity.
- 73 In the main, children do not apply their fluent oral skills to their writing. There is also a great difference between the presentation skills of Year 3 and 4 children compared with the Year 1 and 2 children. Year 3 and 4 children use a distinct cursive style of writing which is invariably neat and legible. In contrast, the Year 1 and 2 children's handwriting is poor, usually of a large print style. There are appropriate examples of children using a range of writing skills in other subjects, for example, recording their work in science or to write about different issues in relation to their design and technology work. Although there are examples of children using word processing this is usually just as a means of copying up work that has already been produced using pen and paper. Children do not have the necessary keyboard skills that help them to compose and edit on the screen.
- 74 Children show positive attitudes to their work as is noted by their contributions in lessons. When expected to answer questions, for example, there is never a shortage of opinions or thought given to their answers. There is a difference in Year 3, who were being taught by a temporary teacher. In this class there were examples of poor attitudes to learning. Children expressed a like for reading although this tended to fall away slightly as children got older. The range of authors read is appropriate, indicating that children have the confidence to move

beyond the more familiar authors they meet in their lessons. However, the way literature is presented to the children gives little opportunity for them to respond spiritually or emotionally. By contrast there are good opportunities for them to respond morally as issues of fairness and sharing are considered when thinking of the plight of 'Charlie's' family or the 'fox's' family in the two Roald Dahl books being contrasted by Year 4. Apart from the example noted in Year 3 children's behaviour is good in lessons.

- 75 The teaching is mostly satisfactory but there are missed opportunities to challenge children more appropriately. There are strengths in the way the teacher's plan for progression in children's learning and in the way they organise their classrooms. However, too frequently the limited information provided for some children about how well they are doing or what they need to do next is hindering progress. Marking of work is consciously done but it does not always give the children information about what they could do to improve. There is a system of target setting in place in Years 1 and 2 but this is not maintained in Years 3 and 4.
- 76 Teachers do not consistently use good expression when reading aloud to the class. This is adversely affecting the children's expression when reading aloud. There were examples when the teacher did read with good expression. For example, in Year 4 one of the teachers used very good expression when reading an extract to the rest of the class and this immediately improved the children's own reading expression. The same occurred in Year 1 with the teacher's own good expression being followed with better expression by the children.
- 77 The best lessons were those in which the teacher made demands on the children. For example, in a Year 4 lesson where children were expected to think about the plight of Charlie in comparison to the plight of the fox in two of Roald Dahl's books, the children were very responsive. In this instance their learning was being improved because they were very engaged in the lesson. This was in contrast to the poor lesson in Year 3 when the temporary teacher failed to challenge the more able children. The pace of the lesson was slow and many children had lost the main thread of the lesson by the time they came to completing individual tasks. One child was heard to say, 'Does he want us to describe it or write a story about it?' This resulted in much lost time with some children taking more than ten minutes to settle to their tasks. They also managed to disrupt others as they moved to their own tables.
- 78 Much has been done since the previous inspection to bring in a greater sense of continuity and progression in children's learning. The National Literacy Strategy has helped in this respect. The co-ordinator has worked hard to implement the strategy and believes that teachers are now far more confident in teaching English as a result. There is good attempt made to use children's literacy skills in other subjects although there is still some way to go before this is fully in place. The school recognises the weaknesses with regard to using information and communication technology more appropriately to support work in literacy. At present there are weaknesses in the teachers' confidence to include ICT in literacy sessions and there is also a lack of resources to help give the necessary impact to improving standards. Teachers are not taking full advantage of opportunities to promote children's spiritual awareness through literacy although they are much quicker to support their moral and social development.
- 79 Assessment arrangements are appropriate with good attention to working out the children's strengths and weaknesses and to making adjustments in teaching and learning accordingly. However, there are inconsistencies in this area, mainly related to marking and target setting. The assessments made for children with special educational needs are appropriate but the information gained from these assessments are not always translated into clear targets outlined in their educational plans.

