

INSPECTION REPORT

WINGATE INFANT SCHOOL

Wingate, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114149

Headteacher: Ms S Waugh

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Hulme
OFSTED Inspector Number: 3609

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 November 2000

Inspection number: 224542

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	infant
School category:	community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Church Street Wingate Co. Durham
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Appropriate authority:	governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss J. Higgins
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs M Hulme 3609	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for the foundation stage	What sort of school is it?
		English	How well are pupils taught?
		Art and design	How well is the school led and managed?
		English as an additional language	
		History	
Mr E Worby 19578	Lay inspector	None	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J Barley 4309	Team inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Geography	
		Physical education	
		Music	
		Equal opportunities	
Revd J Pryor 21858	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Design and technology	
		Science	
		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Wingate, a former mining village of County Durham. Since the mines closed in 1962 the area has continued to have high unemployment and consequently it suffers from those features associated with social deprivation. There are many families where one parent is caring alone for the children. Thirty-nine per cent of children in the school are known to be eligible for free school meals which is a proportion well above the national average. The roll is decreasing and the number of children attending the school is now 127, making it smaller than the average sized primary school. The children are taught in five classes by seven teachers, of whom one is the headteacher and one is part-time. Most children are white. A very few pupils come from another ethnic group but have a good knowledge of the English language. There are now 34 per cent of children on the special educational needs register and three of these pupils have statements requiring specific needs, which is above the national average. Pupils enter the school with a broad range of experiences but the majority have below average reading, writing and number skills for their age. When their assessments on entry are compared with other schools in the county they are below average. The school is making very good efforts to address this at the foundation stage before they begin statutory education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that has benefited from the appointment of a new headteacher who has the skills and vision to see where further development is needed and how to achieve it. The low attainment of children on entry and poor socio-economic factors have not deterred staff from making good efforts to help children succeed. The quality of teaching is good. Improvements in performance have been a priority and there is clear evidence that efforts are being rewarded with better test results. There is still keenness to raise standards further and improve effectiveness. The greatest improvement is in the development of clear systems and procedures that have resulted in confident staff who have raised their own expectations. The school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is successful in raising standards in National Curriculum tests.
- Overall, teaching is good: in over a quarter of lessons seen it was very good.
- There is strong leadership from the headteacher who is well supported by staff and governors.
- The school takes very good care of its children, particularly those with special educational needs, for whom there is a high level of very effective support.
- Parents have very good views of the school and are satisfied with the education it provides.

What could be improved

- The plans for ensuring that curricular policies and guidance meet the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000.
- Provision for children in the foundation stage.

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 1996. The key issues for development emphasised raising standards and continuing a planned programme of improvement. The school has made good improvements. In January 1999 a new headteacher was appointed who has continued the work identified for improvement at the last inspection. Other new appointments include a co-ordinator for assessment and a co-ordinator for the early years. The assessment and record keeping systems have

improved to the point where they are now things that the school does well, although some work remains to be completed, such as portfolios for the moderation of numeracy and science. The deputy head now has a more clearly defined role and all staff are clear about their responsibilities in managing the school. The school is making good headway in its arrangements for performance management. The organisation of the reception classes has improved to make better provision for the foundation stage but improvements to the outdoor play area still remain a priority. Policies and guidance have been improved but these now need auditing to ensure they meet the statutory requirements of Curriculum 2000. The teaching has improved, with now a higher percentage of good and no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have worked hard to improve standards and the results of National Curriculum tests are testimony to their success.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	D	D	B	A
writing	B	B	B	A
mathematics	D	C	C	B

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

Despite the high percentage of children with special educational needs, the school has improved pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests again this year. The percentage of free school meals is the factor relating this school's results to those of similar schools and it was higher when children took the tests than in January when statistics were assembled. Consequently, when compared with the results of similar schools, the results are well above average for reading and writing and above average for mathematics. This is no mean achievement given pupils' attainment on entry to school.

As the school has only infant-aged pupils it is not required to have targets but has set some for itself. They are challenging and show that it is far from complacent about the improvements it has made this year. The standards attained this year are the best that children can do. Apart from the general improvements to the test results there is a significant improvement at certain levels. The school has targeted improvements to Level 2B and has succeeded in getting more children, who were below the appropriate level, to that above it. For example, this year, reading scores have risen by 24 per cent and mathematics scores have risen by 21 per cent. The rise in standards is the result of more effective planning and teaching. More attention has been given to targeting the improvement of those pupils whose results were borderline, with successful outcomes. Teachers' assessments in science show that pupils' performance has improved, with 92 per cent reaching the acceptable Level 2 this year compared with 78 per cent last year. In addition there are 24 per cent at the higher Level 3. The school's strategy to provide high quality support for children with special educational needs is having an impact. Their achievements are good and sometimes very good, resulting in standards that are close to those of others in the class.

Particular strengths are evident in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and geography. There are some weaknesses in art and design and design and technology but the school has plans to remedy these.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have good attitudes to the school and their work. In all classes there are enthusiastic pupils who are keen to succeed and work diligently and this is helping to improve standards.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall good with no exclusions in the last year. The high expectations of the teachers and the clear codes of behaviour ensure that the school is an orderly community.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good resulting in children who are eager to please and do their best. Personal development is very good and children enjoy opportunities to take responsibility.
Attendance	Despite the best efforts of the school the attendance rate remains below the national average. However, there are very few unauthorised absences. Children want to be punctual and come willingly to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	N/A

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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In a quarter of all lessons observed it was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been very effectively implemented and are having a positive effect on the teaching because teachers are more secure in their knowledge and have the technical skills to teach the basic skills very well. The good teaching is a key factor in the improved standards and pupils' good achievement. The planning of lessons shows that teachers understand what children need to learn and plan activities that provide appropriate challenge, whatever their stage of learning. All children have equal access to the curriculum and children with special needs are effectively supported in lessons. The good teaching is resulting in good learning. Children acquire new knowledge, develop ideas and increase their understanding every day.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the foundation stage and very good range of learning opportunities at Years 1 and 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Children are very effectively supported and fully integrated into the life of the school. The very good provision is resulting in improved standards.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has very few such children and they have already gained a good understanding of the English language. They progress at the same rate as others and generally communicate well.
Provision for pupils' personal,	Overall good. This aspect has improved since the previous inspection.

including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Children have a good awareness of spiritual and cultural development. The good staff role models and clear codes of behaviour ensure that pupils understand their moral and social responsibilities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff have caring attitudes towards children and their welfare is of paramount importance to the school.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. They feel welcome in school and try to make very good contributions to their children's learning at school and at home. They are now at the stage where they would like to know more about the curriculum and the headteacher plans more workshop sessions to extend their understanding. An appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and the school is aware that it needs to check against the new Curriculum 2000 and take steps to meet the new requirements. Very good use is made of assessment to guide curricular planning. Staff know the pupils and their families very well and this, together with effective monitoring procedures, ensures that children receive the best possible support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and is supported by staff and governors. Very effective support is provided by the co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors contribute effectively to the work of the school. They have good levels of expertise, are well organised and thorough in their approach.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a very good view of its work and uses the analysis of test results successfully in helping staff understand what works well and why.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use of resources, particularly funds for special educational needs and high quality support staff.

The school's teachers and support staff have a good range of experience and expertise for the age of children and to teach the curriculum. The very good ethos created by the headteacher and supported by the school community effectively supports learning. There is very good teamwork. The leadership and management is providing very clear educational direction for the school. There is a commitment to overcoming weakness and raising the status of the school.

