

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FALLA PARK COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Felling, Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108358

Head teacher: Mrs C E Graham

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker  
1424

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 246787

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Falla Park Road Felling Gateshead
Postcode:	NE10 9HP
Telephone number:	0191 4695528
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss M Quigley
Date of previous inspection:	November 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1424	Mr M Whitaker	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Educational inclusion	How well are pupils taught?
			Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
14083	Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector		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?
11611	Mr J Hall	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Information and communication technology	
			Art and design	
			Music	
			Citizenship	
27477	Mr J Mitchell	Team inspector	Design and technology	
			Religious education	
			Foundation Stage	
10782	Mr H Moreton	Team inspector	English	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

			Geography	
			History	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Falla Park Community Primary School is located in Felling and is for boys and girls aged 3 to 11 years. The main part of the school is housed in a Victorian building whilst nursery provision is made in purpose built premises across the road from the main school. The area served by the school is one of significant social and economical disadvantage and most children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected for their age. There are currently 120 boys and 89 girls attending the school with 33 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis. Six pupils for whom English is an additional language attend the school, five of whom are at the early stages of learning English. This is slightly above average. The main languages are Turkish, Spanish or Punjabi. Fifty one pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, one of whom has a statement. The overall number of pupils with special educational needs is above average. One hundred and four pupils are eligible for free school meals; this represents a very high percentage.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Falla Park is a very effective school. Standards are very high compared with similar schools in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school. The quality of teaching is very good enabling all pupils to make very good progress. They get a very good start in nursery and reception, often from a very low starting point. The head teacher, well supported by staff and governors provides excellent leadership and management for the school. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Enables pupils to make very good progress and achieve well in English, mathematics and science by the age of 11 and good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the age of seven.
- Enables children to make very good progress in all areas of learning in the nursery and in reception.
- Has excellent leadership and management which has successfully created an environment where pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- Has developed a good curriculum which is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- Has very good teaching with an emphasis on the development of 'learning skills' which prepares pupils very well for future learning.
- The school has very good procedures for caring for pupils. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is excellent. It is very good for their social and moral development.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards could be higher in art and design and design and technology by the age of 11.
- A greater number of parents could be more actively involved with the school.
- Accommodation for physical education could be better.
- Overall attendance and the punctuality of pupils could be better.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has continued to make very good progress since its last inspection in November 2000 building on the progress made from its inspection in October 1998. During this time it has developed from a school requiring special measures into a very effective school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are now considerably higher, the quality of teaching is very good and behaviour has much improved.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	C	A
mathematics	E	C	C	A
science	D	A	A	A*

**Key**

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

The standards reached by pupils in the national tests in 2002 in English, mathematics and science by the age of 11 are very high compared with those in similar schools. In science they are in the top five per cent nationally. When compared with all schools standards are very high in science and average in English and mathematics. The trend in the school's results has been above the national average in recent years. This attainment represents very good achievement and progress for pupils since the attainment of most children when they enter the nursery is well below expected levels. Children make very good and rapid progress in the nursery and reception classes and throughout Years 1 and 2. This is reflected in the results of seven year olds in the 2002 national tests where attainment was well above average in reading and mathematics and writing was in the top five per cent compared with similar schools. Compared with all schools standards in writing and mathematics were average and in reading they were below average.

There are weaknesses in the standards being achieved in art and design and design and technology by the age of 11. This is largely because the school has concentrated its efforts, rightly on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. However, there are encouraging signs of improvement in these subjects which augers well for the future since standards are now broadly average by the age of seven and pupils are now in a stronger position to build on their learning in the juniors.

The school sets demanding targets not being content with what is known to be achievable. This represents a great challenge to the pupils and staff but has proved to be very rewarding because of the clear improvements in results.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to work and school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well and they act in a mature manner. They have high expectations of their own and others' behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very positive and pupils relate very well to adults and each other. They are polite and courteous and welcoming of visitors. They develop a good range of social skills which help them become well rounded individuals.
Attendance	Below average. There has been a big improvement but it remains below the national average.

Pupils really enjoy school; they clearly get a real 'buzz' from their successes and this feeds their ambition to achieve even more. It has resulted in very positive attitudes in lessons, much improved behaviour and better attendance. The quality of relationships and a sense of working together to improve have been key features in the school's success.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is very good throughout the school. As a result of the very good teaching in the nursery and reception classes children make very good and rapid progress. Teachers know the children very well; they have high expectations and challenge the children to reach high standards. English and mathematics are taught very well throughout the school and there is a strong emphasis on the development and reinforcement of literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.

As a result standards have improved considerably. Lessons are very well structured and work is very well matched to the different needs and attainment of pupils. The structure of the lessons enables pupils to be effectively managed, pupils feel more confident and secure and have very positive attitudes to learning. An emphasis on the development of skills which will aid learning throughout the curriculum is a very positive factor in the teaching. The marking of pupils' work is exemplary enabling pupils to understand how well they have done and what they need to do next to improve further. Learning, as a result, is very effective.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Very good for the youngest children. Pupils benefit from a rich learning environment.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. All pupils are fully included in all lessons and appropriate support is provided according to individual needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Appropriate support is provided within lessons to enable pupils to take a full and active part.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for spiritual development is excellent. It is very good for moral and social development and good for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good with some excellent features. There is exceptional care in relation to pupils' well being. Marking of pupils' work is exemplary.

The school provides a very secure, caring environment in which pupils are happy and want to learn. Staff have a very detailed understanding of the needs of the children which they use very effectively to enable them to make progress. Most parents now have a high regard for the school and the partnership between home and school is becoming stronger. Not enough parents take an active part in school life yet, although a growing number are very involved and support the school well.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Excellent. The head teacher has established a clear educational direction for the school and this is evident throughout the school. The most important areas for development have been very clearly identified and the action taken has been extremely effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas to be developed. They have worked very hard to improve the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school has very successfully targeted areas for improvement based on a clear analysis. This has led to much higher standards being achieved.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. All resources available to the school are used very effectively to raise standards.

Staffing levels are satisfactory to meet the needs of the school. Accommodation is generally satisfactory to teach the full curriculum, although it is not adequate for physical education. The hall is

too small, the playground slopes badly and the field is often out of bounds because of litter or fouling. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

The head teacher has provided excellent leadership and management, developing a very strong ethos where all staff are determined to improve. The structures and systems established have proved very effective in moving the school forward.

The school evaluates its performance very well and has established excellent plans to develop and improve the school. It compares its results with other schools and evaluates expenditure to determine best value for money.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of teaching</li> <li>• The progress made by their children</li> <li>• The high expectations</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive</li> <li>• Working relationships with them</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive comments of the parents; teaching is very good and as a result pupils make very good progress. Teachers have high expectations and leadership and management are excellent. However, inspectors do not agree that parents do not receive enough information or that working relationships could be improved. The school works very hard to work with parents but does not always get the response it deserves. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside school time.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 The standards attained by the school in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2002 were well above average in English and mathematics and in the top five per cent in science when compared to schools in similar circumstances. When compared with all schools nationally standards in science were well above average and in English and mathematics they were average. The trend in the school's results has been above the national trend for 11 year olds in recent years. These results represent very good achievement because pupils have made very good progress since joining the school when the attainment of most children is well below what is typically expected for their ages. The results for seven year olds in the 2002 national tests also demonstrated this very good progress and achievement. Compared with similar schools attainment in reading and mathematics was well above average and writing was in the top five per cent. Compared with all schools writing and mathematics attainment was in line with the average but reading was below.

