

INSPECTION REPORT

DIAMOND HALL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108759

Head teacher: Mr R Holt

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Bell
2456

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th September 2002

Inspection number: 246820

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Well Street Sunderland
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Snaith
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2456	J Bell	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it?
			Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
			Citizenship	How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
9511	A Longfield	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?
32133	J Elton	Team inspector	Geography	
			History	
			Religious education	
23375	J Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
			Design and technology	
			Educational inclusion	
27545	A Scott	Team inspector	English	
			Art and design	
30745	P Thorpe	Team inspector	Science	
			Music	

			Special educational needs	
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33 Kingsway
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WC2B 6SE.

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Diamond Hall is a larger than average junior school and admits pupils aged seven to 11. It is situated in a built up area to the west of the City of Sunderland and serves an area of mainly Victorian, single storey, terraced houses. Many houses have been purchased by private landlords and are rented out so there is a high level of movement of pupils in and out of the school at times other than the normal admission times. Last year 23 pupils joined the school at different times during the year and 27 left. This level of transience means that there is some disruption to the learning of these pupils and makes it difficult for the school to track their progress. The school is popular and over subscribed, with some pupils coming from beyond the immediate area. There are 377 pupils on roll, 189 boys and 188 girls. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school shows wide variations year-on-year. The current intake into Year 3 covers a broad range of attainment but most attain the standards expected for their age in English and mathematics. The school has 103 pupils on its register of special educational needs, and six have a statement of specific need, about average for a school of this size. Of the 21 pupils the higher stages of need, 11 have specific learning problems, five have severe learning difficulties, three have emotional and behavioural problems and there are two Downs Syndrome pupils. There are 42 pupils with English as a second language; high in comparison with national figures. The school identifies 41 pupils who are at an early stage of learning English but no external support is available to the school this term. There are 95 pupils eligible for free school meals, 25 per cent of school population; similar to the national average. Although not part of the local Education Action Zone (EAZ), the school is part of its 'Sport for All' initiative and has gained an 'Active Mark' award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Diamond Hall Junior School provides a sound education for all its pupils. The head teacher gives a clear lead in establishing the good relationships that encourage pupils to want to learn and to behave well. The head teacher, key staff and governors provide satisfactory leadership and management but more is required to further develop the roles of the deputy head teacher, assistant head teacher and subject co-ordinators. Standards are improving at the same rate as most schools nationally although by the age of 11, pupils' attainment in English is often well below average and standards in mathematics and science are below average. Teaching is mainly satisfactory with examples of good teaching in all year groups, although the most effective teaching is in Years 3 and 6. Given the variable attainment on entry, the high level of transience among pupils, high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- All staff work well as a team; this ensures a positive ethos in the school that encourages good relationships. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well.
- The substantial amount of good and sometimes very good teaching in Years 3 and 6 means that these pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Work in art and design is of a high standard; teachers value pupils' work and display it well.
- The school has very good numbers of teaching and support staff and this enables it to make good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and staff use computers well to support work in other subjects.
- The school offers a good range of out-of-school activities that are popular with pupils and

support well their personal and social development.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The time allocated to religious education to ensure statutory requirements are met.
- The leadership and management to improve the roles of senior staff and subject co-ordinators in checking and providing guidance on teaching, learning and development in all subjects throughout the school.
- The assessment of pupils' progress and the way this information is used on a day-to-day basis to plan work that builds on what pupils' already know and is matched more closely to their ability.

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 responded satisfactorily to the previous inspection in 1997. The development plan has improved and now identifies a realistic number of relevant priorities with clearly defined timescales, cost implications and named staff to lead the initiatives. The staff have worked hard to improve the reading of boys and their attitudes have been improved through the purchase of books more suited to their interests. The school has worked well with parents to enable them to support reading at home. This is beginning to even out the differences in standards in reading between boys and girls. Pupils with English as an additional language are now mainly taught in mainstream groups and make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their ability. Staff now group pupils by ability for English and mathematics in order to more closely match the needs of different abilities but the planned review of assessment procedures has not yet been completed due to staff changes and procedures are still not used well enough to ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able. The school has made substantial improvement in its provision for ICT. New computers and software in classrooms, the creation of a well-resourced computer suite, and well-planned staff training have ensured that standards are rising. Standards in English, mathematics and science have declined since the last inspection and are too low. The school has correctly identified the need to improve standards in these subjects but has not yet established a rigorous enough action plan to support these areas. The good work in training new teachers has been recognised and the school is now designated a 'Primary Partnership School' by Sunderland University. Staff changes have slowed developments but there is good commitment from staff and governors to continue to improve the school's effectiveness.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	E	E	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

mathematics	E	D	E	E	average	C
					below average	D
science	E	E	E	E	well below average	E

The pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 varies year-on-year but the attainment of the current intake is broadly typical of seven year olds. They make a good start because of the good teaching in this year group. Progress slows in Years 4 and 5, where teaching is mainly satisfactory but has some weaknesses. Despite more rapid progress due to effective teaching in Year 6, pupils do not reach sufficiently high standards in National Curriculum tests at the age of 11. In the 2001 tests for 11 year olds standards were well below average in English, mathematics and science. The school's performance in English was below that of schools with a similar intake of pupils and was well below these schools in mathematics and science. Standards in the 2002 tests show a similar picture in English but improvement to below average in mathematics and science. There is no nationally validated data yet available with which to compare the school's results. However, over a four-year period the school has improved at the same rate as most schools nationally. The school is on course to meet its realistic targets for the current year.

Standards of current work in English are still below and often well below those expected at this age. Despite the school's priority to improve writing skills, standards are still too low. There has been some recent improvement in mathematics and science but current work is still below the standards expected for the age of 11. Too few pupils achieve the higher levels in tests and the varying number of pupils with special educational needs and those who join the school mid year also adversely influence the school's yearly test results. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their ability. Many of these pupils speak and read English well although they sometimes achieve less well in writing and need extra help to write using the correct tenses. Provision for ICT has improved and standards have risen and are at the level expected by the end of Year 6. Standards in religious education are below those expected for 11 year olds because too little time is given to ensure that work is taught in sufficient depth. Work in art and design is of a high standard. There is also some good work in physical education, and particularly good progress in dance and gymnastics where specialist teachers, funded through the EAZ initiative have taught pupils in most year groups.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to take advantage of what it offers them. Most pupils try hard and concentrate well on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils know what is expected of them and behave well, both in lessons and in the play areas.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show respect for the views of others and respond well to all staff. Relationships are good and pupils work well together.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Despite the school's best efforts attendance is well below average.

Staff work hard to support pupils' personal and social development but teachers do not enable pupils to gain enough independence in their learning. A significant number of pupils have poor attendance

records. The school works hard with parents to improve attendance but too many families take holidays in term time and the poor attendance of these pupils slows their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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

The teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in all year groups, although the best teaching is in Years 3 and 6 where it is often good and sometimes very good. A few lessons were unsatisfactory in Years 4 and 5 and this was related to a poor match of work to pupils' abilities, which sometimes led to their lack of concentration and lapses in behaviour that were not well managed. Not all teachers in these year groups interpret national guidance for English and mathematics flexibly enough to take account of the abilities of pupils. They teach directly from the guidance provided by the local authority and do not modify their planning to build on what the pupils have learned in previous lessons. Even when teaching is broadly satisfactory this rigid interpretation of national guidance means that some teachers do not plan work that takes account of their day-to-day checks of what pupils have learned. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and use effective strategies to manage their classes. In many lessons teachers provide interesting activities that encourage learning. However, teachers' expectations of what the more able could achieve are not high enough and work is not always well matched to what pupils already know. Teaching in English and mathematics is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good but pupils have too few opportunities to develop and reinforce literacy skills in other subjects, particularly their writing, reading and speaking skills. There is some application of numeracy skills in science and geography but these are too few. The teaching of pupils with special needs is satisfactory and they make sound progress because they are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Occasionally the lower attaining pupils are presented with the same work as the rest of the class and this is too difficult and slows their learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are mainly supported well by teachers and classroom assistants, where required, and often achieve well in relation to their ability.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a good range of activities and experiences to interest the pupils and promote their learning. However, the curriculum for religious education does not meet requirements because too little time is allocated.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are supported well by teachers and classroom support assistants. This ensures that these pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their ability.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. These pupils often have a sound grasp of English and receive sound support from school staff but there is no external support available.
Provision for pupils'	Good. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	this effectively supports their personal development. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound awareness of their own local culture but there are too few opportunities for them to gain an understanding of other cultures and traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school looks after its pupils well. It has good procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development.