The governing body is trying to fulfil all the requirements in seeking best value for money. Spending patterns of other schools and pupils' performance are compared with their own; resources are audited and stock piling rejected, resulting in nothing being wasted.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school expects children to work hard and do their best. Their children like school. The teaching is good. The school is well led and managed. They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. The school helps their children become mature and responsible. Behaviour is good and children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents want the school to provide more interesting activities outside school.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The range of activities during lunchtimes and outside school is satisfactory and similar to that of other infant schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school is working hard and successfully to improve standards. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests 90 per cent of pupils reached Level 2 or above for reading, writing and mathematics, despite there being 39 per cent of pupils identified as having special educational needs. When compared with similar schools the reading and writing results are well above average and mathematics results are above average. As this is an infant school it is not required to have targets but has done so to give children and teachers something to aim for. The targets set for the following year are challenging as the school seeks to consolidate its success and to repeat this year's achievement.
2. In reading, results have risen from 84 per cent reaching Level 2 or above last year to 90 per cent this year. Particularly striking is the dramatic increase in the number of pupils achieving Level 2B or above, which has increased by 24 per cent since last year. In writing, the pupils' performance has improved from 87 per cent reaching Level 2 or above in 1999 to 92 per cent this year. Standards in spelling have remained very similar to last year and are good. Mathematics follows a similar pattern, with improvements from 87 per cent at Level 2 or above in 1999 to 90 per cent in 2000. Again the dramatic increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2B or above is a feature, rising from 56 per cent to 77 per cent.
3. In the teachers' assessments for science, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above has risen from 78 per cent last year to 92 per cent this year and this includes 24 per cent at the higher Level 3.
4. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about overall standards in music, physical education and history, but the work seen was appropriate for children aged seven. In all other subjects standards were at least in line with national expectations. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
5. The school is strong on teaching basic skills, and has been successful in improving standards. They have received national recognition for their work in this area.
6. Each year the school analyses its test results and the pupils' responses to tests in order to ascertain areas of strength and weakness. Teachers analyse individuals' results but also look carefully at those of groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs or brighter pupils. The results of these analyses enable the school to accurately predict future targets for both individuals and year groups. Thus, the targets agreed represent a challenge to the school but one which they are prepared to work for.
7. In English, writing is a strength. Although many children enter school without sufficient pencil control to form letters, effective teaching soon addresses that problem and by Year 2 pupils are joining letters and producing handwriting that is clearly legible and well presented. They use their imagination well to write their own stories, take care in their use of punctuation and make good efforts to spell correctly. Given the limitations of the children's skills on entry to school, they do very well to attain the standards they do in reading. The best readers use expression, changing their voice to indicate when a character is speaking. They pay particular attention to such punctuation as question marks and exclamation marks, sometimes rereading a passage to

make it sound right. They know how to retrieve information from books and value the library as a resource. The very few children for whom English is an additional language make progress at the same rate as others, as their understanding and use of English is good.

8. In mathematics, pupils are improving their confidence and competence, particularly with mental problems, and are using the skills derived from the mental sessions for problem solving. They are becoming more confident in finding their own way of working out problems, for instance by using their knowledge of doubles.
9. In information and communication technology, pupils are making satisfactory progress overall but they make good progress in such aspects as control technology. They learn to guide remote control toys along a predetermined path or can programme a robotic machine in a similar way.
10. In geography, pupils understand their own locality well and are able to compare it with a contrasting locality. They make good progress in identifying local features, first by looking at photographs and then by moving on to the more abstract maps.
11. In art and design, children are becoming skilled at using collage materials in their creations.
12. In design and technology, children are making good progress in developing skills in making objects but have had little time for the development of their design skills. In both subjects there has been very little time to systematically develop the skills and techniques that children need in order to make good progress in all aspects of these subjects
13. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are well supported in their lessons by both teachers and support staff and this enables them to achieve higher levels than might be expected for their stage of learning.
14. The school has done extremely well to achieve the results but it is not complacent and recognises that in order to maintain these standards it will have to continue to work extremely hard. However, staff have the expertise and have a determination to do so.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Children have good attitudes to the school and their work. A recently introduced behaviour policy and high expectations on the part of the headteacher and staff ensure that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Parent's responses to the inspection questionnaire indicate that most children enjoy coming to school. The very good relationships that children form in school with other pupils and staff give them a feeling of belonging to the school community and are a key factor in their positive attitudes to the school. They feel secure in the knowledge that home and school work together with a common purpose. Teachers are good role models, they speak politely and courteously to children, who respond to this positively by being polite and respectful in return. The very good attitudes mean that children try to do their best and this is helping to improve standards.
16. The very good relationships among pupils, and between pupils and staff, mean that in lessons pupils work hard and concentrate well in response to their teacher's expectations. They are keen to answer questions and listen attentively to their teachers and their classmates. When required, they co-operate well in groups and make good progress.

17. Pupils enjoy being asked to take responsibility and try to do this well so that they will be asked again. They set up and put away the equipment for physical education, take registers to the secretary, act as milk monitors and are selected to become 'buddies'. Pupils respond responsibly when required to work independently and take an active role in decision making.
18. At break times, pupils play happily together and show good awareness of the needs of others. No incidents of bullying were observed. There is a clear policy, which ensures that pupils know what to do if bullying occurs, and pupils are confident that teachers will resolve any problems. Pupils clearly enjoy their breaks and return to lessons refreshed and ready to learn.
19. Despite the best efforts of the school, the attendance rate remains below the national average. That is mainly caused by long-term illnesses of certain pupils and parents taking their children on holiday during term time. There are, however, very few unauthorised absences and those are well below the national average. Children want to be punctual and come willingly to school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Overall, the quality of teaching is good: in 25 per cent of lessons observed it was very good. In no lessons was it unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, only 89 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better and 11 per cent were unsatisfactory in respect of quality of teaching. At the foundation stage teaching is generally good. In one class it was very good and in the other it was satisfactory. The teaching of Years 1 and 2 is good, overall, with much teaching that is very good. The good teaching is one of the main reasons why standards have improved and children are achieving as well as they are.
21. One of the strengths in teaching is the very good relationship that exists between teachers and children. This is the foundation for good learning and a motivating force because it results in children making good efforts, getting on with their work and trying to do their best. Teachers listen carefully to the children and show that they value the efforts they have made, which raises children's self-esteem and makes them take pride in their work.
22. Teachers show good knowledge and understanding of their subjects in the way they present and discuss the work. The teaching of basic skills is clear and accurate because teachers explain clearly and, in their introductions, make sure that there is a common understanding of what is to be learned and how to set about the tasks. This is particularly necessary in a school where the classes have all the Year 1 and 2 children together. When group activities take place the Year 2 children know what younger ones have to do and in some literacy lessons they were seen to provide help to groups unsupervised by the teacher.
23. Teachers' planning is mainly good for the foundation stage and very good for Years 1 and 2. Teachers know what children need to learn and lessons are planned to take account of pupils' different stages of learning. Particular care is taken to see that the work matches what children can do, regardless of age, and leads on from that already consolidated. Teachers are now using their assessments well to inform their planning. Daily assessments are used to decide how to move a subject forward and a simple system of highlighting tasks achieved the previous day gives a quick indication of what children did well and where further work is needed. Teachers are also making good use of the information they gain from the analysis of National Curriculum test results and, once weakness is identified, ways of remedying this are planned and introduced to lessons.

24. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. In some lessons observed it was very good. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented well and are used very effectively. By Year 1, children are used to the routines and have a good understanding of how each lesson will begin, that some work they will do unsupervised, and that some pupils will work with the teacher or a member of the support staff. The work that takes place in small groups is broken down for each age group and Year 1 children do not have the same tasks as those in Year 2. Teachers are particularly good at helping children to learn their letter sounds and then use this knowledge when reading unfamiliar words. In numeracy, teachers effectively emphasise speaking and listening skills because children frequently lack the vocabulary they need to explain what they have done. This strategy is leading to improved standards.
25. Teachers' very good management and control of pupils mean that few children challenge the authority of the teacher: when this does happen it is handled well. If given some 'time out', there is no argument from children and they move away from the main class although remain within earshot of what is happening. Generally, they want to be part of the whole-class group and quickly show that they are ready to return. Children help teachers to make their class rules and consequently expect that everyone will try to behave well within the school community.
26. Overall, teachers tend to use time well and lessons move along at a quick pace. This was demonstrated well in numeracy lessons when mental sessions lead quickly into the main activity. Effective and imaginative use is made of resources, as in a mathematics lesson where a magic bag was used to count a number of 2p coins and teddies were used for addition and to introduce children to subtraction. Teachers are trying to make better use of information and communication technology resources with the direct teaching of skills but they are still awaiting training under a national initiative and do not yet have access to the Internet.
27. All children have equal access to the curriculum and children with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons. This support is a great strength and is resulting in children who are equally happy working with the whole class or in small groups where they can tackle specific skills. The special educational needs co-ordinator is extremely knowledgeable and has a width of expertise with which to guide staff. There are detailed individual education plans and work for these children is carefully matched to the plans, resulting in good achievement. Although some children are still below average, others are just reaching average levels. The school's intention of getting more children to an appropriate stage for their age by Year 2 is showing signs of success.
28. Teachers of Years 1 and 2 make good use of homework to reinforce learning and some parents have expressed great satisfaction at what they see children doing at home, such as looking in newspapers and magazines for letter sounds or finding more interesting words to use in sentences. There is regular homework, such as reading, but teachers also issue challenges during lessons such as, "Can you find the correct spelling of 'porij' before the next lesson?", and such tasks are often undertaken at home.
29. The good teaching is resulting in good learning. Children acquire new knowledge, develop ideas and increase their understanding each day. They are productive and work at a good pace. They show interest in their work, sustain concentration and are beginning to think and learn for themselves. They understand what they are doing because the teachers share with them their objectives for learning. During lessons their understanding is probed as progress is checked. The sessions at the end of lessons are often used to help children understand how well they have done and sometimes pupils suggest how they can improve.

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

30. The school provides a well-balanced curriculum for all its pupils. This generally meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for children under five. Following the recent temporary relaxation of requirements for some subjects while the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy were implemented, the school has begun to consider what it needs to do to ensure that all the new requirements for Curriculum 2000 are met.
31. All children have equal access to all subjects of the curriculum and the range of learning opportunities outside lessons. The headteacher monitors this carefully to ensure there is no discrimination of any kind, even unwittingly, by staff. Just a few children have English as an additional language and, although they have a good understanding of English and are making good progress, teachers try to ensure that all in the class have an understanding of the work. This is evident in the teachers' planning.
32. The educational provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school provides very competent additional staff to support the children. They are particularly well informed about the pupils' needs and well trained in the skills needed to provide for them. They work very well with class teachers, providing a consistent approach for the children, and this accelerates their progress. This very effective provision is raising standards. In many cases, standards are broadly similar to those expected of pupils of the same age without special needs. Liaison with outside agencies is good but sometimes they lack the flexibility to meet all the needs of these pupils as they arise. A teacher who has specialist expertise in the area of special educational needs has recently been appointed.
33. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented very effectively in the school and are influencing the continuous improvements in pupils' performance in these subjects. Teachers say that the Numeracy Strategy has made them feel more confident and knowledgeable and so they teach it better.
34. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and similar to that provided for other infant schools. Although 12 parents expressed a desire for more after-school activities, others felt that the school day was long enough. Some clubs, such as the recorder club, are held at lunchtimes. The school is careful to ensure that all pupils profit equally from the range of activities provided.
35. The school is keen to encourage closer relationships between themselves and the nursery school from which many pupils come and the junior school to which they transfer. A new policy to promote continuity and progression between the infant and junior schools has been produced but has yet to be agreed on by the teachers and governors of both schools.
36. Overall, provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A well thought out programme of assemblies and collective worship that encourages thoughtful reflection and a sense of personal worth on the part of the pupils promotes the good provision made for their spiritual development. This is supported by the style of teaching in several of subjects, especially religious education, art and music, and by the wonder promoted by work in science, where the pupils are encouraged to think deeply about what they are learning. The use of 'circle time', when children sit in a circle and talk about their feelings, is also important in promoting the pupils' understanding of themselves and how they fit into their world.

37. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are helped to recognise how their actions affect others. Children are taught how to know right from wrong. The methods teachers use to manage the behaviour of the pupils is not only effective in making the school an orderly community but also encourages pupils to be thoughtful about what they do. All the staff in the school take time to help the pupils to understand which sorts of behaviour are acceptable, which are not, and why. The school's aims for this aspect of its work are fulfilled, and the plans to improve it, since the last inspection, have been fully realised. Moral development is now a strength of the school. Not only does it create a more friendly and humane place for children to learn but it also increases the quality of work that pupils produce because they take pride in it.
38. Provision for social development is also very good. There is a well-planned programme of study to develop the pupils' personal, social and health education, together with citizenship, well ahead of the required starting date. The school has benefited from work done in the nursery school in the development of social skills. Opportunities are provided to use social skills in the classroom, particularly with the youngest pupils at snack-time. At playtime the development of the volunteer 'buddy' system, with older pupils accepting a responsibility for helping other younger or lonely children, is another important contribution to the very good provision for the pupils' social development. Ninety-four per cent of the 83 parents who responded to the questionnaire showed satisfaction with the way their children are becoming mature and responsible.
39. Provision for cultural development is good. Children are gaining knowledge and understanding of their own culture through local songs, stories and drama. A visit from a book illustrator combined elements of literacy and art in promoting pupils' cultural development. An awareness of other cultures is developing, particularly through religious education. Pupils are familiar with festivals such as Divali and the Chinese New Year and hear stories from other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school takes very good care of pupils' health and well being. All staff know the pupils very well and work hard to ensure pupils' happiness, their personal support and the consistent and fair management of their behaviour. This good quality of care has been maintained since the last inspection.
41. The 'buddy' system and the schools merit system are very good examples of the care the school takes in promoting pupils' health, well-being and personal development. In the buddy system, specific children are appointed to take the role of providing help for younger children in the school and playground, which results in a happier and safer place for them to play. Very effective procedures to ensure that pupils' medical needs are known. Good links exist with health advisers and contact with pupils' homes can be made quickly. The headteacher has undertaken training in child protection and has ensured that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and that the arrangements for child protection are effective.
42. The procedures for securing the safety of all pupils have improved since the last inspection. Now regular risk assessments and health audits take place. The school responds quickly to safety issues, holds regular emergency fire drills and is very conscientious in checking the electrical safety of portable appliances.
43. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. They include timely and regular contact with parents to verify reasons for pupils' absence, resulting in very little unauthorised absence. Teachers' high expectations of good behaviour at all times help pupils to

achieve well, and lessons are mainly free of distractions. There are very effective behaviour routines based on the detailed policy. The procedures for the management and elimination of oppressive behaviour are very good.