80 There is appropriate leadership and management for the subject. The co-ordinator has worked out what the school's strengths and weaknesses are and is accurate in her evaluation. She is less successful in being able to help the school make an impact in improving the position however. She does have some time to oversee the teaching and learning but is not able to outline targets for improvement for individual members of staff. There is good information provided for parents in relation to work in literacy with a leaflet produced outlining targets in literacy. This is not yet fully in place throughout the school however. Resources are broadly adequate with appropriate range of books available to support children's learning. There is a school library but this is not fully utilised to maximum advantage at the moment.

MATHEMATICS

81 Standards in mathematics are satisfactory overall which is a similar position to that found during the last inspection. Year 4 children are achieving at the level expected and a significant number of children achieved better than expected nationally in the 2001 results of optional national standard tests and assessments. In these tests 38 per cent of children achieved a Level 4, which is above average. Thirty-one per cent achieved a Level 3, which is at the level expected.

82 At the end of Year 2 the percentage of children reaching the expected level in the National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds was well above the national average and above that of schools with a similar intake of pupils. Girls are performing better than boys by a significant margin, which is a concern. Since 1997 test results for 7-year-olds have varied with results being well below average in 2000. Indications are that the results for 2002 have also declined with a much smaller percentage of children attaining higher levels. If the trend for results from 1997 to 2001 is taken into account there is a gradual improvement overall in achievements in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.

83 The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been carefully implemented by the school with a high level of support from the Local Education Authority. This has resulted in improved planning and satisfactory coverage of the basic skills, which have improved the schools performance over time in mathematics. Attainment of children in the current Year 2 classes is satisfactory, however the lack of more challenging work for the more able, as recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy, is negatively impacting on these children achievements and progress.

84 Children with special educational needs are included in all lessons; the limited amount of support is used wisely to help these children make satisfactory progress. Evidence shows children with special educational needs make good progress in Year 3 and 4.

85 Work scrutiny shows that the presentation of work in Year 2 is unsatisfactory, notably the work of the more able children whose work does not reflect the standard expected nationally for more able 7 year olds. Children make satisfactory progress overall between the ages of 5 and 7. Children in Year 3 and 4 also achieve satisfactory progress. The presentation of their work is satisfactory and conventional written methods for numerical operations are used, these are generally neat and answers are legible.

86 Children in Year 4 have secure concepts of many mathematical operations, for example mentally multiplying numbers such as 115 or 232 by single digit numbers. They enjoy their mathematics and speak enthusiastically about their work. They know appropriate units of

measurement to use for small or large distances. They can mentally divide numbers up to 50 but find difficulty with larger numbers such as 75 divided by 3. They can explain how they have worked out their answers; this means they have securely learnt many number strategies. They have a sound knowledge of place value; know angles of a turn and some more able children can successfully work out angles of a turn in an anti-clockwise direction. They are less secure when transferring these skills to solving problems.

- 87 Year 2 children can make amounts to £1.00 using coins and recognise their values but all except the more able find difficulty in using 10 coins to make £1.00. They know that subtraction is 'opposite' to addition and can say and write, for example $10 - 8 = 2$ matches $8 + 2 = 10$. Their knowledge of place value is less secure, only 1 child recognised thousands when shown a 4-digit number and some had difficulty recognising hundreds. Many can recall 10 more or less than a given number; they know about 2D shapes but were less familiar with 3D shapes and problems involving time.
- 88 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy and plan their work accordingly. They have clear targets for lessons and for identifying success. Children are grouped by ability from Year 1 to Year 4 but in most classes written work is class based and does not take account of these abilities, particularly the more able pupils. Where teachers plan for differing abilities as recommended by the national guidelines learning is more successful. In too many lessons however more able children are working on tasks that are too easy and are insufficiently challenged in their thinking. This hampers progress.
- 89 Children throughout the school demonstrate a sound acquisition of the number skills they have been taught. There is appropriate emphasis on mental mathematics and satisfactory use is made of oral and mental work at the start of lessons. However, many children still lack confidence in dealing with problem solving in mathematics.
- 90 Procedures for assessing children's achievements are satisfactory. Analyses of children's results have taken place and the information obtained is used effectively to guide curriculum planning. Marking is not always consistent and it does not help children to improve the quality of their work and raise their attainment. Children are not fully aware of their immediate 'next steps' in learning, nor do they know how they might achieve them and when they have been achieved. The use of homework to consolidate learning is satisfactory.
- 91 Little evidence was seen as to how teachers are using information and communication technology to support learning. Teachers do not incorporate this subject well enough into classroom activities and as an aid to learning. Computers within the classroom are not used sufficiently to support teaching and learning in mathematics.
- 92 Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that the National Numeracy Strategy is firmly embedded in teachers' planning for the curriculum. She has involved expertise from the Local Education Authority; staff have received appropriate training and observed demonstration lessons. Staff were observed teaching when their training was completed. The co-ordinator now needs further time to monitor and evaluate the teaching of mathematics to find out the current strengths and areas of weakness. Resources for mathematics are accessible and of satisfactory quantity and quality to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum for mathematics.