The good range of activities outside lessons supports the pupils' personal and social development well and the school enhances the curriculum through well-planned visits out of school, including a residential visit for Year 5 pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are not consistent throughout the school. Although it analyses national test results and targets groups of pupils for extra support, there are few specific targets for individual pupils in order to help them improve. Procedures for the day-to-day checking on pupils' progress are not developed as well as they could be to enable teachers to plan work that is closely matched to pupils' needs and provide sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able. The school has established a good partnership with parents; they are very pleased with the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The head teacher gives a good lead in establishing the positive ethos for learning in the school. Teamwork is good and support learning. The roles of the non-class based senior staff and those of subject co-ordinators are not yet effective enough in monitoring teaching, learning and development in all subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors care for the pupils and work hard to support school improvement. Not all statutory requirements are met for religious education and aspects of the governors' report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school sets realistic, broad targets for improvement. However, the action taken to achieve them has not been rigorous enough to improve standards in English, although there is some improvement in mathematics and science.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Governors seek to get the best value they can in respect of goods and services.

The quality and range of accommodation is good and is well cared for. Learning resources are satisfactory. Staffing levels are good. Finances are managed well and the school has a high surplus in its budget. Some funding has been used well to employ extra classroom assistants and some is identified for planned improvements. However, this surplus needs to be reviewed to take account of some gaps in resources in areas such as religious education and special educational needs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable about approaching the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work that children are given

<p>school with any questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good and their children make good progress. • Behaviour is good and the school helps children to become mature and responsible. • Their children like school. 	<p>to do at home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The information about their children's progress.
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Inspectors share parents' positive views. The inspection findings show that the amount and frequency of homework is similar to that in most primary schools. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. The information to parents is satisfactory but written annual reports to parents do not always have enough detail of what their children know and can do.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Pupils enter the school with a broad range of attainment. There are substantial variations year-on-year because in many year groups the school admits high numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The school also has above average numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Although the current intake of pupils into Year 3 reflects a broad range of ability with many who attain standards that are typical for seven year olds in English and mathematics, this is not always the case. Most pupils make satisfactory progress, including those for whom English is an additional language. Many of these pupils have a secure command of English and often achieve well in relation to their ability. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to the realistic targets set for them according to their ability. They benefit from the school's organisation that enables pupils to work in sets arranged according to their ability in English and mathematics. The small numbers in the lower attaining sets enable pupils with special educational needs to be supported well. The recent appointment of extra classroom support assistants means that these pupils often have extra help that enables them to steadily improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

2 Standards in English, mathematics and science are lower than those reported in the last inspection but are improving in line with those in most other schools. However, by the end of Year 6, standards in the 2001 national tests in these subjects were still well below those expected of pupils aged 11. When compared to schools with a similar number of free school meals, standards were below average in English but well below this in mathematics and science. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in English and science were well below the actual standards achieved in the national tests. This reflects the school's insufficient use of assessment information to ensure that teachers' expectations of groups and individuals are sufficiently high. For example, teachers do not set specific targets for individual pupils and groups, which will help them to focus on ways of improving their work.

3 There are a number of factors that influence the school's performance in some years, especially when its test results are compared against similar schools. There is a substantial amount of mobility as families move in and out of the area. This makes it difficult for the school to track pupils' progress from Year 3 to Year 6 since in some years many pupils join the school sometime after the age of seven. Pupils make a good start in Year 3, where teaching is often good but this is not sustained in Years 4 and 5, where teaching is mainly sound and sometimes good but there is some that is unsatisfactory. The effective teaching in Year 6 enables pupils to again make more rapid progress but this is too late to enable them to attain the standards expected at the age of 11.

4 Standards in current work in English are still too low. Although the school has recognised the areas of concern and made them a priority, its efforts have not been consistent or sharply focused enough. There has been a priority to improve the writing of all pupils, but this has not yet had an impact on standards. The school has managed to raise boys' interest in reading by buying in suitable fiction and non-fiction books. The grouping of pupils by ability is sound but teachers do not tailor their teaching enough within these groups to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils have satisfactory listening skills, but their speaking skills are less effective. They often have a limited range of vocabulary and lack confidence; in many lessons, too many pupils are reluctant to join in discussions and offer suggestions. Pupils' diction is not good enough. They often pronounce words casually and prefer colloquial speech. Teachers do not correct this well enough. Too little is done through role-play,

drama and discussion in English and other subjects to enable pupils to practise and reinforce these skills.

5 Reading and writing are especially weak. Although higher attaining pupils do well and achieve above average standards not enough average pupils reach the standards expected for their age. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and with expression but too few pupils read widely enough. There is no structured reading scheme in the school to guide pupils and they select their own books, which are not always suitable. This limits the progress of less able pupils. There is a wide range of attainment in writing and by the age of 11 most pupils of average ability write in simple sentences and use basic grammar and spelling with reasonable accuracy. Higher attaining pupils have good writing skills but less able pupils produce little work that is accurate and spelling is weak. Teachers do not make sufficient use of other subjects, like history, religious education and geography, to enable pupils to practise and enhance their literacy skills in relevant situations. The school currently gives extra time to the practise of English skills such as reading, handwriting and spelling, but these are done in isolation and have little impact on work in literacy lessons. These sessions are not yet having any significant impact on standards.

6 Standards in mathematics are improving but are below those expected for pupils aged 11. The school has identified the improvement of teaching and learning in mathematics as a main priority and has introduced a number of changes, some of which are beginning to have a positive effect. There is a special focus on the lower attaining pupils in each year group in an attempt to increase the number of pupils attaining the expected standard by the end of Year 6. These pupils are currently taught in smaller groups to give them more individual attention and they are making good progress. Although the most able pupils are well taught and make good progress there are few strategies to increase the numbers reaching the higher levels. There is still insufficient challenge for the able and very able pupils in each year group. Much of the work given to extend these pupils uses harder numbers and does not set tasks that cause pupils to apply the ideas they have learned to solving problems rather than further practice in methods of calculation. Pupils occasionally use numeracy skills, such as bar charts and line graphs, successfully in other subjects, such as science and geography.

7 Standards in science are steadily improving but are still below those expected by the end of Year 6. Difficulties in implementing the curriculum fully, due to frequent staff changes and the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs, largely accounts for the drop in standards. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out their own investigations. However, the school is now putting into place strategies designed to improve the standards pupils reach. The school has identified a problem of duplication of activities in some year groups and this slows learning. It is revising the policy and schemes of work to resolve this problem. The teachers' assessments of pupils' progress and attainment in science are not accurate enough to match work closely to what pupils already know and the school plans to ensure assessment opportunities are clearly identified in new subject guidance. However, the action taken to deal with these problems lacks urgency and because all schemes of work are written by the deputy head teacher and assistant head teacher there is little opportunity for the co-ordinator for science to take a lead in the needed developments.

8 The standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved substantially and are now at the levels expected at the age of 11, with a few pupils who achieve more highly. Since the last inspection the school has made big improvements in the provision for ICT, with a well-resourced computer suite and new computers and software in each class. The improved standards also reflect the increased confidence of staff in teaching ICT following well-planned training. Pupils now have more knowledge and understanding of word-processing, data handling and control than they did four years ago.