2 The foundation for these very good achievements is created in the nursery and reception classes. Children make very good and rapid progress against all areas of learning, often from a very low starting point. This is a result of the very effective teaching. By the time they complete the Foundation Stage at the end of the reception year children have reached the standard expected for children of a similar age in all areas of learning except in the area of communication, language and literacy where their attainment when entering the nursery is particularly low.

3 By the time pupils leave the school standards in speaking and listening are in line with those expected nationally, representing very good progress and achievement. All pupils listen carefully and are keen to answer questions. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking skills throughout the curriculum.

4 Standards in reading and writing are in line with national averages by the time pupils leave school. Higher attaining and older pupils can re-tell stories in their own words, they can talk about authors and explain why they like particular books. Good opportunities are provided through all subjects to develop writing skills. All teachers regularly teach handwriting; they are taught to use dictionaries and thesaurus effectively, again promoting learning skills. Extended writing is promoted in history, for example where pupils write reports of their visit to a Roman fort and older pupils write biographies of World War II figures such as Winston Churchill.

5 Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average for 11 year olds, representing very good achievement and progress. Younger pupils develop their understanding that numbers, such as 24, can be reached in a number of ways using multiplication. Older pupils use their knowledge of mathematics to devise their own strategies to solve multiplication problems. They understand that they can use division to solve problems involving fractions.

6 Standards in science are well above average for 11 year olds whilst in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education they are in line with national expectations and the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus respectively. With the exception of art and design and design and technology standards are in line with national expectations in all other subjects. These two subjects have been neglected in recent times to raise standards in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. However, there are signs of improvement and standards, although below expectations in Year 6, are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2.

7 A very low proportion of pupils have English as an additional language, but provision for those who need it is very good. The school deploys its teachers and classroom support staff effectively where appropriate.

8 Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. They are fully included in lessons, work is well matched to their needs and they make very good progress as a result.

9 Pupils in Year 6 are attaining in line with the nationally expected standard in all areas of literacy. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced effectively. Lesson activities are planned to meet the pupils' learning needs, which allow pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through progressively more difficult tasks. This is also the case in numeracy. As a result there has been a considerable improvement in standards in recent years.

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

10 Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. A high number of children arrive early each morning and attend the breakfast club. Pupils quickly settle down in registrations, assemblies and in class, where they consistently demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work. They are motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They are proud of their work and achievements. Children are attentive to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. For example, pupils confidently asked mature and sensible questions of a visitor, dressed as a Roman soldier, during a class assembly. Nearly all parents agree that their children like school.

11 Overall standards of behaviour are very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, and most of the pupils themselves have very high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. Nearly all pupils behave very well and most of them act in a mature and responsible manner. They move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and their behaviour in the classrooms, at breaks and at lunchtime is consistently very good. A tiny minority of pupils can, and on occasions do, present challenging behaviour during lessons, but this is not allowed to disrupt the learning of the rest of the class. There were no signs of any bullying or isolation of individual pupils, consequently pupils work and play in an environment completely free from oppressive behaviour. There have been a high number of exclusions in recent years but these do not accurately reflect the current standard of behaviour seen in the school. The vast majority of parents agree that behaviour in the school is good.

12 The relationships in the school are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults and also to one another. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. During the inspection they consistently spoke confidently to inspectors and cheerfully opened doors for them. Children of all ages work very well together in the classrooms and play well together in the playgrounds. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. The vast majority of pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, pupils are respectful of the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and bow their heads reverently during prayers.

13 The pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are learning a good range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. In the classrooms, the majority of pupils willingly take responsibility for their own work, and in lessons many children were observed working independently. They show initiative and respond well to the formal responsibilities they are given around the school. For example, a Year 3 girl was observed, on her own initiative, helping two younger children to read at the breakfast club. Pupils have input into the school and their own classroom behaviour rules, and the school council offers pupils the opportunity to have a say in the way

in which the school is run. The school supports local, national and international charities and the pupils are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. The pupils are taken on a wide range of social and educational visits, including a residential experience for the older children. The majority of parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

14 Despite significant improvement over recent years, the attendance rate remains below the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. Although the breakfast club has significantly improved punctuality, many pupils still arrive at school late.

15 Pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to work and the relationships within the school are real strengths, and have a positive impact on the standards achieved. This represents considerable progress since the initial inspection.

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

16 The quality of teaching has continued to improve. It is now very good throughout the school. The very effective teaching in the nursery and reception classes has an immediate and positive impact on children's learning and their attainment. Most children enter the school with significant weaknesses in all areas of learning. By the time they transfer into Year 1 they have made significant progress and are well prepared for the National Curriculum. Teachers and support staff know the children very well and they use this knowledge very effectively to ensure that the work, whilst challenging, is matched well to their individual needs. Activities are carefully structured to ensure that children are involved in a wide range of tasks. Speech and language is consistently reinforced through clear questioning and patience whilst children find the right words to respond. They are encouraged to use exact terminology when asking for objects and many opportunities are provided for children to work co-operatively so that they can discuss their play and work. Expectations are high and children respond accordingly. For example they organise their work well when preparing to go outside for physical activity, choosing the toys they will work with and willingly taking turns. This does not happen by accident. When children begin school they find co-operation and organisation difficult. It is the result of the very good teaching with regular, consistent and high expectations.

17 The very good teaching continues in the infants where pupils consolidate their learning and achieve very well. Again, the expectations are high and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. A Year 2 science lesson for example enabled pupils to discuss and design an experiment to indicate the impact of changing the height of a ramp and how far a toy car will travel. They were able to organise the experiment in groups, working out how to set it up because the teacher had explained the task clearly but had deliberately not explained how to do it and how to record the results. The teaching was effective because it promoted scientific thinking, encouraged co-operation and required social skills. Very effective learning took place across these areas.

18 An important feature of the teaching throughout the school is the emphasis on learning skills. Although the content of each subject is considered important, the emphasis in all lessons is on developing skills which will help learning regardless of the subject. Skills such as investigation, sharing, co-operating, developing enquiry skills as well as enhancing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are promoted throughout the curriculum. This develops pupils' confidence and as a result they develop more positive attitudes to learning. The science lesson mentioned above is a good example of this.

19 Teaching in the juniors continues to be very good with many of the same features developing pupils' learning further. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example on number sequencing, pupils learned very effectively when challenged to create number problems for a partner. Very enjoyable learning resulted.



20 The teaching of English is good. The teachers make effective use of the three-part lesson structure recommended in the Literacy Framework, and teachers take account of the range of ability within each class. The most successful teaching is characterised by careful planning that identifies what different groups of pupils are to learn, very good relationships and very effective management of the pupils. The teachers' planning for literacy is good, and they effectively use the range of resources available, including information and communications technology. The co-ordinator guides and monitors the long and medium term plans based on the literacy framework.

21 Teaching in mathematics is very good. The national strategy has been very effectively implemented. Teachers use the guidance very well in their planning; this, coupled with high expectations, very thorough marking and very well targeted questioning leads to very good progress and very effective learning.

22 Teaching in ICT and religious education is good overall. High expectations, effective planning and good teacher knowledge are strong features of the teaching. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for English as an additional language is equally effective. All pupils are fully included in lessons and work is well matched to their needs.

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

23 The school provides a good curriculum, which is strengthened by the use of visits and visitors to the school. The curriculum provided in the nursery and reception classes is very good. It is securely based on the Foundation Stage curriculum for children of this age and they make very good progress. In the rest of the school the overall quality and range of opportunities, and the breadth and balance of the whole curriculum offered to the pupils is good.