SCIENCE

- 93 Standards match those expected for children's age throughout the school. The teacher assessments undertaken at the end of Year 2 for 7-year-olds suggests that the standards are better than this with the 2001 assessments showing that all children attained the expected level for their age (Level 2) and more than a third of the children went on to attain a Level 3, which is above average. The voluntary tests taken with Year 4 children also show that the results tend to be better than expected for their age. However, the evidence from the lessons seen and the scrutiny of work undertaken strongly suggests that standards match age expectations and do not move beyond them.
- 94 Most children by the end of Year 2 have covered the expected topics and have appropriate scientific knowledge covering a range of areas, including knowledge of living and non-living things. They have carried out a study of the way minibeasts live and understand how electricity works and have made a simple electrical circuit. They are able to describe the difference between natural and man-made materials. However, there is little evidence that more able children have covered any work in addition to that covered by others in their class. This is mainly as a result of the way the work is organised which gives little opportunity for more able children to participate in tasks that require them to think for themselves. The work scrutiny showed that too often these more able children are working on the same worksheets as others and that they have not been required to carry out additional investigations.
- 95 This position is very much the same as that noted for Year 4. There is again an appropriate range of activities being covered by the older children but the experiments and investigations tend to follow the same process. There is evidence in the lessons seen that the teacher is far too directional and does not allow the children to follow their own investigations. This is hampering the progress of the more able children, in particular. The older children have covered topics that help them to understand more about healthy eating and have undertaken experiments about keeping food fresh. They also know, and can name, the parts of the human body and that the heart rate changes during exercise. They know that different parts of the flower have different functions. The main issue relates to the lack of variation in the tasks set so that more able children are doing exactly what others are and there is little evidence of extensions being offered to them. This results in these more able children underachieving.
- 96 Children with special education needs make satisfactory progress because of the way their tasks are set out. This is helping them to successfully carry out work that is covered by others. However, there is little opportunity for them to be engaged in investigations that asks them to work things out for themselves. Most of the investigations are over-directed and the children record the information on ready-prepared worksheets.
- 97 Children show satisfactory attitudes to learning. The lack of opportunity for them to find out things for themselves is stifling their spiritual development. There are few occasions when they can feel a sense of awe about what they find out. In the main, the teacher tends to dictate how they set about experimenting. Their behaviour is mainly good but in Year 3, where there was a temporary teacher, the behaviour fell to an unsatisfactory standard. There is limited opportunity for children to work together and this is hampering their personal development. When provided with the opportunity to do so, the children work co-operatively.
- 98 Teaching is satisfactory overall but has unsatisfactory elements, especially with regard to the challenge being provided for more able children and to methods used. The planning is good

with appropriate progression being planned for. The teachers are well prepared and use appropriate resources. They work at ensuring that all children are able to gain new scientific knowledge at a rate that is reasonable for their ability. However, in the area of scientific enquiry, there is limited opportunity for children to find out for themselves. In a Year 4 lesson on wind resistance the teacher took the children through step by step and gave the children little opportunity to find out for themselves. This is in part due to the worry about children not responding appropriately, which was an issue at the time of the previous inspection. This has made teachers rather reluctant to 'let go' and has resulted in the teachers taking children through a 'step by step' method of investigating.