9 The school allocates too little time to religious education and, although teachers cover most of the topics required by the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools, the work lacks sufficient depth and so standards are below those expected at the age of 11.

10 There is high quality work in art throughout the school and by the age of 11 pupils achieve well and standards are higher than expected for their age. Teachers value pupils' work and display it effectively. This helps to raise pupils' self-esteem and they are delighted to show their work. Pupils enjoy the good range of interesting, practical activities and by the end of Year 6, standards in all other subjects are typical of those expected of 11 year olds. Pupils achieve well in physical education and standards are at least in line with those expected at the age of 11. There is good work in dance and gymnastics where pupils have been taught by specialist staff funded by the EAZ. The school enhances pupils' skills through a good range of out of school activities and opportunities to learn from professional coaches. The pupils are very proud of the success of the school's football and netball teams.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 The pupils continue to have the same positive attitudes towards their school as identified in the last inspection. Nearly every parent who returned a questionnaire agreed that their child likes school and inspection evidence supports this. When motivated by good teaching they are capable of sustained concentration. This was evident in a design and technology lesson about hinges, when the pupils were well motivated and persevered to make a monster's head. Occasionally pupils' attitudes are not so positive. In these lessons teachers do not always insist on pupils' attention or the work is not matched well enough to the pupils' abilities so they lose interest, become bored and distract the other members of the class.

12 The behaviour in the school is good. Pupils generally move around the school in a sensible manner, and play and work well together. Parents, staff and pupils acknowledge that there are occasional incidents of bullying. Staff quickly deal with these, and with any instances of unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils look after equipment, such as the computers well and there is no graffiti. There were eight fixed-term exclusions, mainly linked to one pupil, and also one permanent exclusion last academic year.

13 Most pupils with special educational needs respond positively to school life. They are polite and welcoming and usually co-operate well with others. A few pupils show challenging behaviour on occasions but this is usually managed effectively by well-trained classroom support staff. Pupils for whom English is an additional language behave well and are usually eager to do well. However, a few boys in this group are not as well motivated and make less effort in their work.

14 Relationships are good, cordial and constructive throughout the school. Boys and girls get on well together and with all the school staff. They show respect for each other's feelings, beliefs and values and are confident to join in discussions. This was seen in a Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson about the change the Euro could make to their lives. They are appreciative of each other's good work and behaviour, both in class and at the weekly 'good work' assembly.

15 Pupils' personal and social development is good. They develop in self-confidence and are willing to accept responsibility when the opportunity is given, quietly carrying out duties in class and around the school. Most pupils are proud of the responsibility given to them when chosen to be members of the school council or house captains. However, the school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of independence and use their own initiative. In many

classes, pupils do not have enough opportunities for independent learning. The well-planned visits out of school, including a residential visit to The Lake District for pupils in Year 5 have a good impact on their personal and social development. They learn to work together and to take account of others' needs and opinions. Extra-curricular activities are well attended and add much to pupils' pride in their school and self-esteem.

16 The school makes every effort to work with parents to improve pupils' attendance. However, rates of attendance have deteriorated since the last inspection and are now well below the national average of similar primary schools. The rate of unauthorised absence is well above the national average. This slows the learning and progress of the pupils with poor records of attendance and these pupils do not do as well as they should. Registration periods are efficient and although several pupils are persistently late, little time is wasted at the start of school sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with frequently good, and sometimes very good, teaching in Year 3 and Year 6. In these year groups pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. Teaching is mainly satisfactory and occasionally good in Years 4 and 5 but there is also unsatisfactory teaching in a few lessons in each of these year groups. Pupils' progress is less rapid in Years 4 and 5 and so the good start made when they enter school in Year 3 is not maintained and although progress improves again in Year 6 it is too late to have enough impact on standards. The school has had substantial changes in staff in the past two years as teachers have been promoted or retired. The quality of teaching is similar to the last inspection although there is less very good teaching and a few more lessons where it is unsatisfactory.

18 In most lessons, teachers use a good range of teaching methods. In the most effective lessons they skilfully capture pupils' attention at the beginning of lessons, and as a result, pupils listen well and eagerly take part. For example at the beginning of a Year 5 history lesson the teacher used her recent visit to Egypt to share her excitement and enjoyment with the pupils and to stimulate their interest with artefacts such as papyrus pictures. The pupils responded well and there were gasps of excitement when they learned that papyrus is made from leaves. They used well thought out questions and volunteered ideas they had gained from books and television programmes. The teacher's well-timed praise and encouragement ensured that even the least confident pupils felt comfortable in offering suggestions. In most lessons, teachers use to good effect the time at the beginning of lessons to ensure that pupils are clear about what they will learn. They also have good strategies for the end of lessons to check on what has been achieved. This is not always so in Years 4 and 5 where in some mathematics lessons in particular, teachers are good at sharing what is to be taught and learned during lessons but do not engage pupils in sufficient review of what has actually been learned.

19 Teachers develop good relationships with pupils, which help them to manage behaviour very effectively. For example, in a very well taught music lesson with Year 6 pupils, the teacher's good use of humour and recognition of the growing maturity of this age group resulted in very productive work in groups to compose their own music. They were fully involved and became animated as they practised and developed their tunes and totally lost any self-consciousness as they sang them to others. In the substantial number of good lessons, teachers used encouragement and praise skilfully to involve as many pupils as possible and to boost their confidence. As a result they maintain interest and pupils respond well throughout the lesson.

20 Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily through the medium of literacy lessons but are not consistently well taught and reinforced in all other subjects. In many lessons opportunities are provided for pupils to enhance their speaking and listening skills through lively and interesting introductory and plenary sessions. However, opportunities for well-planned role-play, drama and discussion are not used enough to develop and improve pupils' skills in these areas. Good reinforcement is given, though not consistently, to teaching key vocabulary in some subjects. For example in a very good Year 6 art lesson, the teacher's good use of technical terms such as 'stippling', 'still-life' and 'landscape' enabled pupils to try out different techniques and to learn how different brush strokes can be used to create different effects in a picture. In this lesson there were good links with work in English; pupils have been studying the work of Charles Dickens and were encouraged to recreate characters and scenes from 'Great Expectations'. Many pupils successfully conveyed the atmosphere when Pip met the convict. The opportunities to develop and practise reading and writing in other subjects are less well done and there is no clear, whole school policy or practice. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use these skills, for instance, in history or religious education where they would have more relevance than being taught in isolation in the extra time currently allocated to English. These sessions are not yet having a significant impact on standards.

21 The teaching of numeracy skills is mainly satisfactory. Many lessons begin with brisk and purposeful mental arithmetic sessions that stimulate pupils and make them eager to learn. This is not always sustained in the main part of the lessons and, in some classes, pupils lose interest and do not pay sufficient attention so that learning is slow. Although there are some opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects such as ICT, where older pupils create spreadsheet and collect and collate information in graphs there are too few planned opportunities to use these skills in science, geography and design and technology.

22 Teachers group pupils by ability for English and mathematics lessons and this helps them to match work more closely to what pupils already know. In Years 3 and 6, most teachers try to challenge pupils, whatever their ability. This good practice has not been identified and shared to ensure that all teachers, particularly some in Years 4 and 5 adapt their planning in the light of day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress. Not all staff modify the local authority's guidance for literacy and numeracy to meet the needs of their pupils. They stick rigidly to the guidance and do not adapt it through their own planning. The marking of pupils' work varies; in some classes teachers make very helpful comments in pupils' books and give guidance on how to improve their work. However, other books contain too many unchecked spelling and mathematical errors and carelessly presented work.