24 The principles of 'thinking skills' permeate though the curriculum and this is having a significantly positive impact on raising pupils' self-esteem as well as standards. Since last year the school, under the leadership of the head teacher, has made one subject the hub of the curriculum, on a termly basis. Through effective planning it then links other subjects to it in order to provide a broad and relevant curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 study children in the Second World War in history, linking with European geography, prejudice and discrimination in personal, health and social education, Judaism in religious education and the music and art of the 1930s and 1940s. This is successful because it gives pupils a secure base of knowledge from which they can develop their skills, including their reading and writing.

25 The school has relevant policies and the necessary supporting documentation, which can be used by teachers. Curriculum plans identify what is to be covered in classes including knowledge of the next steps necessary to ensure learning for each pupil. Literacy and numeracy, and those subjects taught discretely, are planned for on a weekly basis and there is a secure understanding of what should be taught in order to develop pupils' skills. As a result, the curriculum is consistently taught throughout the school. The role of most of the curriculum co-ordinators is well developed in this crucial area of their work. Good use is made of resources, including the much-improved ICT.

26 The school's strategy for literacy is very good, as is shown by the test results in this subject, which show significant improvement. The numeracy strategy is also very well developed and this means that pupils are taught concepts that are appropriate for their age and ability. The good practice in both literacy and numeracy, which understandably received priority since the last inspection, has been at the expense of some of the other subjects, particularly design and technology and art and design. This now needs to be addressed.

27 Pupils have equality of access and opportunity within the curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They have full access to all subjects and this assists their progress. The effective provision for those pupils with English as an additional language means that they achieve the standards of which they are capable. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good, as is their awareness of citizenship. For example, pupils discuss issues such as school funding and terrorism, with a very explicit focus on discussion as opposed to confrontation. Crucially, through this and the school's underpinning philosophy, pupils learn to respect each other's views.

28 The number of extra-curricular activities provided to enrich the pupils' learning is satisfactory overall with some sports and a range of musical activities. The school offers opportunities for many pupils to enjoy breakfast before they start their day and a homework club at the end of the day. The

school has very good links with its partner institutions including the secondary schools to which pupils transfer when they leave.

29 Links with the community are satisfactory. The school uses external resources well; for example, visits to places of historical interest and field trips are used effectively to support the history and geography topic work. Visits to the theatre, and visits by theatre groups, help children's social, cultural and personal development. There are some appropriate visitors to school, for example, a local author visited and held workshops, and the local vicar occasionally takes assemblies. A visitor from a local reconstructed fort, dressed as a Roman soldier, created an awe-inspiring event during an assembly. A local bakery sponsors the breakfast club, which is of huge benefit for a large number of children. The breakfast club has significantly improved punctuality and has a positive impact on pupils' social and personal development.

30 There are strong links with the local receiving secondary school that ensures smooth transition to the next stage of the children's education.

31 The school places a high value on the part that, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education contributes to the overall curriculum of the school. This results in a curriculum that is underpinned by very strong beliefs in the value of each and every individual in the school. It is this fundamental belief that leads to very good provision in this area and gives the school a very special ethos where pupils can grow and flourish into thinking young people, as well as achieving good academic standards. Again this represents a considerable improvement.

32 The provision for spiritual development is excellent. In lessons across the curriculum pupils are given opportunities to consider their own opinions and those of others. Everyone's view is respected from the youngest children in the reception classes right through the school. In religious education lessons plenty of opportunities arise where pupils can empathise with other peoples' feelings. For example, in a lesson in Year 2 pupils listened to the story of the Prodigal Son. At points during the story, the teacher stopped so that they could mark on a chart how they thought the son was feeling at that point in the story. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils thought very deeply and drew up a list of 'difficult questions' that they would like to know the answers to. For example: 'why do people die?', 'why do people need to fight?' and 'why did God make us?' Further opportunities are provided during assemblies for pupils to both reflect and empathise with other pupils' feelings.

33 The provision for moral development is very good. A sound behaviour policy builds very much on reinforcing and supporting positive behaviour. Pupils have very good guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour in school. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and know that they will be dealt with firmly but fairly if the need should ever arise. They know that everyone is valued and respected within school and therefore the code for good behaviour is accepted.

34 The provision for social development is very good. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility in the classrooms and as they move up the school they provide help for the lunchtime supervisors and control the doors at lunchtime and break time. Year 6 pupils actively help to support reception children at play times. At breakfast club and at lunchtime pupils are taught table manners. Throughout the school plenty of opportunities are provided during lessons for pupils to work together, discussing ideas with a partner or within a small group. An excellent class assembly, based on work about the Romans, by Year 3 showed how successful the school is in developing self-confidence and co-operation. All pupils were fully involved and each offered their contribution clearly without the use of any sort of prompts. The audience of pupils, parents, and friends greatly appreciated their efforts and when a surprise visitor in the form of a 'Roman Centurion' arrived at the end and offered to answer questions, hands immediately went up and sensible questions asked. The school makes full use

of outside visits including residential visits providing pupils with valuable social experiences. Residential visits have included a trip to France.

35 The provision for cultural development is good. The contribution from religious education and history and music is good. Pupils do not just consider the traditions of other religions but also the impact that it has on the lives of people who follow them. The wealth of Roman local history is well used. During a class assembly, the presence of a 'Roman Centurion from a local fort' prompted a series of very sensible questions. During the inspection the nursery had an India theme to tie in with the festival of Diwali. Children dressed up in Indian costumes, smelt Indian spices and enjoyed a simple story of a train travelling across India. Local culture is well represented through music and pupils experience music from famous composers during assemblies. However, there is insufficient contribution from the art and design curriculum.

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

36 The school provides exceptional care for its pupils. This starts with the pre-school breakfast club, which not only provides a substantial breakfast for a large number of children, but also impacts very positively on their social and personal development. The head teacher places a very high priority on pastoral care and provides excellent leadership in this aspect. All members of staff are very caring, dedicated and totally committed to the welfare of the children in their charge. They are very approachable and totally supportive. The members of the non-teaching staff give very good support for both teachers and pupils. Procedures for child protection are securely in place and fully understood by all teaching and support staff. However, the midday supervisors have not yet been briefed on this aspect. The governing body and the head teacher take their health and safety responsibilities seriously and all the required health and safety inspections, including risk assessment, are systematically carried out and meticulously recorded. There is consistent safe practice in lessons, particularly physical education lessons. Conscientious teachers and teaching assistants, who are alert and vigilant, supervise pupils very well at breaks. Experienced midday supervisors undertake lunchtime supervision conscientiously, and the standard of care is very high.

37 The school has very good procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. For example, the behaviour policy is supplemented by an anti-bullying policy, lunchtime code and individual classroom rules. All staff have very high expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and discipline is administered conscientiously and consistently throughout the school. This has a positive impact on the very high standards of good behaviour maintained throughout the school. Procedures for recording and monitoring absence are very good. Registers are completed correctly, reasons for non-attendance recorded consistently and absences rigorously followed up.

38 The class teachers know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs.

39 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and their academic progress are good. The school has good procedures for monitoring the pupils' attainments and tracking the progress they make in English and mathematics. There is an effective use of appropriate software which enables regular assessment. The school makes good use of the baseline assessments, the national tests, reading tests, tests at the end of Year 4 and teacher assessments. The school uses these assessments well to identify groups of pupils who might benefit from additional support. Pupils who need it receive extra support, particularly in English.

40 The marking of pupil's work is exemplary across the school. All teachers provide comments in the pupils' books that help to clarify their misunderstandings. They give the pupils helpful guidance

on how to improve the quality of their work. The school's targets for attainment in English and mathematics by the age of 11 are challenging and appropriate.