44. There have been very significant improvements in the procedures for assessment since the last inspection. Previously, they relied heavily on the teachers' personal knowledge and there was a lack of formal systems. There is now a very clear, well-defined policy, with good guidance to assist teachers. Regular assessments are used daily to help teachers plan what work is needed next. These are very evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy.
45. A particular strength is the way that the school cares for pupils with special educational needs. The ethos of the school promotes their well-being and encourages very positive relations and mutual respect between pupils. The school very successfully integrates all pupils with special educational needs into every aspect of school life. Very good liaison exists between the specialist teachers, class teachers and support staff: the needs of the children are identified carefully and met effectively, both in class and in withdrawal groups. There is also very good liaison with outside agencies to support their progress. Although support for brighter children is sound, the school is aware that further development in the support for more able children is required. A new appointment has been made that will bring specific expertise to this task.
46. The very good care provided for the children is the result of teachers' using their knowledge of families effectively: they have ensured that right procedures are in place to provide the most appropriate support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school's partnership with parents has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good. Parents fully support the aims and values of the school and consider that it provides a very caring environment and has the interests of their children very much at heart.
48. Parents receive very good quality information about school news and events through newsletters and notice boards displaying school and community information. Many parents and relatives attend school assemblies, which strengthens the partnership between school and parents. There is a very good school brochure that clearly describes the school's expectations and standards and is of significant value to parents of children new to the school.
49. The headteacher and staff constantly make themselves available to parents on a daily basis. Parents say they find it easy to approach the school with suggestions or concerns and are confident that these would always be dealt with adequately and urgently. The school provides formal consultation evenings twice a year and these are greatly valued by parents. Several parents and relatives regularly help in school to very good effect. This gives them a greater understanding of how their children learn and how best to help them at home. The staff value their assistance and willingness to help: formal training sessions are planned to enhance this valuable resource.
50. The school effectively consults parents about educational change and their views are taken into account. For example, the homework policy and behaviour have been the subject of recent questionnaires and responses have guided changes to practice. The pupils' annual reports are very detailed and informative, stating clearly what the pupils can do, their progress through the year and their targets for improvement. These reports are discussed with individual parents, who are always welcome to make written contributions. Very good arrangements are made to

review the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and these are discussed appropriately with parents, who say that the school values their views. The school's homework policy is a useful document and is implemented to the satisfaction of most parents who accept the importance of their children learning at home and reinforcing the work done at school. Parents are interested in what children are learning and send helpful written comments to teachers about how they tackle the work at home.

51. The Parents and Friends Group is very successful and helps to strengthen the home-school link. A large number of fundraising events have taken place and the funds are prudently spent in consultation with the head teacher.
52. Parents have very good views of the school, welcome opportunities to be involved in their children's education and are satisfied with the standards they achieve. However, some parents would like to know more about the curriculum and the headteacher understands that.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. One of the main reasons for the improvement in standards and the continuing success of this school is the strong and purposeful leadership of the new headteacher and the effective support provided by staff, particularly the co-ordinators of literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. The responsibilities of curriculum leaders are heavy and they spend considerable time in making the school an attractive and effective place in which children can learn. The headteacher provides very good leadership: she has a very clear view of the type of education that the school should provide and this is resulting in a firm steer to the school's work. Through her personal example, in assemblies and by being around the school, the headteacher successfully promotes the development of very good relationships and encourages a range of learning opportunities. The success of the mission statement and the school's aims in promoting a caring community, where children are encouraged to develop their personal, social and academic skills, is evident every day. The school team is committed to these aims and it influences the children, who are well behaved and generally have a positive attitude to school life.
54. The present headteacher was after the last inspection but in response to a key issue the work of the deputy was reviewed and she was given responsibilities more in keeping with her post. The deputy's leadership in health and safety is good. She has made satisfactory attempts to look at the needs of the school as they plan future work in the subject of information and communication technology. However, she has yet to make an impact on the teaching and learning in the school or on the art and design curriculum for which she is responsible. Although there is a policy and guidelines for art they do not emphasise the need for a systematic teaching of skills and techniques. While there has been flexibility within the curriculum to allow for the implementation of literacy and numeracy this has not received attention but it will be given more emphasis when the school reviews all the subjects to bring them into line with Curriculum 2000. The new headteacher is working with the deputy to help her extend her expertise to make more valuable contributions to the school.
55. Teachers responsible for planning how the curriculum should be taught have received appropriate training, produced policies and guidance, and have undertaken monitoring of teaching and learning. Not all subject co-ordinators have had time to observe the teaching in other classes and only limited time has been made for making sure that subjects meet statutory requirements of Curriculum 2000. The school is aware that this is a major area now needing

development and plans have been made. When this work is completed the school plans to extend the monitoring of co-ordinators to other subjects. Although there have been several improvements in the provision for the foundation stage, some plans have not yet been realised. These are concerned with the provision of an outdoor area for physical development and bringing the policy and guidance into line with the requirements of the new foundation curriculum introduced this term.

56. All staff recognise the importance of consultation with parents, who are sought as effective partners in the education of their children. Governors try to be aware of parental concerns and try to respond quickly to suggestions and concerns. Parents have very good views of the school and have welcomed such initiatives as the home and school agreement that emphasises partnership with families and the community. Recent consultations with parents have concerned homework and behaviour.
57. Governors contribute effectively to the work of the school. They have good levels of expertise and are well organised and thorough in their approach. They have trust in the headteacher and are kept very well informed by the wealth of information provided for them, particularly in reports that are very detailed. Some governors are able to take an interest in subjects and staff spoke of the tremendous support they had received in mathematics and the way that they are receiving help in information and communication technology. The headteacher has welcomed their help with the monitoring of provision for special educational needs and that of teaching and learning. The chair of governors regularly meets the headteacher and acts as critical friend, providing a range of support but expecting accountability. What is learned from visiting school is shared at governing body meetings, ensuring that all governors are knowledgeable about the life and work of the school. They use the school management plan to identify priorities and make targets, then take action to achieve them. The governing body looks at records kept of progress made towards targets and contributes to the action that is taken.
58. Despite falling numbers the level of teaching staff has been maintained and the level of support staff raised because governors see good staff as a priority. Funds have been used most effectively. For example, the school has used its budget to supplement special educational needs support with good results in pupils' attainment. When making a new teaching appointment consideration was given to the need to look carefully at the needs of brighter children and this can now be developed with new expertise.
59. The accommodation provides satisfactory space and some specialist areas such as the library and hall. The room below the library has been made into a 'sunshine room' with good lighting, attractive displays and good quality resources for children with special educational needs. Children love using this area and thrive there. The outdoor area still lacks provision for children under five and this restricts the progress they might make in physical development.
60. The governing body knows about the principles of best value and is trying to apply them. Spending patterns of other schools and pupils' performance are compared with their own. They make good efforts to get the best value possible, such as when using the free services of the probationary service for work on the grounds and by spending time actively seeking the best value for money in making purchases. Resources are audited and stock piling and wastage rejected. They make as effective use of new technology as they can and although linked to Intranet through the Local Education Authority they are still awaiting the use of e-mail and Internet.

61. The headteacher and governors see the greatest improvement made as being the development of clear systems and procedures that have resulted in confident staff who have raised their own expectations. There is commitment to continual improvement so that the quality of education meets the needs of the children. The staff are willing to share success and weakness and feel secure in trying new ideas to offer better opportunities for pupils. This is a good school offering good value for money

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to take the school to its next stage of development the school should

Implement the plans for ensuring that curricular policies and guidance are meeting the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000 by:

- ensuring that there is sufficient time for all subjects
- ensuring that planning incorporates the systematic teaching of key skills and techniques, particularly in art and design and design and technology;
- checking there are sufficient resources for all subjects

(paragraphs 30 & 55)

Improve the provision for children in the foundation stage by:

- implementing plans for the development of the outdoor space that will extend opportunities for physical development;
- revising the policy and guidance to come into line with the new requirements for the areas of learning;
- sharing examples of best practice to bring all teaching to the level of the best.

(paragraph 55)

Minor issues

63. When compiling the action plan the school should give consideration to meeting the parents' request for more information about the curriculum, to extend their understanding, and implement the plans to provide more workshop sessions, particularly on literacy and numeracy.