23 The school analyses test results and seeks to identify what is needed to improve standards. However, although this analysis enables the school to identify and target groups and individuals for extra help from the three non-class based teachers and support staff, pupils do not have individual targets for learning. Teachers are not therefore always clear enough about pupils' progress and attainment over time. There is no agreed recording system so all teachers do not have a clear idea of how well pupils make progress against the aims for each lesson. As a result, teachers do not always adapt their next lessons to reflect what pupils can do. This can result in limited learning in these lessons because the work presented to pupils is either too easy or too difficult. For example, in English all pupils in a lower attaining group were required to study the same text, which ensured good challenge for more able pupils but was difficult for most other pupils and the least able found it impossible to complete the work. In a Year 4 science lesson on how heating and cooling can cause irreversible change in some materials, many of the examples used were beyond the pupils' experience. There was too little practical work or examples to enable pupils to gain experience and so they began to lose interest, behaviour declined and they learned very little.

24 In other lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers do not always establish their expectations in respect of work and behaviour. Pupils do not always settle well and teachers do not ensure they are listening before starting the lesson. This was identified as a concern in the last inspection. In these lessons teachers do not expect enough from the pupils; they do not insist that work is completed in good time or offer exciting new work to those who finish more quickly. As a result some pupils lose interest and fidget. Teachers do not monitor effectively enough how well pupils are working within groups, so that less motivated pupils are able to get away with doing too little work and so make limited gains in their learning.

25 Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and enables them to plan a good range of activities and to teach the National Curriculum in the required depth. This is not done in religious education but this reflects the limited time allocated to this subject rather than any lack of expertise in teaching. The last inspection raised concerns about the limited teaching of control technology in ICT but these have been resolved through improvements in resources and staff training.

26 The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language has improved since the last inspection and is at least satisfactory. Many of these pupils have a sound grasp of English; they are

eager to learn and so make good progress in relation to their ability. The school now includes these pupils in mainstream classes and provides effective in-class support or one-to-one support if it is needed.

27 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is broadly satisfactory. Teachers plan suitable work to meet the needs of these pupils and they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. The main thrust in learning for these pupils is in literacy and numeracy and teachers involve support teachers and classroom assistants effectively. The school groups pupils by ability for these subjects; non-class based senior teachers and part-time teachers work with these sets to ensure that less able pupils benefit from being taught in small groups. The individual learning plans for these pupils are closely linked to their needs and contain realistic targets that are reviewed regularly to ensure pupils are making enough progress.

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

28 The curriculum is broad and balanced but it does not meet statutory requirements because the agreed syllabus for religious education is not taught in sufficient depth. Improvements have been made to the curriculum for ICT since the last inspection so that it now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

29 The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies so that both subjects are planned and taught systematically throughout the school. However, standards are still too low. Although no longer a strength of the curriculum some teachers continue to make valuable links between different areas of the curriculum so that they are better developed but this is not consistent throughout the school. For example, there are too few opportunities to develop reading and writing in subjects such as history and religious education and the planned use of numeracy skills is not yet embedded in subjects such as design and technology, science and geography. Although most areas of the curriculum are supported by policies these have not been recently reviewed to take account of recent national guidance and to reflect the priorities in the school. There are many teachers who are new to the school and this makes it difficult for them to be sure of what is required.

30 There is a good range of extra-curricular activities based on the 'School's Out' system. This enables the school to benefit from additional financial resources so that they are able to purchase extra services and equipment to improve the quality of extra-curricular activities. These clubs are well supported by pupils and this amply demonstrates how much they enjoy and appreciate these additional opportunities. The range of activities includes sports such as football and netball as well as other diverse activities such as a choir and school newspaper. These clubs depend heavily on the goodwill and energetic support of teachers as well as the occasional valuable involvement of parents, especially in sporting activities. Although some clubs, such as football, are restricted to particular year groups to make them manageable, all pupils have equal access to extra-curricular activities.

31 Pupils benefit greatly from a range of visits and visitors. For example, Year 6 pupils have visited the Stadium of Light as part of a community project and Year 4 pupils learned much from their visit to Bede's World as part of their work in history. Visitors include authors and poets who discuss their work with pupils so that they gain valuable insights and knowledge.

32 The school has satisfactory policies for teaching pupils about sex education and drug awareness. The school nurse uses video material to teach Year 4 pupils sex education and ensures parents are fully involved. Drugs awareness is carefully taught and pupils receive valuable lessons from local police teams who specialise in this area of education. Personal, health and social education,

including citizenship, are well-planned and take place regularly. For example, pupils use 'Circle Time' well to enhance their self-esteem when they describe to the rest of the class why they are special and what they are particularly good at.

33 Provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs is good and they make satisfactory progress in regard to their ability. Pupils have equal access to the school's curriculum. Support staff are well briefed and deployed and make an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning and social integration. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans that are used to inform and support their learning. These are regularly reviewed and, if necessary, amended to take account of changes and developments in pupils' needs. The quality of individual education plans is good and targets are identified for each pupil. On the whole these are relevant and achievable by individual pupils. Some targets are too broad however, and need to be broken down into manageable steps within a set time. The class teacher or the special needs co-ordinator or both regularly assess the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Outside agencies, are also consulted if necessary. New targets are set if appropriate and teachers adjust their planning accordingly.

34 The provision for pupils with English as a second language is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Many are taught in mainstream classes and supported by classroom assistants where help is needed. The school indicates that many of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English and although many have a secure grasp of spoken English and many learn to read accurately, they often find writing more difficult. The school uses its support staff well to help pupils overcome these difficulties but there is currently no externally funded support provided by the local education authority.

35 The school has limited links with local commerce and industry apart from their donations to school raffles. There are wider links with the local community through the clergy, and the use made of the school's community room by various organisations and the Parent and Toddler group who meet three mornings a week. The choir visits the local hospital and senior citizen home. The useful exchange of staff with the local secondary school helps the pupils' transition from Year 6 to Year 7. The infant school pupils visit for concerts and assemblies but there are few useful curriculum links between the infant and junior schools.

36 The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision for pupils is good overall. There is good provision for pupils' social and moral development. The provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

37 The school provides satisfactorily for the spiritual development of pupils. School assemblies are effective but do not have a strong spiritual flavour. However, stories may well come from the scriptures, such as the Parable of the Talents, and pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own attributes. Assemblies are often led well by the local vicar. There are useful opportunities in special 'Circle Time' lessons for pupils to consider and discuss sensitive, personal issues. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were encouraged to list their own qualities in order to boost their self-esteem. This was only partly successful, since pupils tended to think of what they simply liked doing. Sometimes, teachers use opportunities in lessons to stimulate pupils' sense of discovery or appreciation of beauty. In a history lesson, for example, Year 5 pupils were suitably amazed by the fact that papyrus was made from leaves. This is also a feature of some art lessons and, occasionally, when reading literature. In most lessons, however, teachers do not make the most of such opportunities.

38 The school has a good approach to teaching pupils right from wrong. There are clear school and class rules with sensible rewards and punishments that pupils understand. There is a weekly assembly, which celebrates good work and other achievements so that pupils appreciate the right way

to approach school life. Many teachers have good methods for managing behaviour in their classrooms. This means that pupils know what effect any misbehaviour will have. 'Circle Time' provides useful opportunities for pupils to discuss moral issues and to take turns in sharing their views.

39 The school has good provision for the social development of pupils. There is a good family atmosphere within the school, which makes pupils feel comfortable and secure. Teachers foster a sense of trust so that pupils can work in groups or pairs without the need for supervision. This was very evident in a Year 3 lesson, when pupils were wielding scissors and glue. There is a good range of activities, clubs and team sports, which promote social skills. The residential course for older pupils helps them bond together, as well as enabling them to experience a new part of the world. Pupils appreciate the concept of charity by raising money for good causes. There is a school council, which enables pupils to give their views on what they would like to change or develop in the school. These pupils are elected by their classmates and work well together to gather information from other pupils and to discuss possible initiatives in meetings. However, the school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their own initiative.