- 99 There is appropriate curriculum coverage and good attempts made to ensure that children are using their literacy and numeracy skills. There are examples of children needing to record information on charts and in children needing to write up exactly what has happened as a result of the investigations that they have been involved with. The use of ICT to support the subject is unsatisfactory. Equal opportunities are not however guaranteed because of the lack of awareness for more able children. There is also limited opportunity for helping to develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through the subject. The lack of tasks requiring children to work together or to find out things for themselves is inhibiting children's development in this area.
- 100 Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because there is little monitoring of the teaching and learning taking place. Therefore the issues raised about over direction by the teacher are not being picked up. The range of resources available is adequate and the accommodation is not restricting the provision. There is limited use of information and communication technology in the subject due to a lack of computers being available to the children.

ART AND DESIGN

- 101 Standards in art and design are unsatisfactory. There is unsatisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4 and this results in the appropriate standards being attained by Year 2 children not being maintained by older children.
- 102 Art and design suffers from the lack of creativity in the curriculum as a whole. This results in opportunities for children to express themselves through different media being limited. In Year 1 children experience weaving and printing and their finished pieces are about at the levels expected for their age. Their work with pencil or with paint is less well developed with little sense of their skill level being improved as they move through the year. In Year 2 the children have created some town landscapes using charcoal, which reflect good use of perspective. However, this work contrasts to the disappointing standards attained by children when sketching self-portraits. By the time children finish Year 2 they are producing work that matches that expected for their age although they have limited experience of artists from other cultures other than white, European males.
- 103 Children do not make satisfactory progress through Years 3 and 4 mainly because there is limited attention to developing their skills and techniques. The range of artists studied is also narrow and this is not helping them to consider different ways of presenting or representing their work. By the end of Year 4 children have limited knowledge of how to apply a 'wash' in painting. They do not mix colour appropriately and most did not know how to achieve a brown from a set of primary and secondary colours. The quality of their drawing is better.

They can draw taking account of proportion and they use tone and texture well. However, the overall standard of their work is disappointing and below that expected for their age.

- 104 Lessons in art and design do little to help their personal development with a lack of opportunity to study the work of artists from a range of cultures inhibiting their development. There is also a lack of opportunity for them to respond spiritually in art and design. This is due to children's limited knowledge of artists and to limited opportunity for them to improve their own skill level.
- 105 During the inspection there was only opportunity to see one lesson being taught in art and design. This lesson was satisfactory but the issues raised above suggest that the teaching is unsatisfactory overall especially in Years 3 and 4. The children do not make satisfactory progress through these years and this is due to the lack of progression in their learning, which is not giving enough attention to skills and techniques.
- 106 The subject leader is very keen but has had little opportunity to have an overview of the standards being attained. She has a very good plan in place to help her focus on future developments. There has been very little attention given to staff training as there has been little available in the immediate area. The school is aware of the need to consider future training for staff and especially to giving greater consideration to studying artists from a wider range of backgrounds and culture. Resources are broadly adequate and there is a balance being achieved in terms of two and three-dimensional art. The school is following the national guidelines for teaching art and design but this is only partially successful in helping the school meet the needs of all its children in this area of the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 107 Standards in design and technology match those expected for children's age and children make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. All children, including those with special educational needs achieve appropriately.
- 108 Design and technology has a very prominent place in the school curriculum and the subject is followed using the national guidance appropriately. There is good attention given to developing children's planning, designing, making and evaluative skills. During the inspection two lessons were observed and although the teachers still tend to be too directional the children achieved work of a pleasing standard.
- 109 In a Year 2 lesson the children were making a puppet. They had designed the puppet they were making and were now at the stage of using a range of skills and techniques to help with the making of their puppet. Some children were able to use a range of sewing skills to help them and others used glue to join pieces of material or card together. In most areas there were good opportunities for children to develop their skills. The one disappointing area was that of creativity. The children had been given a template to use for eyes and other features when they could have easily been capable of making their own.
- 110 In a Year 4 lesson, where the children were making a photograph frame, many of the same issues were again prominent. Creativity was the weakest element as children were provided with too much which tended to define the way their frames were created. In this case the teacher models the making stage and therefore the children are following his lead. The finished frames do differ but there is still a lack of creativity evident.