(paragraph 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	26	48	26	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	127
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	22	25	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	19
	Girls	24	25	23
	Total	43	43	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (87)	91 (87)	90 (87)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	42	42	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (80)	89 (90)	91 (79)
	National	84 (82)	82 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	125
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	282454
Total expenditure	278841
Expenditure per pupil	2066
Balance brought forward from previous year	27217
Balance carried forward to next year	30830

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	127
Number of questionnaires returned	83

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	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	59	34	2	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	42	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	40	10	0	0
The teaching is good.	67	27	1	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	33	13	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	23	2	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	24	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	53	30	10	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	61	33	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	33	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	30	14	0	20

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

64. Several improvements have been made in the provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection, when several aspects were unsatisfactory. There is now a knowledgeable early years co-ordinator who has set out to improve links with the local nursery school. A new policy and guidance for teachers were produced and the organisation of the two classes has been changed to give more time to the areas of learning and consistency in approach. The expertise of support staff has been recognised and they now take a full part in contributing towards the assessment of children and are involved in their play.
65. Children entering the school have a wide range of ability but many children have underdeveloped language and mathematical skills and some have poor social skills. This is confirmed by the initial assessments made of these young children. At the time of inspection the children were still working towards the early learning goals. However, the good progress being made indicates that by the time they are ready to start in Year 1 the majority of children should attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Children are building well on the skills they acquired before entering school and by the end of their reception year are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area. The good teaching from all adults makes the children feel secure and confident about what they can achieve. They play and work well together. They are taught to show consideration for one another and are learning how to behave if they hurt or upset anyone. They are enthusiastic about their learning, seen, for example, when they were learning to handle and use a camera or when serving in the mini market.
67. The adults provide good role models for the children, always treating one another and the children with friendliness and respect. This leads to trusting relationships. For example, as a follow-up to the story 'A Dark, Dark Tale' children were willing to try an experiment that necessitated going into a large dark area alone, provided they could see the fingers of the nursery nurse working with them. Everyone in the group was involved and later explained how the lack of light made their task more difficult.
68. The adults promote children's personal development effectively, by ensuring that the organisation of the classroom ensures that equipment and resources that children need are readily accessible to them. This helps them become independent. This area of learning is well taught in both classes.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Children are enthusiastic about books. They enjoy stories and like to share books with adults and one another. All the adults know that talking to children is important and time needs to be made to listen. Adults listen carefully and talk to good effect, showing children that they value the efforts they make to communicate. Teachers usually intervene at appropriate times to

extend language and extend understanding but occasionally such opportunities are lost. For example, a small group of children were involved in cutting out biscuits using different shapes: the adult supporting the children was keen to help them and in assisting with the cutting missed opportunities to reinforce mathematical language and to talk about the task. This went unnoticed by the teacher.

70. The children are learning new sounds and familiar words. They listen to stories on tape and many already know the initial sound of their name and words on captions around the room. Elements of the Literacy Framework are used well by teachers and children readily take part in the big book reading sessions. They are already becoming familiar with such technical vocabulary as 'text', 'author' and 'illustrator' and are at the early stages of putting the story into a sequence. However, many children still have relatively short concentration spans and teachers are correctly introducing such sessions very gradually.
71. Children are encouraged to think of themselves as writers. Supplies of paper, pens, crayons and pencils are available for their use in the home corner to write a shopping list or in the mini-market to write a bill or list. Teachers are beginning to show children how to form letters but sometimes the challenge is too difficult and some children have problems in succeeding. For example, in both classes children had examined the contents of a box and were attempting to write 'in the box was a ()' This was tackled well in one class, as it was better matched to their ability to control the pencil and form letters, but it was not appropriate in the other class. Writing was very shaky and showed that children were still having difficulty in controlling the pencil and some were unsure of how to form the letters. The practice of copying sentences before children can form letters was criticised in the previous report and has been stopped. Some children still need more opportunities for lots of practical experiences before embarking on writing sentences.

Mathematical development

72. This area of learning is well taught in one class and satisfactorily in the other. Most children can count to ten and a few can go beyond that. When counting backwards, one child used 'zero' and the teacher capitalised on this, extending the learning of others to the meaning and use of this term. The teacher reinforced their counting skills by making two queues and as they counted people they had to decide whether one queue had more or fewer people in it. Children use mathematical language with confidence. They ask for one more teddy in a game, they know the times of day and discuss what comes first or happens later.
73. In one class the teacher treats the children like mathematicians and helps them to see mathematics all around them. At snack time there were sandwiches, cakes and jellies to be sampled if the children were aware of the shape and colour. Children had no problems matching shapes and colours and were familiar with the names of two-dimensional shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. This is an area where children have limited knowledge when they enter school. They build on what they do know to understand more about the place they live and what has happened to them since they were babies. They know that autumn is an important time for some animals. They know the autumn colours, have collected fallen leaves and explain how early frost has affected them. They have planted winter flowering pansies and have some understanding of the conditions they need to grow. They have a growing understanding that some clothes are

suitable for winter because it is cold, as seen when they selected items from a range of clothes with which to dress teddy.

75. Children show confidence when using the computer supported by an adult but some are very confident and know how to use the mouse to make objects move on the screen, such as building towers or making a sequence of beads on a string. Adults make good use of the play activities and intervene at appropriate moments to move it on. Some adults are involved in the play and at such times children make rapid progress. For example, the home corner was used for a party and the teacher's involvement enabled children to learn that when they used the tape recorder to provide music they needed to press 'play' to start it and to press 'pause' when they wanted it to stop for a short time. This was effective when they introduced the party game of 'passing the parcel'. The teacher introduced a camera at an appropriate point and they quickly learned that they needed to see everyone through the viewfinder and that when they pressed a button and saw a flash the photograph was taken.
76. In both classes children select resources and use tools safely to construct and build. They have a good sense of how things join together and are imaginative in their designs. When designing and making a bed for a teddy, no two models were the same.

Physical development

77. At present there is no outdoor play area where children can run, jump, balance and climb. The school is aware that this lack of facility hampers the progress that children can make and has already made plans to improve it. Children do have use of the hall space every day and use it mainly for movement that is often linked to their literacy work. At such times they show an awareness of space and are learning to move confidently without bumping into others. Children have some awareness that physical activity is healthy. When these sessions are used for movement related to a story there is sometimes too little movement, with children standing still while the teacher explains the story. This is not the best use of time and the pace is too slow. Opportunities to use words that will encourage children to move well are sometimes missed.
78. In the classroom there are many opportunities for children to develop their finer physical skills as they use a range of small and large equipment. Children change their clothes before the hall sessions and are quickly learning to attend to their personal needs as they put on shoes and socks and fasten buttons. They are gaining independence.

Creative development

79. Children readily take part in role-play and this is good in one class where the teacher supports and extends these opportunities. Children use props and other resources with imaginative skill. They enjoy becoming other characters. Children have opportunities to paint and draw. One group chose painting when inspired by the book 'A Dark Dark Wood' and had looked closely at the work of an artist who had used dark colours. They used black and grey paint but did not mix their own colours. No opportunities were seen for children to use malleable materials, music making or a range of fabrics and papers for their creative work.

ENGLISH

80. Standards in English have improved significantly since the last inspection and are better than average. Results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests show that, when compared with those in similar schools, children achieve standards that are much better than national averages in

reading and writing at age seven. Much hard work has gone into improving spelling and standards are good. Assessments in speaking and listening show that children do not do as well as in reading and writing. When they enter school, the majority are willing to speak but often lack the vocabulary to express themselves clearly. Test results have risen over the last four years at a rate higher than the national trend. Although infants schools are not required to set targets, the school has chosen to do so because it gives the teachers and children something to aim for. The school has done very well this year and has set even higher targets for next year.