40 Cultural provision is satisfactory. Teachers offer insights into past and present cultures around the world through history and geography lessons. A European club has recently been established to raise pupils' awareness of European issues. There is a choir, a recorder club, as well as school productions, which give pupils the chance to develop their musical knowledge and skills. There have been visits by writers and dancers to lead workshops for pupils, but these are not regular enough activities to have lasting impact. Pupils are rightly proud of their own heritage, but the school does not actively develop pupils' knowledge of this. Similarly, the school offers some opportunities to learn about other cultures and traditions to reflect the multicultural mix within our own country, but these are underdeveloped. For example, there are few opportunities for pupils to learn about non-Western art, music or dance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41 There are good procedures in place for promoting pupils' well-being, health and safety but some weaknesses in supporting their academic and personal development. An ethos of care, order and structure is set through the daily assemblies. For example, pupils learn to value themselves and each other by identifying their strengths and how these can be used to help others. There is a good standard of care from teaching and non-teaching staff with strengths in the promotion of good behaviour. Staff are sensitive to pupils' problems; they listen to what pupils have to say and work with them to raise their self-esteem, which is often low.

42 Sound child protection procedures are in place and meet statutory requirements. There are two designated persons for child protection who have received training. All the teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities and are kept up to date with child protection issues. Training has not been recently up dated for new staff. There are two first aiders and pupils know who to go to if they are sick or injured.

43 There are sensible procedures in place for identifying and controlling risks to health and safety. There are regular fire drills and fire exits are clearly marked. The school's health and safety policy is being re-written and current guidance is out of date. The police, in conjunction with 'Stranger Danger' and from the 'Safer Estates Team' visit the school and work with pupils in relation to alcohol and drug abuse and to ensure they are aware of how to stay safe.

44 Most pupils who have special educational needs are identified when attending the infant school. Other needs are recognised by staff as they begin to know their pupils well and are sensitive to any particular difficulties. They are well supported by classroom assistants and teachers. The

liaison between the school and external support agencies is good and appropriate expert advice is sought when necessary.

45 The school has good measures in place for monitoring attendance. However, the level of attendance is well below the national average. This is partly due to families taking holidays in term time. The school constantly reminds parents about the need for good attendance and pupils are rewarded with certificates for 100 per cent attendance at the end of each half term. The educational welfare officer contacts the parents of any pupil whose attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern. However, the poor attendance of this small group of pupils slows their learning and limits their achievement.

46 The school has a positive approach to behaviour through the useful behaviour policy and the comprehensive merit system. All members of staff monitor the behaviour of individuals and present a united approach in dealing with discipline problems when they arise. Pupils and parents know the rules, know what is expected of the pupils and the sanctions and rewards that are applied when necessary. Parents are informed of any instances of inappropriate behaviour, including bullying and racism, which are dealt with promptly.

47 There are good relationships between the pupils, teachers and other adults in the school. The class teachers, when monitoring pupils' personal development rely on this relationship and their knowledge of the pupils to build their self-esteem and to enable all pupils to work together in harmony.

48 The school has limited systems of assessment to monitor the progress of pupils. The school analyses the results of the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science for pupils at the end of Year 6. It uses this data to identify areas for improvement. For example, a dip in mathematics was identified last year and the school has plans to improve teaching for the most able pupils and to target learning for individual pupils more accurately, but these are at an early stage of development and are just beginning to have an impact. At the end of each year, the school tests pupils in English and mathematics, which give teachers a good overview of how well all pupils are achieving. The school is starting to collate test results annually to gain valuable information. For example, the school noticed that in one year group many pupils actually regressed over the year and initiated extra support to teaching staff. However, the school has not adopted any formal assessments to get a picture of progress in any other subjects. Teachers rely solely on their own assessments of pupils' progress and pupils' potential and these are not sufficiently accurate to provide specific targets for individual pupils.

49 The school does not act effectively enough on the results of its formal tests in English and mathematics. The results are certainly used well to determine grouping arrangements by ability for all classes in English and mathematics. Senior staff are now beginning to analyse these results and know where pupils' strengths and weaknesses lie. This good practice is yielding vital data. For example, it was noted that pupils in Year 3 were good at recognising fractions in mathematics but not so good at rounding numbers to the nearest 10. However, the school does not use this data well enough. It does not focus teachers' planning sharply enough to address such weaknesses. For example, there is no attempt to set clear targets for individuals or groups, so that both teachers and pupils are well aware of priorities. This weakness does little to help raise pupils' attainment especially in English, mathematics and science.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50 Most parents are very supportive of the school. The views expressed by parents in the questionnaires were predominately very positive. In particular, almost all agreed that their children

liked school and that the teaching was good. Most parents would feel comfortable in approaching the school with any problems. Some parents identified concerns about the range of outside activities, the amount of homework set and the lack of information about their children's progress. The inspection team disagrees with the parents' views about the range of extra-curricular activities, which is good, and the amount of homework, which is similar to most other primary schools and supports pupils' learning satisfactorily.

51 The quality of the information about the school provided for parents is satisfactory. The school brochure contains all the necessary information. The parents receive basic information through newsletters and correspondence about school events. However, there are several omissions from the Governors' Annual Report. Written annual school reports give the parents sufficient information about the standards that their children have achieved. All the remarks are related to subjects but do not always give details of what their children know, understand and can do or indicate areas and targets for improvement. Parents are invited to two consultation evenings a year.

52 There is a very active Friends Association, which supports the school through social and fund raising events. Last academic year they raised the funding for a Golden Jubilee party. Several parents have attended the family literacy and basic skills programme and are now starting a teaching assistant course. They provide valued help in the classroom and on educational visits. The majority of parents have signed the Home School Agreement and support their children at home by listening to them read and supervising the homework set for them.

53 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are suitably involved and kept informed about their progress and proposed developments. If external advice and support is felt to be necessary parents are invited to discuss their child's difficulties with the support service concerned before any further action is taken. Parents are informed about any particular provision made for their child and are invited to any review meetings held.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54 The head teacher, key staff and governors provide sound leadership. This is similar to the last inspection. The head teacher provides a good lead in setting the school's effective ethos for learning. He gives a clear lead in building the good relationships throughout the school and these support the teaching and learning. All staff are committed to providing a good level of care and support for the pupils. This results in a school where pupils are happy and enjoy the good range of activities that are presented within most subjects. All staff share a commitment to improving pupils' work and behaviour. They work well together to raise pupils' self-esteem.

55 The school development plan (known as the 'Action Plan') has improved and reflects input from subject co-ordinators and sets out a clear agenda for action, incorporating realistic costs, responsibilities, success criteria and time scales. However, there has not been sufficient rigour in ensuring that the action taken to meet the priorities identified in the plan are specific enough to make the needed improvements. For example, standards in English are well below the levels expected by the end of Year 6 and the school has rightly identified the need to improve pupils' writing skills. However, the school has not been thorough enough in investigating the reasons for the previously low standards and so the action plan lacks detail, and is unlikely to succeed quickly.

56 The school has established some sound systems to monitor and evaluate what it does well and to identify areas for improvement but action lacks impetus. The staff analyse test results and other assessment information to set realistic, broad targets for improvement in English and mathematics. The head teacher, senior staff and co-ordinators for English and mathematics have had an opportunity

to check on work in classrooms and to look at the development of literacy and numeracy. However, this has not yet been used to evaluate teaching and learning throughout the school and to identify and share what works well and what needs to be improved.

57 The school currently has a deputy head teacher and assistant head teacher who are not responsible for a particular class. Their skills are used well in working with groups of pupils when they work in sets organised according to ability for English and mathematics. They also each have specific roles in management for pastoral and curriculum matters. Their role in checking on the effectiveness of teaching and learning throughout the school and the impact on pupils' achievement is not developed well enough. The school is fortunate in having the resources to afford non-class based senior staff but these roles are not yet developed well enough to have sufficient impact on improving the school's effectiveness in raising standards.