- 111 Children enjoy their design and technology lessons. They explain that they enjoy the fact that there is an 'end-product' and that they feel they have worked hard. There are opportunities for children to work together and they do so very well. The over-directionality of the teaching tends to limit spiritual awareness, as the children tend to know exactly what they outcomes are going to be and are therefore not overly excited by their creations.
- 112 The teaching is satisfactory and does guarantee that children are developing their skills appropriately. However, as with many other subjects, it is the area of creativity that is being stifled. Teachers are confident of their subject knowledge and this shows in the quality of modelling that is taking place. There are good opportunities taken to apply children's numeracy skills in design and technology lessons although there was a lost opportunity to develop measuring skills during the lesson on making frames in Year 4.
- 113 The curriculum planning follows the national guidelines and this does help to ensure that there is progression in children's learning. The subject is appropriately led but there is little monitoring of teaching and learning happening. Resources are adequate and there is a high priority given to the subject in terms of time throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

- 114 Insufficient evidence was seen during the inspection to form a secure view on the children's attainment or the quality of teaching and learning in geography. No lessons were seen during the inspection.
- 115 The scrutiny of work for Year 3 and 4 children show that they work on compass bearings, surveys of local traffic and land use, early mapping skills and work on their local environment. This work and the work produced for the 'Children's Guide to Spittal' shows children beginning to use appropriate geographical vocabulary. The work seen shows satisfactory coverage of some programmes of study in the National Curriculum. Work from displays indicates that two recent geography days were used to spend intensive time on mapping skills and local work in the environment. The use of other adults to help assist children to conduct a traffic survey, look at land use around the area and consider environmental issues is appropriate. Year 2 children have covered work on other places by looking at 'The Isle of Struay' in the Katie-Morag series of books and Tocuaro in Mexico. There is little evidence of the use of geographical terms such as river, hill, valley or mountain.
- 116 The presentation of work at the end of Year 2 is poor. Little attention is given to the standard of handwriting, drawings are of a poor quality and some work is left unfinished. Work in Years 3 and 4 is of a better standard and particularly notable progress is made in Year 3. The quality of marking however is inconsistent. Some work in Years 1 and 2 is left unmarked and though work has normally been checked in Years 3 and 4 there are no targets set for children to improve their drawings, plans and maps or other work in geography. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are fully included in lessons. Children make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
- 117 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall but the co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped so the school is not in a position to know the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of geography. This means that the school will find it difficult to know what it needs to do to improve further. Planning procedures have improved since the last

inspection so there is a better progression of learning and the use of nationally agreed guidelines are helping to ensure the programmes of study for the National Curriculum are now fully covered. Opportunities for children to use information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.

HISTORY

- 118 Standards in history have improved since the last inspection when they were found to be unsatisfactory. By the time they are in Year 4 the majority of the children are achieving at the level expected for 9-year-olds.
- 119 By the end of Year 2 children are achieving the level expected for 7-year-olds, however their written work does not reflect their knowledge and understanding of the history they have learnt in lessons. Presentation skills are poor; there is a lack of attention to handwriting and poor quality drawings.
- 120 In a Year 4 history lesson children take part in a lesson where desks are arranged in rows and a 'Victorian' lesson taught. Their developing sense of the past is evident as they discuss how a 'dunce' or left-handed pupil might have felt being unkindly treated. In discussion, they can talk about their study of the Ancient Greeks the previous term and can recall names of Gods and some knowledge of this period of history.
- 121 Year 2 children learn about the 'Great Fire of London', they know where it started, that Samuel Pepys kept a diary and are beginning to understand the role of an eyewitness in describing historical events. Scrutiny of work and discussion with children show that there has been some improvement in children's knowledge and understanding of history but the opportunity to use research skills especially in information and communication technology is a weakness. The attention to planning and the use of national guidelines for history ensures better coverage of the National Curriculum than at the last inspection.
- 122 The quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. The better teaching was for example where the re-enactment of a Victorian classroom engaged children's attention and enlivened their learning. Taking part helped them to understand how children were expected to behave and learn, this led to a better understanding of the past. Where first hand experiences are used learning is enhanced as where a website is used in a Year 2 lesson played actual sounds representing the Great Fire of London. As a consequence, this enriches history teaching and therefore children further their knowledge and understanding of the past. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, children are not challenged in their thinking, the pace of the lesson is slow, teaching lacks imagination and work is not matched to different abilities. This results in children becoming bored and behaviour deteriorating. A significant number of children fail to be sufficiently motivated to complete the work set.
- 123 The quality of marking of children work is inconsistent. A few comments praise children but teachers do not set targets to show children what to do to improve their work. Teachers' expectations of written work are not high enough particularly in Year 2. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are fully included in lessons. Children make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
- 124 The leadership and management of the subject overall are satisfactory. The school has raised standards in history especially in knowledge and understanding but work set for children does not challenge the more able. The role of subject co-ordinator is under developed so the school does not know what to do to make further improvements. The use of information and communication technology to support the teaching of history was only seen once during the inspection and is unsatisfactory overall. There are missed opportunities for children to develop historical skills by researching the past. Resources are adequate to support the teaching of