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

41 Relationships between the school and parents, although much improved, are variable. Some parents do not fully value their child(ren)'s education. There is a tendency to condone absence and a significant number of parents do not support the school's efforts to improve attendance and punctuality. The school enjoys the passive support of many of the parents but has difficulty in recruiting active support. For example, there is no parents' association and there are no parents who currently help in the classrooms. However, some parents will accompany the children on out of school trips and give of their time to help in other ways around the school, for example, helping with cooking, if asked. A small number of committed parents willingly give time daily to run the breakfast club. A significant number of parents are involved in their children's work at home. These parents support homework and home reading, and consistently enter appropriate comments in the home-school reading books.

42 The majority of parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. Some parents expressed concerns about the lack of school-organised activities outside lessons. The inspection team judged the provision for extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory. A significant number of parents disagree that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. The inspection team did not support these parents' views and judged communication between the school and home to be very good. The school sends out regular, informative newsletters and individual letters about specific events and activities. It publishes a comprehensive, informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. However, the current report omits some of the statutory required information, for example, a financial statement and the school's targets for Key Stage 2 assessments. Parents are given an informative annual progress report that clearly indicates what the pupils can do, the progress they are making and areas for improvement. They are also given an interim report at the end of the autumn term. They are offered the opportunity to attend appropriate consultation meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. These consultation evenings are not always well attended. The head teacher and her staff are very welcoming and approachable. They make themselves readily available to parents at the start and end of each day. There are plenty of opportunities for parents to speak informally to their child's class teacher.

43 Although the school tries very hard to involve parents, and is successful to a degree with a minority of them, overall, the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is unsatisfactory. There is a need to motivate a greater number of parents to be more actively involved with their child(ren)'s education.

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

44 The head teacher, deputy head teacher and senior staff provide excellent leadership and management for the school. This has built upon the effective work identified at the last inspection when the school was brought out of special measures.

45 The most important development since the initial inspection has been the way in which the head teacher has changed the ethos of the school, creating a strong climate for learning. Everyone is valued as an individual and all now have a strong desire to succeed. Leadership and management have established this within the context of a very caring and supportive school. There is a very strong sense of purpose and the school is now very highly regarded in the local community.

46 Very effective systems have been established to determine the school's most important areas for improvement. These have inevitably centred around raising standards in literacy and numeracy, improving the attitudes of pupils to school, improving their behaviour and improving attendance. Very effective planning, clear monitoring and evaluation systems, a strong, shared determination to succeed and a lot of hard work has led to success in all of these areas. Work still needs to be done in reducing the level of authorised absence.

47 All staff have very clear roles and responsibilities which they carry out very well. Teamwork, relationships and mutual support are very important factors. The standards achieved, the quality and its effect on learning are all carefully evaluated. This leads to clear action to improve. Finances are appropriately targeted to support the main priorities and the effects of spending decisions are evaluated in relation to the impact on pupils' learning. This has ensured that the main priorities are well supported. The school improvement plan is very thorough and is informed from the clear evaluations. It has proved very successful.

48 Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school; they have been very supportive and have worked very hard to improve the quality of education and the standards achieved by pupils. A number of governors have specific roles in school which they fulfil well, for example in relation to literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. An appropriate committee structure has been established which has helped to manage the work of the governors during a difficult period. Governors have worked effectively with the senior management of the school in moving it forward.

49 Administrative support within the school is also very effective, enabling the head teacher to concentrate her efforts on raising standards and creating an effective climate for learning. Finances are very well controlled and managed and grants are used very well.

50 As a result of the leadership and management the school is in an excellent position to improve further and build on its successes.

51 Staffing levels are satisfactory. Teaching staff have a range of skills and experience relevant to the priorities of the school. There is an appropriate level of learning support staff who supply valued and skilled guidance to individual pupils and groups and have good working partnerships with teachers. Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the support given to pupils with special educational needs and to pupils working in the computer suite. However, in those classes with larger numbers of pupils in the suite, the pace of learning is slower, despite the best efforts of the teacher and assistants in supporting pupils. The school ensures that new teachers are mentored and receive the appropriate opportunities for training.

52 The accommodation is satisfactory. The caretaker attempts to do his best to maintain the upkeep of the site, but there are fundamental design problems. For example, the hall is inadequate for gymnastics and physical education.

53 The hall is a thoroughfare and it is to the teachers' and pupils' credit that they are not distracted. There are no appropriate facilities to teach physical education, outside play areas are unsatisfactory and the libraries are not places where it is easy for pupils to work quietly.

54 Resources for learning are satisfactory. In some areas, for example, ICT, there has been a considerable improvement with a consequential effect on learning.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

55 In order to improve further the head teacher, staff and governors should;

- (1) Improve the standards achieved in art and design and design and technology by the age of 11 by:
  - (a) giving pupils more opportunities in art and design to acquire a greater range of techniques in both two and three-dimensional work.  
(Paragraph 94)
  - (b) enabling pupils to build on the skills acquired by the age of seven in design and technology through extending the range of opportunities for designing and making in the juniors.  
(Paragraph 98)
- (2) Increase the level of parental involvement in school by encouraging more parents to take a more active part in their children's learning.  
(Paragraph 43)
- (3) Improve the overall attendance by reducing the number of authorised absences and promoting greater punctuality.  
(Paragraph 14)
- (4) Improve the accommodation by developing facilities for physical education.  
(Paragraphs 52 and 115)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	18	23	10	0	0	0
Percentage	4	34	43	19	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	17	209
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	104

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	51

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	17	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	16
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	29	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88% (79%)	94% (71%)	94% (94%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	14
	Girls	13	15	14
	Total	27	31	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82% (76%)	94% (94%)	85% (82%)
	National	85% (85%)	89% (89%)	89% (89%)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	16	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	16
	Girls	14	13	18
	Total	27	27	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77% (50%)	77% (77%)	97% (97%)
	National	75% (75%)	73% (71%)	86% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	13	16
	Girls	14	13	18
	Total	23	26	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66% (63%)	74% (73%)	97% (80%)
	National	73% (72%)	74% (74%)	82% (82%)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils******Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	204	7	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	21

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	632,267
Total expenditure	620,582
Expenditure per pupil	2,742
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,481
Balance carried forward to next year	48,162

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	226
Number of questionnaires returned	93

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	43	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	50	5	0	5
The teaching is good.	68	30	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	38	18	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	23	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	36	9	3	8
The school is well led and managed.	62	32	1	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	46	0	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	32	22	3	19

## **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**

56 The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage is very good both in the nursery and the reception classes. The school operates an admissions policy for children to start in the nursery after their third birthday. Some children will have a year in the nursery while others have longer as they transfer into the reception class in September of the year in which they are five. Of the 33 children that attend the nursery 20 come in the morning and the other 13 in the afternoon. An analysis of entry profiles confirms that the attainment on the entry to the nursery is well below what is typical for children of this age.

57 Many children have very poor personal and social skills as well as limited language and mathematical development. As a result of the very good assessment procedures, teachers plan daily activities with the attention on what children need to learn. Teaching in the nursery and both reception classes is very good across all areas of the learning so that they make very good progress through the nursery and reception classes. By the time they complete the Foundation Stage at the end of the reception year they have reached the standards that are expected for children of similar age in all the areas of learning except in the area of communication, language and literacy.

58 Planning in both the nursery and in reception classes is good and meets the needs of all children including those with special educational needs. The teachers and support staff work very well as a team and create a warm and secure environment for children to start their education. Classes are organised efficiently and managed well. The school works very hard to build up positive relationships with parents. The school has an effective induction policy, which include home visits as well as meetings and visits for parents and children ensuring a smooth transition from home to school.