58 The school has been through a difficult period over the last two years with ten teachers leaving, some for promotion. This has meant that many subject co-ordinators are new to the school. The head teacher, deputy head teacher and assistant head teacher took over the writing of guidance for each subject, with little involvement of the co-ordinators in identifying what is needed in their subjects. This has limited opportunities for them to give specialist guidance to staff on how best to plan from the school, local authority or national guidance. For example, less confident teachers have tended to teach directly from the guidance for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and have not modified this to meet the needs of their classes and so improve standards. Subject co-ordinators work hard to ensure that their subjects are well managed and colleagues are supported. However, they have no opportunities to observe teaching and learning in other classrooms or to work alongside colleagues to influence work in their subjects or to gain an overview of developments.

59 The role of the governors is satisfactory and they work hard to support the school. Governors linked to areas such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs take a keen interest in developments and several governors work in classrooms for instance in the computer suite where they provide very effective support. They have a sound awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work well in committees to support management. The governing body ensures that most statutory requirements are now met but the limited time given to teaching religious education means that the locally agreed syllabus is not taught in sufficient depth.

60 The school has made sound progress since the last inspection in 1997 and all the issues identified for improvement have been resolved. The teachers now group pupils by ability for English and mathematics in order to more closely match the needs of different abilities but staff changes have delayed the planned review of assessment procedures and procedures are still not sufficiently well established and used to ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able. New computers and software in classrooms, the creation of a well-resourced computer suite and well-planned staff training have ensured that the provision for ICT has improved substantially and standards are rising. Standards in English, mathematics and science have declined since the last inspection and are too low even though there have been recent improvements in mathematics and science. The school has established priorities to improve standards in these subjects but has not been rigorous enough in implementing action with sufficient urgency.

61 The school's financial planning is good and specific grants are used appropriately. The governors seek the best value in their expenditure. The school has a substantial surplus in its budget. Some of this is for planned improvements and to protect staffing next year when a dip in the numbers of pupils on roll is forecast. However, the head teacher and governors will need to review this large surplus to ensure that minor gaps in resources are filled.

62 The funding for pupils with special educational needs is managed well and the decision to allocate funding for extra classroom assistants to work with these pupils has enabled them to be supported effectively in class and when withdrawn for extra help. Support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactorily led and managed by the co-ordinator. She liaises with the appropriate teacher in the infants school so that staff are well informed and prepared to meet pupils' needs when they enter school. The co-ordinator offers advice and support to teachers and consults parents and external support services as appropriate.

63 The school is well managed on a day-to-day basis and new technology is used well to support management. The school's administrative staff provide good support to the administration of the school. The parents are rightly pleased with the friendly and helpful way these staff welcome them into the school.

64 The staffing of the school is good. The school has a good number of suitably qualified teachers and the use of the non-class based staff means that when pupils are grouped by ability for English and mathematics the numbers in each set are low. Although there are high numbers of pupils in many classes, the school makes sure that each class benefits from a learning support assistant. Training usually focuses on the school's priorities or on targets identified in the annual review of teachers' performance and those identified in the school development plan. There is a well-managed programme of training for teaching and support staff and this is having a positive effect in some areas. For example, teachers' competence and confidence in ICT have developed significantly and the support staff who work in the computer suite have a high level of expertise. These positive factors are enabling the pupils to achieve well and standards are improving.

65 The school has sound procedures for introducing new staff to the school. The senior teachers who mentor newly qualified teachers are very supportive and offer valuable advice when necessary. Newly qualified teachers benefit from a variety of relevant training throughout their first year. The school is committed to working with Sunderland University to train new teachers and has been successful in being identified as a 'Primary Partnership School'.

66 The school has a good range of accommodation to teach the curriculum effectively. It is well maintained and kept meticulously clean by the caretaker and cleaning staff. Classrooms are suitably furnished and further enhanced through attractive displays. The new computer suite is well equipped and used effectively. There is a large hall and a community room. The large library is now shared with the adjoining infant school but is underused and pupils have few opportunities to practise much needed reading skills. The playgrounds are also well maintained with a range of markings for sports or play activities.

67 On balance the resources to support learning are satisfactory. There are good resources for English, ICT, music, art and design and physical education. The library offers a comprehensive range of good quality books. Resources for the teaching of religious education and resources to support pupils' multicultural education are inadequate. There are insufficient resources in some areas of the curriculum to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68 In order to further improve standards by the end of Year 6 the head teacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Improve standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - providing more planned opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their speaking and listening skills through drama, role-play and discussion in English and other subjects;
 - improving opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects, especially in science, history, geography and religious education;
 - promoting pupils' interest in reading by providing a more structured approach to reading materials for pupils in Years 5 and 6;
 - encouraging pupils to use the library to find information to support their work in all subjects;
 - enabling pupils to be more accurate in mathematics by ensuring that they are taught how to order and set out their work correctly;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to plan and conduct their own investigations and experiments in science.(Paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 20, 21, 29, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 79, 86, 89, 91)

- (2) Improve systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers use the information from day-to-day assessments to plan work that builds more precisely on what pupils have already learned;
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work provides information on what they do well and guidance on how to improve their work.(Paragraphs 4, 7, 23, 48, 77, 83, 84,)

- (3) Improve the leadership of the school by:
 - developing more effective roles for the deputy and assistant head teachers particularly in more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school;
 - developing the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning and developments in their subjects through observing and supporting work in other classes;
 - enabling co-ordinators to have a greater role in drawing up and monitoring policies and schemes of work in their subjects.(Paragraphs 55, 56, 57, 58, 85, 93, 98, 103, 108, 113, 119, 125, 130, 137)

- (4) Ensure that the statutory requirements for religious education are fully met by allocating sufficient time for work to be covered in the required depth.
(Paragraphs 8, 13, 25, 59, 131)

69 In addition to the issues above, the governing body should consider the following less important issues when drawing up its action plan:

1. Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 4 and 5 so that it matches the quality in Years 3 and 6.
(Paragraphs 17, 22, 74, 75, 81, 107)

2. Improve the learning of the small groups of pupils with poor records of attendance by continuing to carefully monitor the effects of repeated absences and sharing this information with parents to show that their children are not doing as well as they could be.
(Paragraphs 16, 45)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	32	35	9	0	0
Percentage	1	7	39	42	11	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	377
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	95

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	97

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	42

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	47	42	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	22	32
	Girls	29	22	34
	Total	55	44	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62% (61%)	49% (72%)	74% (76%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	23	25
	Girls	25	24	24
	Total	46	47	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52% (73%)	53% (67%)	55% (67%)
	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	335	8	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	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	33	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	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	0	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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.0:1
Average class size	29.0

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	231

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	790,752
Total expenditure	808,451
Expenditure per pupil	2,117
Balance brought forward from previous year	111,791
Balance carried forward to next year	94,092

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	377
Number of questionnaires returned	180

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	47	2	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	48	4	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	51	18	3	3
The teaching is good.	53	44	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	48	11	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	36	0	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	48	9	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	50	41	4	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	49	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	46	12	3	9

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

ENGLISH

70 By the age of 11, pupils' attainment is well below national expectations. Pupils have satisfactory listening skills, but their speaking skills are less effective. However, it is their reading and writing, which are especially weak. An encouraging proportion of pupils attain an above average standard but not enough average pupils reach expected standards for their age. This represents a weaker picture compared to the findings of the last inspection. Although standards are keeping up with the national trend over time, they are not being raised enough to become nearer to the national average. Teaching is satisfactory overall but it is not consistently good enough. The quality of teaching in Year 3 gives pupils a positive start but some teaching in Years 4 and 5 is less effective and pupils' progress suffers accordingly. There is good teaching in Year 6 but this comes too late to raise standards quickly enough. Pupils with special educational needs and those who do not have English as their first language learn as well as other pupils.