81. Although children have a limited vocabulary on entry to school they are soon introduced to a wider range of words and take delight in their use. A group of children with special educational needs were engaged in a conversation about bicycles and their various parts and were soon using such terms as *'mudguard'*, *'chain'* and *'gears'* as they talked about what they could see. There are many opportunities to talk about everyday experiences, such as how to make buttered toast. They know how to explain about stories, particularly those they have written themselves. They talk about characters, express opinions about events in the story and listen to the views of others.
82. Given the limitations of the children's skills on entry to school they do very well to attain the standards they do in reading. This is because teachers have the technical skills to teach basic skills well and give a high priority to helping children do the best they can. Both average and below average readers have a good grasp of letter sounds and Year 1 children benefit from being in the same class as those in Year 2, for they hear their work and many remember it and consequently have fewer problems in reading unfamiliar words. The buddy system is also used well with older children assisting younger ones with their reading. This makes them more confident when tackling such tasks as spelling and attempts are usually phonetically plausible, (such as *'brixs'*) if not quite correct. Children at Year 2 love to read. They are enthusiastic and insist on giving an explanation about the author and illustrator before they begin. The above average readers are particularly good at reading with expression, changing their voices to indicate that a character is speaking. In addition, they are quick to explain, using the text, the reasons for the change. Punctuation is observed and sometimes children will go back and read a sentence again if they become aware that they have missed a question mark or full stop. The school has made good use of the local library and children have had regular storytelling sessions that have given them a love of books. The librarian has visited the school to help children develop the skills they need to find books and retrieve information and they do so using both colour coding and a numbering system based on that used at the library.
83. Writing is also a delight to children and shows good achievement. At the Foundation Stage, many children lack sufficient pencil control to write but these limitations are soon addressed by effective teaching. The most able seven-year-olds are already writing well. Teachers provide stimulating classrooms with lots of print everywhere to support writing. When composing their own stories children use their imagination well, choosing to write about wizards, dinosaurs or even vampires. They make sure there is a beginning, a middle and an end and plan what they want to write. They take care to use punctuation. They have a good memory for the correct sequence and retell their story with few problems. They enjoy using interesting words to replace common words such as *'said'* by *'screamed'* or *'shouted'* or *'muttered'*. They try to introduce speech that is correctly punctuated or indicate, by use of capitals, that speech is to be shouted. A good example was seen when children wrote the sequence of the story *'Three Billy Goats Gruff'* and made the Troll say, *'WHO IS THAT CROSSING MY BRIDGE'*. They enjoyed reading it back.
84. Standards of handwriting are good in handwriting books. Children regularly practise forming their letters correctly and Year 2 pupils have already begun to join letters together. At this stage

most children are still printing most of their written work but the most able are keen to accelerate their skills and some Year 1 children are eager to try joined writing too. Other written work is often well presented but standards in workbooks vary and not all classes emphasise the skills in other lessons that they do in handwriting lessons. Children try hard with their spelling, often helping one another. When younger children were writing a list of things that teddy might take in his case on holiday the misspelling of 'hunee' was noticed and another showed one child the correct spelling. Children are taught about spelling patterns, learn spellings at home and are confident in their attempts. In some books the teachers' marking is helpful, drawing attention to strengths and what needs improvement but in other books it is cursory.

85. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In over half of lessons observed the teaching was good, a significant proportion was very good and in no lessons was it unsatisfactory. All teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They know the importance of establishing the right relationship with pupils that motivates them to make good efforts and try hard. Without exception the very good relationships produced a good working atmosphere in which children quickly settled to their work and most completed it within the lesson.
86. Teachers use a wide vocabulary to promote the children's interest in new words. They insist that the proper terms for language are used, such as *consonant*, even if the children have trouble in pronunciation and they encourage pupils to select descriptive words accurately. It was not unusual to hear teachers read from children's writing and ask 'could you have found a more interesting word?'. Collections of words, from which children could select, supported the writing and some pupils found words at home and added them to the collection. The introduction of a book with removal items captured interest immediately and using the '*Jolly Postman*' a teacher found within it a removal letter addressed to her. Children were excited to know more and the choice of words was a good way to whet their appetite to read the book and take part in the task. Class challenges were used well in this lesson, such as, 'Find a split digraph and explain it to your mum' or, 'I want the correct spelling of '*porij*' before the end of the day'.
87. Teachers encourage children to understand characters and their feelings by asking appropriate questions. In one class this prompted a child to offer an opinion that Goldilocks was not a nice person because she entered a house unasked, ate the bears' food, broke a chair and used their beds causing them to be confused and upset. This proved to be a good opportunity for developing moral understanding. The end of literacy sessions are used effectively to encourage pupils to identify what they have learned and to think about what they need to learn next.
88. Children with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans that are followed carefully, which results in good teaching that is well focused. The learning support assistant makes children feel they are special by providing a sunshine room with a wide range of games and resources particularly suitable for their needs. They have opportunities to succeed, as when having a discussion about bicycles that resulted in their producing a clear set of instructions. The language used and points made by the teacher were closely related to the individual education plans. The teacher maintained their attention without oppression and obvious control but by her skilled direction of the stream of conversation. This intensive small group worked very productively and increased their self-esteem. Their follow-up work was different for each child, recognising the variation in their stage of learning. There are very few children for whom English is an additional language and their understanding and use of language are at a level that enables them to work at the same pace as others and do well.
89. The management of English is good. The literacy co-ordinator observes lessons, looking for a consistency of approach, an awareness of equal opportunity and any aspect where her

considerable expertise can be helpful. Help from outside agencies has been sought when teachers have encountered problems in such areas as guided reading. The suggestions from a consultant were found to be too clumsy and staff experimented, finding that listening for specific skills made the task easier and that they were able to improve children's skills in reading more quickly. The opportunity for every teacher to be involved in moderating children's writing has extended the expertise of all teachers and writing is now a strength in the school.

MATHEMATICS

90. Evidence from lessons and from the scrutiny of written work indicates that standards are in line with those expected for children aged seven and consistent with the 2000 National curriculum test results. These showed that 90 per cent of children reached Level 2 or above. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school was particularly pleased with the higher percentage of children reaching Level 2B and higher, which has increased from 56 per cent last year to 77 per cent this year. It is evident that the work undertaken in the last year to achieve this has paid off. The way that the school has supported children with special educational needs has also had a very positive effect. Although they have been able to work at a level appropriate for their ability, achievement has often been very good, with children attaining higher levels than might be expected for their stage of learning.
91. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and in the lessons observed it was often very good. Teachers plan lessons, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, that have clear learning objectives and this means that children have a good understanding of what they are to learn. These objectives are displayed in all classrooms but not all teachers explain them to pupils. Usually lessons begin with a short session of mental arithmetic that is taken at a good pace and children quickly move to the next stage of their work. The mental sessions have become very popular and teachers' questioning is skilful, as they provide appropriately challenging questions for each age and stage of learning to ensure that both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils can work together successfully. For example, when asking pupils to add two numbers mentally the teacher will make the problem harder for the Year 2 pupils by making the numbers bigger, while working in single digits for the younger ones. This keeps the interest of the pupils and ensures that all stay fully involved. The transition from the first session on the carpet to the main activities is always smooth and quick. The main activities are all appropriately planned for different age and ability groups, ensuring that all pupils have equal access and that the challenge is at a suitable level.
92. The teachers deploy extra adult help effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. They use their time appropriately to focus on one particular group while keeping a careful watch on the progress of the other groups. In most lessons pupils show that they can work well without direct supervision and concentration is sustained throughout the lesson.
93. Teachers are particularly skilled at ensuring that learning at each stage is consolidated and secure and they often use different activities to make the same teaching point. For example, in one class the teacher began by asking them to count in twos and then reinforced this by counting pairs of shoes. This was followed by children recalling the two times table and finally the teacher used two-pence coins as a counting tool. In another lesson the teacher introduced a "magic bag" into which she placed imaginary coins which the pupils had to count. This novel approach captured pupils' imagination and they readily accepted 'the magic'. By the end of this session pupils were confident in their ability to count in twos. A notable feature of all

classrooms is the very good display of numeracy to which teachers are constantly referring and which pupils often use to aid their learning.

94. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has done much to promote the subject and improve standards. She has led many training sessions for staff, which has increased the teachers' confidence tremendously. Each year she conducts an audit of the subject to ascertain resource and training needs. In addition, the test results are carefully identified to identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching programme and to set targets for both individuals and groups. She is very aware of what needs to be done and has the ability to do it.

SCIENCE

95. By Year 2, the standards indicated by the teachers' assessments are what would be expected of seven years olds when compared with schools nationally. When comparison is made with similar schools their results are very good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. There are no marked differences between boys and girls. In lessons standards are typical of those for children aged seven. Children made good gains in scientific thinking when conducting experiments and investigations. For example, when observing changes to a number of materials, such as flour and sugar when mixed with water, pupils recognised the need to use fair tests. Pupils understand what living things need to grow and make clear observations of changes in plants, such as leaves turning brown in autumn. They understand the qualities of different materials such as wood, plastic or metal, and talk knowledgeably about which textiles make warm clothing. They understand the changes brought about as a result of different physical processes such as cooking, and use this knowledge to understand how other changes occur.
96. Teaching was good in half the lessons observed and very good in the others, resulting in good learning. The improvement in standards in science over time are the result of improved teaching methods, particularly the closer attention paid to planning the work and using assessments to develop the work within each topic. Teachers pay close attention to developing scientific language and encourage children in the use of scientific ways of thinking.
97. A particular feature in the work of the school is the very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs. The work prepared for these pupils in their individual education plans and the extra support that they receive ensures that they make good progress and do not fall behind the other pupils. The teachers and support staff, working with small groups, make sure that each new idea is fully grasped before they move onto the next one.
98. The quality of assessment and its use for planning has been improved resulting in improvements to pupils' understanding of experimental methods and investigations and a better knowledge of science. The clearer planning has had an impact on the quality of scientific thinking and has reduced incidents of unwitting repetition between classes. The marking of work is variable and best practice enables children to understand what is done well and what needs further work.
99. Co-operative planning ensures that teachers have a good overall knowledge of what they are teaching and of how it can best be taught. The teaching methods employed ensure that interest is maintained and concentration sustained. Teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves, try things out, and take pride in their work. The lessons proceed at a good pace and no time is wasted. The teachers make good use of skills developed in literacy and numeracy to extend the pupils' understanding of science - for example, by ensuring that correct scientific terms are used and in computing quantities and measurements in experiments.

100. The subject is well managed; the documentation is clear and promotes good planning and effective teaching. The planning and the teaching are carefully monitored and areas for development identified and pursued. The careful and knowledgeable co-ordination of the subject has helped to both maintain and improve the quality of the teaching, and hence of the learning of the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Only one lesson of this subject was observed but displays shows that work undertaken is at a satisfactory standard. Children are used to using a range of materials and tools and talked informally about the use of pattern and shape in recent work and the beginnings of observational work. Although children referred to painting in topic work there were no examples on display. There were many examples of artwork involving the use of patterns and collage materials.
102. No overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching but in the one lesson seen the teaching was good. In this lesson the two art tasks were explained clearly by the teacher and children were eager to get involved. Although the tasks were challenging the teacher had planned carefully and deployed support staff well so that they would use their knowledge and expertise to enable pupils to be confident in their work and take pride in what they were achieving. A new type of loom for weaving was introduced and a wide range of materials, fabrics and threads made the choice exciting as each child determined what they would use. They gave reasons for their choice such as 'I like the shiny surface of the ribbon' and in creating a design in their weaving became enthralled in the task, behaviour was good and outcomes were admired. Younger children in the class were creating patterns using different fabrics and carefully placed them alongside each other before sticking into place and decorating the surface. The very good relationships between adults and children and the clear explanations, good management and organisation resulted in both year groups' sustaining concentration, learning for themselves and evaluating how well they had done. As there has been less time for some subjects while the school has been implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies, teachers have taught the two subjects of art and design and design and technology at the same time and this has restricted the systematic teaching of art skills and techniques for the whole class.
103. The management of art and design is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware that this subject now needs to be audited against the new requirements in Curriculum 2000 and that the current scheme and guidance will need to apply to Years 1 and 2 only and lead on from the Foundation Curriculum for children under five. At present the subject's teaching and learning are not monitored and the co-ordinator would like the subject to have more time but the school has yet to work out how this can be fitted in.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. By the time children leave the school, at the end of year 2, standards are appropriate for their age. They enjoy working with tools, cutting and sticking and joining components to make models. Children are less advanced in planning and evaluating their designs, although they talk knowledgeably about the materials they have used. Brighter pupils give reasons for their choice. For example, they understand how to use levers for making toys with moveable components and follow instructions well when constructing them. When selecting tools they

understand about safety in the use of sharp and cutting tools. Confident speakers discuss the reasons for their selection while those less skilled make effective choices but are less able to give explanations.

105. The skills of making are better developed than those of planning and designing, largely because teachers emphasise the making of good looking objects within a limited amount of time. Less time has been available for concentrating on the processes involved in designing a product, assessing its potential and refining the plans. Similar comments were made about standards in the last report. The combining of art and design with design and technology has restricted the teaching and learning of skills specific to design and technology, as it has done in art and design.
106. The teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of how to develop the skills needed by younger pupils to make good quality products. However, planning sometimes fails to provide sufficient opportunities for children to plan their own products. The management of pupils is good and time is used efficiently. Teachers have high expectations that children will work hard and take pride in what they make, to which there is a positive response. Work is assessed after each lesson and the information used to plan what the next step will be. Teachers make good use of support staff and parent volunteers and the opportunity to have one adult with each group of children adds effectively to what children produce.
107. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has produced a policy and guidance based on advice from the national Qualifications and Curriculum agency. The effective co-ordination is ensuring that the teaching is having a positive effect on children's learning, as have appropriate monitoring, advice and shared insights at team planning meetings. The co-ordinator is aware that there is an under-emphasis on the skills of designing and evaluation and this is already under review by the school.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Standards in geography have been maintained since the previous inspection and, by Year 2, are in line with expectations for children aged seven. The range of work shows that pupils are developing a sound awareness of their own locality; they identify important features and compare them with a contrasting locality. Children confidently discuss their local area and suggest how it can be improved.
109. In the two lessons seen the quality of teaching was good in one class and very good in the other. Teachers prepare interesting lessons that engage pupils' interest from the outset and then by skilful and appropriate questioning sustain the children's interest, resulting in sustained concentration. In both lessons, teachers made excellent use of such resources as village photographs to extend children's understanding about the area in which they live. Good use had been made of the school's digital camera, and, in one class it was evident that the teacher, with her local knowledge, knew exactly which features were likely to hold their interest longest. She used her knowledge very effectively. A good feature of both lessons was the care taken by teachers to match the activity to the two age groups and stages of learning. For example, Year 2 pupils were asked to create their own plan of their journey to school, identifying key features, but Year 1 pupils worked with the teacher to identify their route to school using the photographs. Both groups made very good efforts and the activities generated good discussion about their home area. The below average group used building blocks to create a busy high street and because the task was more appropriate to their stage of learning they too showed good concentration and effort, talking about the activity as they progressed.

110. In both lessons teachers deployed extra adults well using their expertise to advantage, particularly in supporting children with special educational needs. This effective support was enabling the children to achieve at a level appropriate for their age. Teachers planned the lessons in detail, which enabled a smooth transition from introduction to group activity. They managed their classes well, with an ability to focus on one group and yet keep a watching eye on the other groups too. A group of children was very willing to talk about work in geography and recalled that done previously about contrasting locations. They remembered how they had used the 'Katy Morag' stories from literacy to show a contrasting location.
111. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has produced useful guidelines to support the teachers but recognises that some adjustments are required to meet the demands of Curriculum 2000.