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

59 When children start the nursery many lack any level of independence and appear lost and bewildered. Through the strong supportive environment, including very good teaching, in the nursery children make rapid progress so that when they enter the reception classes they are able to make good progress in their other areas of learning. Progress in personal, emotional and social skills continues through the reception classes so that they meet the expectations of children of a similar age by the end of the reception year.

60 Children develop an enthusiasm to learn. They are becoming independent and after a relatively short time in the nursery they can choose activities. However, their concentration spans are short and they still need adult support to complete activities. Children are given plenty of opportunities to make decisions and the time they need to consider the options. Some of these are individual, as in the choice of construction materials when junk modelling, others are joint decisions as occurred during snack time. A group of children were having their milk with the teacher, who was cutting up fruit for snacks. Following a joint decision that more fruit would be needed the children then chose what they thought the group would like.

61 Adults provide good role models in their caring relationships with children and with each other. They make good use of praise to encourage children to try hard, to raise their self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning. The early years team provides good opportunities for children to play together through a range of activities. Children's personal and social development takes place in

a calm, ordered atmosphere of mutual respect. Children develop positive attitudes and good working routines from the time they start nursery.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

62 Throughout all classes children are introduced to the joy of stories and staff take every opportunity to engage children in conversation giving them time, encouragement and support to express their knowledge and thoughts. This means that they learn a great deal about language and literacy even though they do not reach the expected levels of attainment for children of similar age by the time they leave the reception classes.

63 The story of “Engine, Engine” is used effectively in the nursery as a basis for activities across the curriculum and children learn to sit and listen to the story, which then becomes familiar so that they are able to recall characters and events. The children use the story of a train with numbered carriages to build a ‘railway track’ across India and adults joining in their play successfully encourage children to talk about the places it visits on the way.

64 In the reception classes the story of “The Rainbow Fish” was imaginatively developed into role play in a ‘deep cave’, ‘rock pools’ and ‘on the beach’, staff joining in to extend children’s communication skills. Most children know how books work and understand that print carries meaning. Many children are beginning to associate letters with sounds.

65 From the time children enter the nursery they are encouraged to find their name cards and copy their names on to what they have done. By the time they reach reception they ‘sign in’ before going to work on the computer. Writing materials are readily available in many areas so that nursery children can make notes of jobs in ‘Percy the gardeners tent’ and reception children make lists of fish seen in the underwater cave. Most hold their pencils effectively to make meaningful marks and understand that writing conveys meaning. Higher attaining children write their own names and are beginning to recognise and write simple words.

66 The introduction of the literacy session in the reception class is effective in developing children’s literacy skills. Teaching is very good. Children are actively involved in whole class and group sessions and there is a good balance in activities that ensures that they do not sit for periods that are beyond their levels of concentration and they have plenty of opportunities to choose their own activities.

## **Mathematical development**

67 In the nursery children are introduced to counting and numbers through a range of well chosen informal activities and this is continued into the reception classes together with planned numeracy sessions. Through very good teaching children’s interest is stimulated and this results in very good progress through the Foundation Stage so that children reach the expected levels of attainment by the time they enter Year 1.

68 Counting skills are regularly practised in both nursery and reception by counting rhymes and in counting children present in the whole class or in small groups. In the nursery children thread coloured beads learning colours and number names. In the reception classes they learn to count accurately to at least to 10 and benefit from structured activities as a whole class and in groups. Following whole class introduction children working in imaginative group session pulled strands of coloured ‘spaghetti worms’ from the water trough. Due to very good teaching and support they successfully compared relative lengths using correct mathematical language of “longer” and “shorter”. When children enter the nursery few have any idea of names of colours or shape but by the time they leave the reception classes this knowledge is secure due to a wide range of well planned activities and the quality of the interaction between children and adults.

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

69 Throughout children's time in the nursery and reception classes they have a range of experiences that help them to learn about the world and their progress is very good. By the time they leave the reception classes they reach the level of knowledge, understanding and curiosity about the world that is expected for children of this age.

70 In the nursery children experiment with torches and confidently switch them on and off. They know that they require batteries to work. During the inspection the teacher had just introduced a disposable camera which the children used sensibly but with enthusiasm. The resulting pictures were yet to be developed! In reception classes children correctly predicted that objects like marbles would sink, while a model boat would float. Hidden metal objects in the sand were found by using magnets. Children working on the computer can use the mouse to select an icon on the screen and know the vocabulary 'mouse' and 'click'.

71 Knowledge of looking after plants is well developed in the summer by the creating and looking after of the garden. Photographs showed that the reception children took pride in looking after the plants that they had planted. Again, teaching in this area of learning is very good.

## **Physical development**

72 By the end of the reception year children have developed satisfactory physical skills that are in line with those expected for children of similar age. This is the result of the very effective teaching. In the nursery they walk along low beams and jump along a line of hoops. They are confident in their movements in and around the nursery play area. Children in the reception classes co-operated in a small group to build a house with walls and slopes. They carefully moved along the slopes taking care when they knew that it would tip. Children in the reception classes use space in the hall for soft play activities and satisfactorily experiment using their bodies in different ways. It was not possible to observe children in their outside play area as this was out of use at the time of the inspection due to extensive building works. This resulted in reduced opportunities for physical development but full use was made of the hall for two sessions a week. They have good control over their bodies.

73 Many opportunities are provided for children to build with construction kits, to explore materials including sand and water and to manipulate jig-saws. Most children hold pencils correctly and use them for writing drawing and colouring, although the amount of control those children have is variable.

## **Creative development**

74 Children are provided with good opportunities and very good teaching to enable them to develop creatively throughout both the nursery and reception classes. They enjoy these activities and make good progress so that by the end of the Foundation Stage they attain levels of understanding and skill, which are appropriate for their age. Children are well supported in these activities and learn to use paint to create pictures of themselves and to support stories that they have heard such as the Rainbow Fish. Glitter, glue, coloured paper were combined effectively with adult support, enabling children to create stick puppets of fish and octopuses. Children know a good range of songs and they join enthusiastically in singing sessions where they contribute to the choice of the songs they will sing.

## **ENGLISH**



75 The school's provision in English and literacy is very good.

76 Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Standards are in line with national averages at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. In the national tests in 2002, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was well above the average of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was also well above the average of similar schools. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls when their prior attainments are taken into account.

77 By the age of seven pupils achieve well in comparison to their prior attainment. By the age of 11 pupils continue to achieve well because of the very good progress they make overall. This is due to good teaching supported by well developed planning which ensures thorough coverage of all aspects of the subject, particularly writing. There is a very positive drive from the school's managers to raise standards. As a result, pupils of all abilities are interested in English and they have very good attitudes towards the subject. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced effectively and this is helping to raise standards alongside intervention to address the needs of individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language are well provided for and make good progress.

78 By the time pupils leave the school standards in speaking and listening are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Throughout the school, all pupils listen attentively to their teachers during literacy and other lessons. Although some have a limited vocabulary, many are keen to answer questions. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills using complete and extended sentences. For example, all the Year 3 pupils showed above average confidence when performing to a large audience, on the theme of the Romans in Britain.

79 Standards in reading are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Most pupils express interest in books and enjoy reading. They take books home regularly and many read to a parent or other adult. When talking about stories, most are able to describe the main character and plot. Higher attaining and older pupils are able to retell the story in their own words, name their favourite authors and explain how they chose a book. Teachers keep records of pupils' progress, with appropriate comments. The library for the older pupils has a sufficient number of fiction and non-fiction books, and the pupils themselves help to choose which books to read. Books for the younger pupils are readily accessible and sound library skills are developed.