71 Pupils have satisfactory listening skills by the age of 11. They are mostly attentive in class because they are eager to learn. Pupils understand most new areas of learning clearly because teachers explain and demonstrate them well. Teachers read texts expressively so that pupils concentrate hard and want to understand new ideas and language. For example, in one Year 6 drama lesson, the teacher vividly brought alive the emotions in an extract from *Great Expectations*. As a result, pupils could interpret the feelings of terror in the meeting between Pip and Abel Magwitch. Pupils' concentration, can be weak, partly when teaching is uninspiring and partly because many pupils have a limited vocabulary. This is especially true of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The range of vocabulary and a lack of self-confidence are the main reasons why pupils do not speak well. In many lessons, too many pupils are reluctant to join in discussions and offer suggestions. In a Year 4 class, pupils were unwilling to discuss a character in a story. Where teaching is more dynamic, pupils speak with more confidence. Pupils' diction is not good enough. They often pronounce words casually and prefer colloquial speech. Teachers do not correct this enough and sometimes set bad examples when speaking themselves.

72 Pupils' standard of reading by the age of 11 is well below what is expected for their age. Most pupils read with reasonable fluency and have good enough skills to tackle new words like 'seriously' with confidence. They have some expression but do not really immerse themselves in the style of a story even with dialogue. Pupils do not have a wide range of reading. They tend to read adventure and fantasy stories, and have much less experience in reading non-fiction books for pleasure. As a result, their vocabulary is restricted. Too many pupils have lower than average reading skills, including those with special educational needs. These pupils read with little confidence and not enough expression or fluency, because they often struggle with new words. Higher attaining pupils have better comprehension and a wider vocabulary, which makes them good readers.

73 There is a wide range of ability in writing, but too few pupils are good enough. Pupils generally are comfortable with the mechanics of language, such as sentence structure, grammar, spelling and handwriting. They know how to use different language in different contexts as, for example, when dreaming up evocative words in a poem or factual comments in a book review. They are beginning to use paragraphs and vary the length of sentences for impact. One Year 6 pupil wrote in a story, for dramatic effect, 'In the yard stood Mr Smith.' As with reading, though, too many pupils, including those with special educational needs, do not have enough skill in writing. Their writing is often limited to simple sentences strung together with 'ands' and 'buts' and spelling can be quite weak. On the other hand, higher attaining pupils are capable of some fine language. In some fantasy stories,

pupils showed an evident awareness of writing descriptively for impact when they wrote, 'Its teeth clearly knew the taste of blood', and 'The quietness was killing his ears.'

74 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is not, however, a consistent picture throughout the school. Sometimes, it is very good, at other times unsatisfactory. Teaching is more effective in Years 3 and 6, because teachers provide a better level of challenge. Overall, teachers work well together to plan lessons and this ensures that all pupils receive a similar curriculum in each year group. Teachers introduce topics thoughtfully and their enthusiasm can be infectious. The head teacher's passion for Charles Dickens, for example, has certainly motivated many pupils in Year 6 to want to read some of his classic novels. A lively reading of an extract from Harry Potter gripped the attention of a Year 4 class. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils. They mostly manage pupils' behaviour well and hold their attention. As a result, pupils concentrate well and are often keen to complete the appropriate work. Teachers are quick to praise pupils for their efforts and this benefits pupils' self-esteem. Teachers deploy classroom assistants sensitively to support lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. In the better lessons, teachers make the most of discussions to help pupils develop their skills in speaking and listening, and involve all pupils.

75 Teaching is not always so effective. There is a significant problem in providing pupils with the right level of challenge. Although teachers do record informally how well pupils do in lessons, they do not adapt their planning enough. For example, in one year group, all pupils had to study the same text, an extract from Dickens. This meant a good challenge for higher attaining pupils, quite a struggle for many pupils and an almost impossible task for lower attaining pupils. Pupils in a lower attaining set in Year 5 struggled to comprehend the concept of idiomatic phrases. Sometimes, teachers do not engage the attention of all pupils. They read texts themselves without involving the pupils much and, consequently, pupils' attention dwindles and learning suffers. Frequently, teachers fail to exploit opportunities for speaking and listening in lessons, and so many pupils remain reticent. Teachers are not consistent enough in controlling pupils' behaviour and this can result in disruption to the flow of a lesson. Teachers do not always expect enough from the pupils. They do not, for example, insist that work is completed in good time and offer exciting new work to those who finish efficiently. Teachers do not monitor effectively enough how well pupils are working within groups, so that less motivated pupils are able to do too little work.

76 The school has not done enough to improve standards in English since the last inspection. Although the school has recognised the areas of concern and made them a priority, its efforts have not been consistent or sharply focused enough. There has been a priority to improve the writing of all pupils, but this has not really succeeded. It has managed to raise boys' interest in reading by buying in suitable fiction and non-fiction books. The grouping arrangements across each year are sensible, but teachers do not tailor their teaching enough to meet the needs of all pupils. There has been some useful staff training to improve skills but the monitoring of teaching by senior staff has not been rigorous enough. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to vary.

77 The school does not have good enough systems to assess pupils' progress on a regular basis. Yearly tests show where pupils need help, but the school does not make good use of this information. For example, teachers do not set specific targets for individual pupils and groups, which will help focus their minds on issues of concern, like spelling or punctuation. There is no structured reading scheme in the school to guide pupils through a systematic improvement. Instead, pupils select their own books, which are not always suitable. This is especially detrimental to lower attaining pupils. The curriculum is rather thin. Older pupils benefit from some input of classic literature, but there are not enough interesting influences throughout the school to enrich pupils' language. Teachers do not make the most of other subjects, like history and geography, to enhance pupils' skills in English. Resources are generally good. All pupils have their own dictionaries and there is a good range of books. The library is an impressive but underused resource. Classes rarely visit it for lessons but pupils sometimes use reference books for a project.

MATHEMATICS

78 Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are below those for pupils aged 11; this is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when standards at the end of Year 6 were judged to be similar to that of most 11 year olds. Progress in every year group is below that necessary to maintain the satisfactory standards pupils have achieved when they enter the school at age seven.

79 The school has identified the improvement of teaching and learning in mathematics as a main priority and has introduced a number of changes, some of which are beginning to have a positive effect. For example, pupils are placed in ability groups for mathematics throughout the school and this has allowed the teaching to be better directed at their different needs. In each year group there is a special focus given to pupils who, with a little extra support, could reach the expected levels for their age by the end of Year 6. These pupils are currently being taught in smaller groups to give them more individual attention and therefore more rapid progress. The quality of teaching varies too much with the higher attaining sets being better taught than the lower attaining sets and this is affecting the rate of progress of these pupils. The school is placing a particular emphasis on giving additional support to those pupils close to attaining the expected level but insufficient focus is placed on the average pupils to improve their attainment. This is because the information gained from the regular assessment of pupils' progress is not used well enough to inform teachers' planning or to match work to pupils' needs.

80 Pupils in all year groups cover the whole mathematics curriculum and there is a reasonable balance of activities. The school has analysed pupils' results in national tests and has identified problem solving and mathematical vocabulary as major weaknesses to be addressed. In most lessons seen pupils were required to solve real life problems but most found it difficult to use their mathematical skills and knowledge in this way. Teachers develop mathematical vocabulary in lessons and support this with relevant classroom displays of useful words and phrases. Lessons on 'thinking skills' are beginning to help pupils to organise data and apply appropriate techniques to resolve problems like choosing the best holiday package for a family.

81 Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall, with a few good lessons in most year groups and the best teaching in Years 3 and 6, which encourages pupils to achieve well. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 4 and 5, where teachers' expectations are often too low. This means that progress slows after the good start in Year 3. Work in books is not always as well presented as it should be and answers are not then clear enough. Too much work is not dated and headings to describe the skill or knowledge being acquired are not included to help revision. Teachers do not apply the marking policy consistently enough and pupils are not required to correct their mistakes to demonstrate better learning. Taken together these factors have an adverse effect on learning so that pupils in all year groups do not make the progress they should.