history. Assessment is being developed but the lack of checks on the quality of teaching and learning is hampering further improvement in the subject

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 125 Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. This is due to a combination of two things, in the first place there are too few computers in the school to enable children to have regular opportunities to improve their skills and secondly, the level of staff confidence in teaching the subject is low.
- 126 Children make unsatisfactory progress in this subject after leaving the reception class with skill levels in ICT that approximately matches that expected for their age. The lack of opportunity and the limited confidence levels of staff are inhibiting progress thereafter. This is resulting in underachievement by different groups of children, including the more able and those with special educational needs.
- 127 There are many lost opportunities to involve children with ICT work in many subjects. In literacy most of the ICT work is confined to word processing where the children are copying up from their pen and paper first drafts. There is little composing done on screen. It is mainly editing that is done at this stage. In Year 1 there are examples of children having responded to computer generated questions in relation to a range of graphs about favourite food. Children in this age group are able to use different fonts and styles to create their names in a variety of ways. There are examples of children downloading information from the Internet in Year 2. This is usually in association with history or geography work.
- 128 By Year 3 children have used the word processor to set out a poem they have written and have accessed the Internet to find out information. They have also used a LOGO program to move an object from point A to B. Year 4 children have more regular access to the Internet but the amount of time each child spends on the computer is well below that expected for their age.
- 129 No direct teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection but the evidence is very convincing that teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject. The school is awaiting staff training in ICT and most staff are keen to be involved in this. The co-ordinator is keen but recognises that until there is an increased resource level at the school there is only limited improvement possible in the subject. There is very little monitoring happening at the moment. The school is only just meeting the requirements set out in the National Curriculum. There is very much to be done to improve the situation with very little improvement noted since the time of the previous inspection when the subject was not satisfactorily taught.

MUSIC

- 130 Standards in music have improved since the last inspection when they were found to be unsatisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 children are achieving standards in performing and composing at the level expected for their age.
- 131 In Years 1 and 2 children are working below the level expected for 7-year-olds in their understanding of pitch but they know the names of some of the instruments of the orchestra

and discover how to make sounds with bottles and reeds made out of art straws. This results in a greater understanding of pitch and the way sounds are produced with wind instruments.