80 Standards in writing are in line with national expectations by the time pupils leave the school. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their writing through other subjects. For example, older pupils plan, draft, revise and write a biography of a key World War Two figure such as Winston Churchill. Very good provision is made for improving handwriting. All teachers regularly teach pupils how to use a joined handwriting script and, with the provision of high quality pens, this is having a positive impact on standards. Pupils are beginning to use dictionaries and thesaurus effectively. The use of punctuation is sound, but the standard of spelling is below average. There are displays of English work in classrooms and around the school, which greatly enhance the quality of learning. For example, pupils' written reports on their visit to the Roman fort at Segedunum, a recount of the battle of Marathon and letters from evacuees during World War Two. The use of ICT to research and to word-process writing is satisfactory, and is much improved since the last inspection.

81 The quality of teaching is good. The main factor for effective teaching is the quality of the relationships, enabling pupils to be relaxed and so able to respond well. The teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils, building their confidence and self-esteem, alongside their 'thinking skills'. In lessons all pupils are fully engaged. Pupils' learning is helped by their very good behaviour and positive responses to English. All teachers mark pupils' work exceptionally well. They give them clear directions about how they can improve the standard of their written work in English and all other subjects, placing importance on the standard of presentation.

82 Leadership and management are good. Pupils are given good guidance on their progress. The assessment of pupils' progress is documented and recorded in appropriate detail. The older pupils take pride in their achievements, benefiting from support to ensure they achieve their potential. The school has been very successful in developing the subject since the last inspection with the result that standards have risen markedly and continue to improve.

## MATHEMATICS

83 When pupils are seven and 11 years old, the standards they achieve match the standards expected nationally in mathematics. This represents an improvement in standards among 11 year-old pupils since the previous inspection. There has been a very significant, sustained improvement in pupils' attainment overall in national tests since 1998; the trend of improvement being above the national trend for 11 year old pupils.

84 The majority of pupils in Year 1 read and write the numbers involved when they are subtracting one digit numbers from a two digit number, for example 12 minus 7. A significant minority of these pupils subtract two digit numbers. Most seven year-old pupils understand that a given number, such as 24, may be reached in a number of ways by multiplication. They use cubes to make arrays of varying numbers such as two sets of 12 and three sets of six. They recognise and identify shapes such as circles and triangles. Higher attaining pupils name and describe the properties of more complex shapes, such as octagon and hexagon.

85 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school. In a Year 3 lesson on data collection, most pupils had a clear understanding of the mathematical vocabulary to use when transferring data they had collected on favourite breakfast spreads to a pictogram. A significant minority of these pupils completed a pictogram with accurate use of axes, key, labels and title. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 devised their own strategies to solve multiplication problems. They understand that, by using division, they can solve problems involving factors. Year 6 pupils, in a lesson on number sequences, compiled problems to be solved by a partner. They used sequences which increased in a variety of ways, such as addition and progressive, increasing multiplication. A minority of lower attaining pupils used simple, single digit additions to present their problem. Pupils' books and folders show that they record their work in a very methodical, systematic way and they have completed a very substantial volume of work across all the appropriate programmes of study.

86 Teaching in mathematics is very good overall. The National Numeracy Strategy has been very effectively implemented and has had a significant impact on teaching, learning and attainment since its introduction in the school. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the numeracy guidance and use this very well to inform their planning. Teachers have high expectations of the way in which pupils should present their work and the amount of work that they should do. The clarity, consistency and methodical nature of pupils' work in their exercise books throughout the school significantly increases pupils' understanding of what they are doing and how they can improve. This is further enhanced by the very good comments that teachers use when they are marking books, providing pupils with a valuable insight into their own progress. Weekly homework exercises give pupils good practice in, and extend work from classroom activities. All homework is consistently marked with informative comments. In the best teaching, skilled questioning, prompting and discussions and a wide range of teaching methods ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum and make good progress in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of how much pupils should achieve in lessons. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils responded enthusiastically in a class discussion on number sequences. The teacher engaged pupils very well with a brisk introduction and then continued to drive the pace of the activities. Pupils became highly involved in their work. They become excited at their discoveries when compiling their own number problems for a partner to solve and delighted in sharing their skills with their partner. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good in mathematics. They settle very quickly to their work at the beginning of lessons and work hard throughout. Pupils show both enthusiasm and concentration, responding very well to the high expectations that teachers have of their behaviour and attitudes.

87        The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has a thorough grasp of the issues involved and has a clear picture of future development. Assessment procedures have been developed substantially. Strategies such as pupil tracking and pupils' profiles give teachers a very good picture of individual pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school. Regular monitoring of planning and teaching helps to give the co-ordinator a coherent picture of the subject and, in particular, the way in which pupils progress. Implementation of consistent and methodical policies in marking, use of exercise books and presentation has contributed much to the raising of standards, giving pupils a pride in their work and a very clear insight into their progress and what is expected of them.

## SCIENCE

88 By the age of 11 pupils are achieving standards well above those expected for their age. This represents very good achievement and progress and is the result of the good teaching they receive throughout the school and the very good teaching in Year 6. Standards achieved by the age of seven are higher than those expected for their age and again is the result of the effective teaching. An emphasis on practical and investigative work has led to better learning and has enabled pupils of all ages to develop a greater understanding which they have been able to build upon as they move through the school. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

89 The very good teaching in Year 6 developed a very good understanding of reversible and irreversible change using heat. Different types of sweets were heated to see the effect. Pupils were very interested in the task and the methods used engaged their attention. Excellent questioning challenged pupils' understanding and promoted high levels of thought and discussion. The lesson made a very good contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills and their social development as well as their scientific understanding as they worked together in groups discussing their ideas and listening to the thoughts of others. Previous learning about conducting fair tests and making predictions was evident as pupils planned and conducted their investigations. This approach to teaching science is clearly developing pupils' confidence and leading to high standards because it promotes learning skills which are transferable to other topics for example, evidence of these skills was clear in work covered previously in relation to electricity. Pupils had designed investigations to explore the impact of lengthening or shortening wires in electric circuits. Work demonstrated how they had thought about the challenge, considered how to ensure a fair test, posed a hypothesis and tested it out. Work is extremely well presented with great clarity which aids understanding. The quality of marking is excellent as it provides encouragement and praise but is creative and developmental in challenging pupils' understanding further. This is a strong feature throughout the school.

90 The scientific skills are being developed well in the infants. In Year 2, for example, pupils were challenged to develop their own investigation to test the hypothesis that the greater the slope of a ramp the further a toy car will travel. Very good questioning by the teacher encouraged pupils to think about how they would create different ramps using cubes, where they should measure from and how they would record their results. The teacher and the pupils had the confidence to allow pupils to explore how they might tackle the challenge before designing their own investigation. Again the lesson made a very positive contribution to personal and social development, speech and language and the development of scientific understanding. After a period of appropriate exploration, experiment and discussion all groups settled on an approach and carried out their investigation. Very good learning occurred as pupils were allowed to make mistakes in recording and measuring which were then picked up during a whole class discussion about the reliability of results and what they might have done differently to make the test fair. Subsequently, pupils were able to talk confidently about their work and what they needed to do to make it better. As with Year 6, samples of previous work in Year 2 indicated how pupils used their developing skills across a range of topics. Again the quality of marking is very high and promotes effective learning. Pupils of different abilities are encouraged to record their findings in the most appropriate way so that literacy skills do not become a barrier to scientific learning; lower attainers demonstrate their understanding, for example, by recording their findings in pictorial form.