HISTORY

112. No lessons were seen in history during the inspection. There was only a limited amount of written work because during the last two years the school has given emphasis to implementing and consolidating the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Some work about the Gunpowder Plot was on display and discussions were held with children about this work. They also enjoyed talking about work relating to the topic of 'seaside past and present', remembering it reasonably well given that they studied it well before the summer holiday. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about standards but the work seen was sound and related to knowledge and understanding that are expected for children aged seven.
113. Children responded to questions about the subject excitedly and were eager to answer questions and demonstrate what they know and understand. They understood how to find books about the Gunpowder Plot and talked with understanding about the display. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to respond to such questions as '*What happened next?*' and '*How were things different then?*', although they preferred to concentrate on the more grisly details of the fall of Guy Fawkes and his end. They gave convincing responses to whether what happened to the plotters was fair and showed some awareness of the need for tolerance to different religious groups. They had less information to impart about seaside holidays in the past but talked about the differences in clothes and the ways that holidaymakers spent their time. Although unable to quote historical dates, they are gaining some knowledge of the passing of time and acquiring knowledge and understanding of people, episodes and events in history. They were only aware of one main source of evidence and information to find out about the past, namely books. However, the school is soon hoping to extend the range of sources, particularly through the use of computers.
114. As no lessons were seen no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. The management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator is currently working on a new scheme and guidance and is well aware that the school needs to match practice to the requirements of Curriculum 2000. It is recognised that more time is needed for this subject, that the monitoring of teaching and learning is needed and that some additional resources may be required. The previous inspection drew attention to the need for more written work: that need still exists.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory. However, in some aspects of the subject the pupils do better than expected; for example, in control technology they can successfully direct a programmable toy vehicle, as well as working out how to do it on the computer. There is no significant difference between the skills of boys and girls.
116. In lessons children were experiencing a good range of activities that utilised different pieces of apparatus. They successfully used a variety of communication tools, such as a flash camera to take pictures of the preparation for the teddy bears' picnic. They used tape recorders for stories supporting work in literacy, efficiently setting them up and rewinding the tape after use. They practised skills on the computers, such as moving the cursor with both mouse and direction keys, with increasing accuracy. Younger pupils enjoyed using a drawing programme to practise writing their names. Good use was made of a digital camera to make and record images. Older pupils were familiar with a word-processing programme to create simple texts that they saved and printed. A music programme was used to compose simple tunes.
117. In the last report progress in information technology was described as satisfactory but now attainment is good and children are doing as well as they can. This development has been achieved at the same time that the scope of the subject has been broadened and the anticipated levels raised.
118. The teaching is good. The direct teaching of the subject is effective. Good use is made of support staff and confident and talented parents who complement the efforts of the teachers. The pupils' learning is marked by an enthusiasm for the subject, and a willingness to work hard at acquiring skills to produce more adventurous work. The pupils support one another and share their expertise generously. The good level of support provided for the pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make good progress and most attain standards that are broadly in line with what is expected of pupils of their age. Teachers encourage pupils to work well in pairs, sharing computer time fairly. The ethos of the school supports this willingness to share equipment sensibly.
119. The subject is satisfactorily managed and the co-ordinator has ensured that there is the provision of a policy and some guidance to support staff. Satisfactory attempts have been made, by the co-ordinator, to look at the work of the school as they plan future work in this subject. Teachers take care to see that the subject is planned progressively. The quality of the curriculum support staff plays a significant role in the standards achieved.

MUSIC

120. It was possible to see only one lesson of music and therefore no overall judgement is given of standards or of the quality of teaching and learning. However, in the one lesson seen standards were in line with expectations. Children were able to sing a range of songs from memory. They could handle instruments well and most could keep a steady beat to accompany their singing. Included in the scheme of work are sections on local folk music and on music from the Caribbean. In this way, music during the year makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
121. In the one lesson seen teaching was satisfactory. However, despite the best efforts of the teacher the behaviour of a small minority of pupils, particularly the very youngest in the class,

was very challenging. They have short concentration spans which limit their learning. The teacher handled the situation well and most children successfully extended and developed their ability to beat out rhythmic patterns as they read from standard notation. Children sing well in assemblies. They remember songs that they have previously learned, clap in rhythm and do actions to accompany their singing.

122. Although the school has no music specialist, it has partly overcome this by using a volunteer pianist who visits each week to play for hymn singing and prepares tape recordings to be used as an accompaniment when she is not there.
123. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has enhanced the subject with the provision of a recorder club and ocarina club. In addition, she arranges for musical ensembles to visit the school and give children a chance to hear good playing of instruments. The co-ordinator has recently updated the scheme of work but now needs to make minor changes to bring it into line with Curriculum 2000. The school regularly puts on performances for parents and participates in joint musical events with local schools.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. It was possible to observe only one lesson of physical education and therefore no judgements are made on the overall standards or on the quality of teaching and learning. However, in that lesson children were working at an acceptable standard as they practised skills in sequencing. They linked movement with balancing and travelling and then had to repeat the sequence they had developed. Children co-operated well together to achieve the task.
125. In that one lesson teaching was good. Children responded well to the teacher's high expectation and the very good relationships resulted in a high level of effort and sustained concentration. The teacher gave clear instructions so children knew what they were expected to do and the brisk pace of the lesson enabled them to move quickly onto the task of creating a sequence of movement and improving it. As children became more confident the sequence became more complicated. Pupils showed appreciation for the efforts of others and on several occasions gave them spontaneous applause. Praise was used well, encouraging the pupils to greater effort. The teacher was also keen to extend the pupils' thinking by asking appropriate questions. By the end of the lesson the children had improved their performance through good physical and intellectual effort.
126. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has recently rewritten the scheme of work and is now in the process of bringing it into line with the requirements of Curriculum 2000. Resources for the subject are generally adequate and the hall is large enough to accommodate a class. Outdoor work is confined to the adequate hard play area.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. The standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and typical of those expected of children by the age of seven. They understand, at a level appropriate for their age, how and why people who profess a religious faith pray. They know about things used in praying, such as candles, beads or flowers. They relate this knowledge to their own lives and experience, linking it to opportunities for quiet reflection that are provided in the school's assemblies and acts of worship.

128. The pupils know simple facts about the religions they study. They are familiar with festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year as well as the Christian Festivals that mark their year such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. They relate the activities associated with the school harvest festival with what they are learning about prayer. Those pupils who come from families that practise a religious faith share what they know in the lessons and the other pupils receive this with sensitivity. This enables all of them to explore how religions affect the way people live their lives. The pupils are most familiar with the Christian traditions because of the community background, but they also develop an understanding of aspects of the Hindu faith and, to a lesser extent, Buddhism.
129. The satisfactory standards are the result of the careful planning that is matched to the pupils' stages of development. Such planning provides a secure base for the good teaching resulting in good progress.
130. The previous inspection reported that pupils were not as adept in thinking about the significance of the stories they knew as they were in retelling them. This weakness has been overcome well: their understanding is often better than expected.
131. The teaching of religious education is good. The relationships between the pupils and the teachers are very good and pupils talk confidently about matters that are important to them. The teachers manage the classes well so that pupils with special educational needs, or those with poor behaviour, join in well and the latter do not disturb the progress of the lesson. Teachers expect pupils to enjoy the lessons and to think hard; the pupils rise to those expectations and develop their knowledge and understanding of religions well. Good use is made of skills developed in literacy to promote discussion and writing.
132. The subject is well managed. The recently produced guidelines include a clear system of assessment which is being used to check on the pupils' progress when compared with what is expected from the Durham Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education and national guidelines. These documents form the basis of the work. The subject is satisfactorily resourced. New purchases are wisely being deferred until the newly revised county syllabus is published.