- 132 It is not possible to make a secure judgment on the standard of singing throughout the school as no singing took place in either of the music lessons observed. However singing by all age groups took place in assemblies. Words were learnt by heart and the tunes secure. Generally diction is good although the hall acoustics made some words difficult to distinguish. The songs are thoroughly taught however the tone of singing was at times lacking in quality during the children's enthusiastic performance. Many children sing too loudly and this detracts from the sweet tonal quality of the singing especially notes in the higher register of the voice which were not always in tune. The standard in music overall was however found to be satisfactory throughout the school which is an improvement since the last inspection.
- 133 The quality of teaching in both lessons seen was satisfactory. In Years 3 and 4 children had prepared a composition using symbols (graphic notation) to represent the sounds their chosen instruments would make. They work during the lesson to add 'spaces' which their teacher says is necessary for a better performance. Children's further understanding is restricted by the use of a descriptive word rather than the correct musical vocabulary such as 'rest' or 'pause'. Children performed their compositions well with the teacher directing, learning experiences were limited, as children did not have their own opportunity to conduct, which would enrich their understanding of ensemble playing and the importance of working collaboratively.
- 134 In Year 2 children hear a well-chosen tape extract by an oboe player describing her instrument and the range of sounds it can make. They then explore how to make sounds with wind instruments by blowing across plastic bottles and on reeds made from art straws. The lack of scissors meant some children becoming frustrated as they wait for a turn. Others whose listening skills are less well developed find instructions difficult to remember and fail to cut the reed in the correct way.
- 135 Children with special educational needs are fully included in music lessons and assemblies. There are limited opportunities for those with musical abilities to develop, as the school does not provide any extra curricular activities in music. The annual carol service for example, does give opportunities for children to perform in public, which is important to enhance self-esteem.
- 136 Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory but the schools lack of formal opportunities to check on the quality of teaching and learning. This means targets for future improvement, or areas of weakness are not identified. Resources are adequate and planning has been improved since the last inspection ensuring better coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Children attitudes to music are satisfactory and in Year 4 they were good. Children in this year group listen well are generous with praise of the performance of their peers and respect each other's performances. This enhances spiritual development and raises the self-esteem of those performing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 137 No physical education lessons were seen during the inspection. In view of the fact that it is not possible to make a secure judgement about standards, teaching, learning and management without seeing the subject taught the inspection team will not comment on physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 138 By the time they are aged 9 the majority of children are achieving the level expected in the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement overall is satisfactory. Children's oral knowledge of religious education is better than is reflected in their written work that is lacking in content and creativity, often based on a recall of taught facts.
- 139 By the time they are aged 7, children are achieving at the levels expected for their age in religious education, their achievement is satisfactory but the presentation of written work is poor.
- 140 During the inspection only one lesson was seen, which was satisfactory that involved no real learning or teaching. In the satisfactory lesson seen in Year 1 the teachers subject knowledge was secure and the story behind the Jewish festival of Hanukkah adapted well to suit the needs of younger listeners. Activities chosen are good with children learning to play the Jewish game of 'Dreidl', making Hanukkah cards and other activities designed to help young children understand the festival. They soon learn the Hebrew meanings on the 'dreidl' spinner and illustrate their cards with pictures appropriate to the festival. They work co-operatively and talk about the story they have heard.
- 141 In discussion Year 4 children are able to recall videos they have seen of Old and New Testament events and have a satisfactory knowledge of basic Christian values and that there are different groups of Christian people worshipping in the town. They know of the Jewish faith and can recall the story of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments but have no knowledge of where Jewish people worship or what objects are sacred to the Jewish faith. They are unable to name any other world faiths, which is an unsatisfactory position for children growing up in Britain's multicultural society.
- 142 Children's attitudes to learning are satisfactory, the majority behave well and listen to instructions on how to play the Hanukkah game. Children play games together or make cards and 'Hannukiah' candlestick pictures sharing scissors and glue.
- 143 Children receive a satisfactory curriculum overall with opportunities to study Christian beliefs. Opportunities to study other major world religions are limited and this is a significant weakness. Whole school assemblies meet statutory requirements and are held every day. They include a school prayer that all children know and can repeat. They also know the Lord's Prayer and words to hymns, which they sing with enthusiasm. The planned assemblies however provide limited opportunities for quiet reflection to develop an understanding of inner self. Music is played to heighten the feeling of spirituality and promote cultural development. However the tendency of many children to talk at various points during the assembly spoils the quiet atmosphere necessary for quality worship.
- 144 There is satisfactory management of the subject and the use of the agreed syllabus together with nationally agreed guidelines is an improvement since the last inspection. The role of the subject leader in evaluating teaching and learning is under developed which means she is not in a position to know strengths and weaknesses in her subject. There are satisfactory resources but information technology is not used to enhance learning. Marking does not effectively inform how children might improve their work and teachers' expectations of the standard of written work, particularly in Year 2 are low.

145 The school has a link with the adjacent church. Children perform the annual carol service in the church and the vicar visits the school. The classroom accommodation is adequate and allows opportunity for individual and small group work as well as whole class discussion. The school has made some progress since the last inspection and is now meeting statutory requirements but there are still areas in the teaching and learning of religious education that require further improvement, notably the study of other faiths and cultures. This requirement is necessary to prepare children for understanding how to live in a multicultural society.