91 The teaching of science throughout the school is effective in developing scientific knowledge and understanding because of the consistent approach adopted. There is a clear concentration on the development of skills which are transferable regardless of the content. Teachers plan lessons very effectively and allow pupils, in a controlled way, to explore and investigate and pupils respond very

well to this approach. They enjoy their science lessons and are keen to discover things. Resources are always well prepared and are chosen to stimulate pupils' interest, for example in a Year 1 class pupils were highly motivated to test whether shiny objects shine in the dark using sealed boxes. The selected resources promoted good discussion and excitement about the results. The use of the national recommended scheme for science adapted to the needs of the school has added to teachers' subject knowledge and confidence and provided a good starting point from which the subject has grown and improved.

92 The science curriculum is well managed by the subject leader who monitors planning and teaching and enables good practice to be shared. Resources for science are good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93 Attainment in art and design matches the standards expected nationally among seven year-olds, but eleven year-old pupils attain standards which are below those expected nationally.

94 Pupils in Year 2 explore and investigate how to match a colour by mixing two primary colours and black. Most pupils understand how to improve their work by changing the balance of the colours they are using. They use their knowledge to experiment with hot colours using a variety of materials such as fabric and foil. They use a paint program on a computer to make a picture representing fire with colours based around reds and yellows. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, do not develop their art and design skills to the appropriate level as they move through the school. Whilst pupils develop drawing and painting skills, the work that they do is on a limited, small scale and there is little evidence that they have the necessary experience of three-dimensional work to reach the required level of attainment. Pupils in Year 6 explore the way in which movement can be represented by repeating a shape in a variety of ways. They discuss and comment on their previous work on the movement of figures when using charcoal. They have an understanding of why some pictures work better than others do, and suggest improvements. However, the work they do is not developed sufficiently in variety and scale. They have a limited understanding of techniques and materials.

95 There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching as only two lessons were seen during the inspection. Whilst the lessons seen were good, however, the implication from the standard of work seen and discussions with pupils is that insufficient opportunities are given to older pupils to develop their skills and techniques to the appropriate level. In a Year 6 lesson pupils concentrated very well and showed a lot of interest in their work. The teacher discussed the previous lesson with pupils who recalled and evaluated their work on the movement of figures. Pupils clearly knew what they were doing and made good progress in showing movement by repeating and changing the shape of a figure on the paper. The teacher prepared resources and planned well for the lesson, which ensured that pupils could begin their work immediately, making the best use of the time available. There was a purposeful, industrious working atmosphere.

96 The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of future developments needed to raise standards among older pupils. In particular, the identification of the need to develop teachers' expertise in a wider variety of skills is appropriate. This is important in order to widen the opportunities for older pupils to tackle the work necessary to raise standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97 Design and technology has not been one of the schools' priorities in recent years. Consequently, although pupils enjoy the subject, the standards they reach are below those expected by

the time they leave the school. However, in the younger classes pupils do learn the early basic skills so that their achievements are line with those expected at this age.

98 No lessons were seen during the inspection therefore no judgements can be made on teaching in either the younger or older classes. From the limited amount of work available teachers have a reliable scheme to follow so that pupils are taught the principles of designing. They follow the recognised path of initial ideas, developed into plans, which lead to the making of objects and finally to evaluation of the product made. However, none of these skills are sufficiently developed because staff lack subject knowledge and expertise. The subject has no co-ordinator who can inspire and lead staff in the development of the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

99 Standards in history meet the national expectations by the time pupils are 11.

100 By the age of seven pupils have a good knowledge of the Great Fire of London. They learn about Samuel Pepys, and using his diary as a model, write their own eyewitness account of the impact of the fire. By the age of 11 pupils are able to demonstrate factual knowledge and understanding of the impact of World War Two on children in particular and society in general. They evaluate the reasons for evacuation and its impact on the lives of families. They recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways and give reasons for this, including both English and German biases. They understand that World War Two was a catalyst for social change in the latter part of the twentieth century.

101 In the lessons seen the teaching was good and pupils made good progress. The planning focuses on well defined objectives that extend both knowledge and skills. Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills, and with other subjects. Pupils are given work suited to their needs, and in the Year 6 lesson they were given responsibility to choose how they would record their findings. In the same lesson the teachers also had the confidence to address issues that arose during discussion such as the changing role of women in society and how much healthier people were in the 1940s because of their dietary habits imposed as a result of rationing. Moral issues were well addressed through examination of propaganda, with pupils able to see how the German people were influenced. The marking of pupils' books in all classes is exceptionally thorough. Pupils value this and it is time well spent.

102 One of the school's strengths is that it links all subjects, in turn, to history and geography. For example, in Year 2 pupils create fire pictures using ICT, examine artwork from 1666 in art, in physical education using 'inferno' as a theme, and study religious changes, including King Charles Bible, in religious education. Similar threads drive the curriculum in each year and the result is that pupils develop a good knowledge base.

103 Because of the school's timetabling arrangements geography will be the focus subject later in the year. Consequently, it was only possible to observe two lessons in geography but an examination of pupils' work indicates that standards of attainment are in line with expectations by the time pupils leave the school.

104 By the age of seven pupils have develop their mapping skills, making a three-dimensional plan of London that shows how it was at the time of the Great Fire of 1666. By the age of 11 they understand that areas of high industry were likely to be bombed during World War Two, and why people chose to stay in vulnerable cities such as Coventry and Liverpool.

105 Teaching is good overall because of the way teachers develop pupils' skills and attitudes, and build in links with other subjects of the curriculum. They plan ways in which pupils can think about the underlying principles of the subject through discussion, investigations and research. Displays around the school enhance the subject. For example, younger pupils show how types of home differ around the world, while older pupils show where the main Roman towns were located in England. All pupils benefit from a range of visits to complement their work in history and geography.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

106 The attainment of seven and 11 year-old pupils in ICT matches the standards expected nationally, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection report.



107 Pupils in Year 2 use a paint program on the computer to create their own pictures on “Fire”, which is related to the work they are doing on colour mixing in art. They successfully use the line, shape and colour tools independently. They discuss their work using the appropriate vocabulary, such as tools, undo and fill. They understand the use of a floor robot, which increases their knowledge of how a device responds to simple instructions by moving across the floor. They follow instructions to make a variety of rectangular shapes on the computer screen, and print out their work. These pupils collect information on the various means of transport to school. They enter this information into the computer and produce bar charts of the results.

108 Pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school and build successfully on their ICT skills and knowledge. Pupils in Year 3 learn to combine text and pictures about the Roman god Jupiter from a CD. Higher attaining pupils use a search engine to research and retrieve information and present it in their own way. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils confidently use a search engine for their research on the Internet and produce, for example, biographies of the Beatles and World War 2 presentations. Year 4 pupils develop their understanding of how a database can enhance their historical and geographical knowledge by thinking logically about the questions to ask when accessing a database. For example, the materials and writing used in ancient Egypt. A significant majority of these pupils understand how to begin to create the appropriate fields for their own database. Pupils in Year 5 understand that a spreadsheet can be used to record the results of an audit they have carried out at home on which appliance uses the most water. Most pupils understand that mathematical formulae will enable changes to be made to the information entered to give different outcomes. Year 6 pupils have developed their skills in writing commands to give a predetermined outcome, and write a series of commands that produce a variety of shapes and letters on the screen. A significant majority of these pupils correspond with pupils from other schools via e-mail and understand that photographs may be added to mail.

109 Teaching of ICT is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which is very effectively used to enhance pupils’ skills and knowledge. They are confident when demonstrating new techniques, using the computers and solving problems. This is evident in the skills pupils have previously acquired. For example, the way in which teachers confidently use the whiteboard to project the computer screen whilst they are discussing the work enhances pupils’ ability to grasp new concepts more quickly. Support assistants in the computer suite are effectively deployed. They confidently and quickly solve problems with individual pupils, which maintains a good pace to learning. Teachers ensure that much of the work that pupils do in the computer suite is linked to their work in other subjects. Work carried out in lessons such as mathematics, art and design, history, geography and English forms the starting point when learning new ICT skills, which gives pupils an awareness of the way ICT is used in a wide variety of contexts. Very good use is made of exercise books to record the knowledge and skills that pupils acquire. Teachers have high expectations of the way that pupils present this work. The clarity, consistency and methodical nature of their exercise books throughout the school enables pupils to refer to previous work for information and significantly increases their understanding of what they are doing and how they can improve. This is further enhanced by the very good comments that teachers use when they are marking books, providing pupils with a valuable insight into their own progress.

110 Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a firm grasp of the issues and a clear view on the future development of ICT. The effective monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils’ work provides a good overview of the subject, and helps to ensure consistency and progression of teaching and learning throughout the school. The computer suite is generally used well to enable all pupils to acquire the appropriate range of skills. However, in those classes with larger numbers of

pupils, access is sometimes restricted and solving pupils' problems is hectic. This slows the pace of learning, despite the best efforts in supporting pupils from the teacher and assistants.

## **MUSIC**

111 The attainment of both seven and 11 year-old pupils matches the standards expected nationally.

112 Seven year-old pupils sing with an understanding of the shape of a melody. When singing in a large group they maintain a counter melody against the main theme. They understand how to keep a steady pulse, using hand movements and clapping for emphasis and control. Pupils in Year 3 listened to "Sea Interludes" by Benjamin Britten and discussed the moods portrayed. They chose simple instruments which portrayed the mood and used pictures as a form of notation when performing together as a group. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Year 6 pupils use their work in history on the Second World War to develop ideas to represent sounds from the "Blitz". They use a variety of instruments to portray their ideas. They have a good understanding of how different parts of a song fit together and how an overall effect is achieved through many opportunities they are given to sing together. In singing as a group, these pupils maintain their part well and have a well-developed awareness pulse and melody. However, their ability to describe and compare different kinds of music is not sufficiently developed, and they do not have an appropriate knowledge of musical vocabulary.

113 Insufficient direct teaching of music was seen during the inspection to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, good teaching is evident in singing practices and clubs, where the subject expertise of the teacher is a significant factor in enhancing pupils' skills and knowledge. Pupils enjoy their singing and participate enthusiastically. The very good subject knowledge of the peripatetic teacher who visits the school is effective in increasing pupils' skills in areas such as composing, however, insufficient opportunities are currently given on a systematic basis to older pupils in lessons to extend their composition skills. The many opportunities that pupils are given to perform in public outside school, such as at the Newcastle Arena and the Baltic Square contribute much to pupils' understanding of performing with others and working together towards a common goal. Many pupils take advantage of the opportunities to learn to play instruments such as the recorder and guitar outside of classroom lesson time, and participate in a wide variety of singing events throughout the school year. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership of the subject and the subject policy and schemes of work are sound. The resources for the subject are used effectively.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

114 Standards achieved in physical education by the age of seven and by the age of 11 are similar to those seen nationally for pupils of those ages. This represents sound progress. No judgement was made about standards in physical education in the last inspection so no comparison can be made. However, as behaviour in the school has improved, the school has been able to develop a higher profile in local sporting events and for example, pupils are now involved in football matches against other schools. A number of boys have been selected to represent the district as a result. Other activities have included athletics and line dancing.

115 The school provides a broad range of activities for physical education and planning is based on national guidelines demonstrating a balanced programme of activities. During the inspection only a narrow range of activities could be observed although these indicated average standards and satisfactory learning and progress. The constraints of the building and outdoor play areas including the field restrict some opportunities for pupils. The hall is too small for some large apparatus work in

gymnastics for example and the school playground is built on a difficult slope making games difficult. The school field is often out of bounds because of litter and dog fouling.

116 During the inspection Year 6 pupils made satisfactory progress in a dance lesson linked to their history topic exploring movement through rock and roll dance. Pupils had a clear understanding of the importance of warming up and were able to describe the effect of cross-exercises. The lesson contributed to social development well with pupils encouraged to work in pairs. Some found it difficult to work with pupils other than their close friends but they were encouraged to do so. During the lesson sound progress was made in developing rock and roll rhythm and pupils followed instructions well.

117 Year 4 pupils achieved well and made good progress in developing ball skills for games as a result of the good teaching. They had a clear understanding of the need for warming up and made good progress in passing accurately, throwing and catching and using space effectively to create opening in a game situation.

118 Year 3 pupils go swimming but standards are below those normally expected for their age. Many have little or no experience of swimming until they start to learn with school. All make good progress as a result of the effective instruction they receive. Many start with a fear of water and quickly gain confidence, putting their face and head under the water. More confident pupils begin to propel themselves through the water with aids. Standards by the age of 11 are below those expected despite the progress they make.

119 Year 2 pupils made very good progress in a dance lesson as a result of very good teaching while they were using movement to respond imaginatively to music. Again, a good link with their fire of London history topic was evident. When asked to simulate getting water from the River Thames using buckets, the teacher asked what the buckets were made of and all pupils responded "leather!" in unison.

120 Good opportunities were provided for pupils to analyse the music and develop movements to suit the mood. They analysed the performance of each other and could describe why they thought particular movements were effective. The link with history was effective in stimulating pupils' imagination; they enjoyed the lesson and made very good progress.

121 Pupils enjoy physical education; they have positive attitudes and join in well. Teaching is good overall. Good opportunities are provided to develop social skills as well as skills in physical education. Resources are adequate and the subject is appropriately led and managed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

122 The teaching of religious education is based on the locally agreed syllabus with supplementary material from commercial schemes. Therefore, teachers are provided with a secure framework in which to work. Pupils learn about Christianity and other major world faiths including, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism. The attainment of pupils of seven and 11 is in line with expectations of the agreed syllabus, although in some aspects the standards they reach are above those that would be expected because of the style of teaching that develops pupils' thinking about wider issues. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and make progress that is in line with their abilities.

123 From the beginning of Year 1 teachers encourage pupils to not only acquire knowledge from their lessons but also to extract the wider meanings of the stories and feelings of the characters in those stories. Pupils are encouraged to offer different points of view with reasons to support them. This results in good teaching and means that religious education lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' overall spiritual development. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher read the story of the Prodigal Son pausing at points in the story for the pupils to discuss the feelings of the son. After sharing their ideas with a partner, opinions, supported by reasons were put to the class. A chart was built up so that at a later date pupils could compare the feelings of the father to that of the son.

124 Good, thought provoking teaching is further developed in Years 3 to 6. Teachers use open ended questions effectively and all pupils' contributions are valued. In a good lesson in Year 4 pupils discussed the part that angels play in both in Christianity and Islam. Although no work was recorded from this lesson pupils showed that they had sound knowledge of both religions and were therefore able to give examples. Such questions as 'What is special about an angel?' and 'Why do Muslims believe in angels?' challenged pupils' thinking as well as testing their knowledge. Another group of pupils considered difficult questions that they would like to know the answer to. The story of the Good Samaritan proved a challenge to pupils in Year 5 because it was difficult to find a direct comparison by

putting the story directly into a present day situation. However, the teacher successfully developed the theme into how Christian Aid helps people in third world countries today.