82 Pupils enter Year 3 with average skills and knowledge in mathematics as measured by national tests. They make progress in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum but some of the work is superficial and does not lead to secure learning. For example, they do not measure accurately enough or have a good understanding of money. More able pupils maintain better progress and reach higher than average levels by the end of the year. Year 4 pupils learn about basic shapes such as pentagons, use standard units of measure and develop their skills at solving problems. Some areas of the curriculum such as place value and division are not well developed and progress is slower than necessary throughout the year. Year 5 pupils start at a lower level than expected and learn how to work with more complex problems, use coordinates in one quadrant and do sums like 2,676 divided by 17. More able pupils find the perimeters of regular shapes and solve problems involving timetables. However, work with graphs and handling data is not demanding or thorough enough. Pupils in Year 6

work within the full mathematics curriculum and develop their knowledge and understanding of percentages and fractions in real life problems. For example they work out discounts on holidays or deposits on purchases such as video recorders to establish a 'best buy'. Throughout the school less able pupils are well supported by their teachers and classroom assistants but make less progress than average over time. Overall, the proportion of pupils reaching average or above average levels of attainment is too small for the current Year 6 to match standards attained nationally.

83 Most teachers implement the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily. Many lessons begin with brisk and purposeful mental arithmetic sessions that stimulate pupils and get them in the right mood for learning. This is not always carried forward into the main part of the lessons and, in some classes, a significant minority of pupils lose interest and do not pay sufficient attention so that learning is slow. Pupils are generally quiet in lessons but most show little eagerness to become involved or answer questions. Although teachers are good at sharing what is to be taught and learned during lessons with their pupils, the plenary sessions at the end of lessons do not often result in a proper review of what has actually been learned. Teachers encourage pupils to work together on projects but this is not as successful as it could be because many pupils do not readily learn from other members of the class. Pupils do not have individual targets for learning and so work is sometimes not sufficiently challenging and teachers are not clear enough about their progress and attainment over time. There is no agreed recording system so teachers do not have a clear idea of pupils' progress or attainment against their learning objectives.

84 Although the current focus on improving standards is beginning to have a positive effect pupils still lose ground against standards attained by pupils nationally. The school has strategies to deal with identified general weaknesses but does not have a clear structure to set targets for individual pupils and accurately assess and record progress towards achieving them. Analysis of optional tests clearly demonstrates that pupils do not progress at the necessary speed in any year group and a significant number make virtually no progress at all in some years. Homework is set regularly and shows the importance the school gives to parents supporting their pupils' learning at home as another way of raising standards.

85 The curriculum leader for mathematics has been in post for one year and was formerly responsible for the subject in the adjoining infant school. This is a strength because she understands the foundations laid in the early years that need to be built on during their time in the junior school. Although currently on part-time secondment to the local education authority she has systematically carried out observations of lessons and is beginning to examine planning. Plans to improve teaching for the most able pupils and to target learning for individual pupils more accurately are at an early stage of development. These, together with a sharply focused assessment and recording system are necessary if pupils are to attain the standards of which they are capable.

SCIENCE

86 Standards by the age of 11 are below those expected for this age group and have declined since the last inspection. Difficulties in implementing the curriculum fully, due to frequent staff changes and the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs, largely accounts for the recent dip in standards. However, the school is now putting into place strategies designed to improve the standards pupils achieve.

87 Pupils are beginning to make sound progress as they move through the school. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing their knowledge of materials. In Year 3 they investigate the quality of light shown through different materials and understand properties such as opaque, translucent and transparent. Pupils in Year 4 consider how the heating and cooling of certain materials can lead to

temporary or permanent changes in them. Their understanding is limited however by a lack of opportunity to experiment and observe some of these changes for themselves.

88 In a Year 5 lesson pupils investigated how air resistance slows the speed of falling objects. They enjoyed making and testing parachutes but did not understand the principles of a fair test and the investigations lacked structure. Consequently, opportunities for learning were lost. In studying the body, pupils in Year 6 learn about the functions of the skeleton and major organs. They have an increasing understanding of scientific concepts and what makes a test fair. When investigating the effects of various foods and liquids on teeth, pupils were given the opportunity to plan their own experiments and how they would record the results.

89 Although pupils' knowledge and understanding skills are developing satisfactorily throughout the school, their investigative and experimental skills are not. The school has identified the need to increase the opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, to develop their skills of prediction, enquiry and exploration further through more practical activities and by the provision of extended tasks to challenge the more able pupils. The school's scheme of work in science is based on a series of topics.

90 The school has recently identified a problem of duplication in some age groups and both the policy and schemes of work will be revised this year. The new policy will include assessment procedures to enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress. The action taken to develop these areas has not been sufficiently urgent to have impacted on standards and work to improve the curriculum has not yet improved pupils' opportunities to improve their skills well enough.

91 Teaching overall is satisfactory with some good teaching in Years 3 and 6 where staff plan thoroughly and use resources well. They build on previous learning and use questioning effectively. There was some unsatisfactory teaching in a few lessons in Years 4 and 5 where staff did not develop pupils' investigative skills or encourage pupils to carry out their own experiments. Tasks are often set for the whole class and are therefore often too difficult for the less able pupils and lack challenge for the more able pupils. Although specific scientific vocabulary is taught and simple tables are used to record some work too few opportunities are taken to enhance pupils' literary or numeracy skills in their science work. The use of ICT is underdeveloped.

92 Support staff sometimes work with pupils with special educational needs in science lessons, which enables them to complete work and take part in discussions. Teachers make day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress but the lack of a structured assessment system means that this is not used to plan work that is matched closely enough to pupils' present learning needs. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly although this usually takes the form of a tick or encouraging comment and does not normally include targets for how the pupils can improve their work.

93 The co-ordinator is new to the role but has already begun to devise a plan of improvements needed. She monitors the quality of teachers' planning but has not yet had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning or to have opportunities to improve developments in the curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

94 By the age of 11, pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils have a variety of skills and produce a range of good quality work. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and their enthusiasm succeeds in motivating the pupils.

95 Pupils benefit from a good experience in art and design by the age of 11. They show accuracy when sketching. Pupils in Year 3 drew and cut out effective silhouettes of their profiles in black paper. They know how to sketch outlines of pictures to guide their painting. This was clear in a Year 4 lesson, when pupils produced effective landscapes inspired by a scene from the book 'The Owl Tree'. The broad stippling technique they used produced the right kind of impressionist feel. Pupils have a good eye for detail. Some of their observational drawing is skilful, whether cross-sections of an apple or the gentle curve a flower stem. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 produced some fine examples using pastels and paint to highlight a patch of cheetah's hide or an antelope's eye. Pupils can use a range of media. Those in Years 4 and 6 know how to gently gouge an abstract design on to a lino block to produce a striking pattern when inks are applied. Teachers make some use of major artists to inspire pupils. Pupils in Year 5 showed sensitivity and awareness of colour when reproducing some landscapes in the style of Van Gogh. Pupils know how to use computers to make basic graphics, although this area is not yet well developed. They also work well in three dimensions. Pupils in Year 6 have designed rose plaques made in clay, which are quite effective. In addition, pupils know basic techniques of tapestry and batik.

96 The teaching of art and design is good. Teachers are knowledgeable, enjoy the subject and explain techniques clearly. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and take care to produce worthwhile work. Teachers insist that pupils acquire the right skills. In one Year 4 lesson, the teacher showed pupils how to experiment with mixing primary colours with black or white to find just the right shades to portray the spookiness of a misty swamp. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher demonstrated broad, brush strokes to show how to represent the sweep of the skin of an orange. The pupils were intrigued by such techniques and so learned swiftly. As teachers are positive about the subject, the working atmosphere in classrooms is happy and focused. The positive relationships mean that pupils work efficiently without the need for constant supervision. Teachers further encourage pupils to succeed by praising good efforts and displaying good work prominently on the walls around the school. Teachers benefit from the school's good resources to help give pupils a sense of pride in their work. In a lesson on lino printing in Year 6, the good range of cutting tools and the variety of suitable ink encouraged pupils to take great care.

97 However, teachers do not always prepare pupils enough. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher was not sufficiently aware that pupils could not use scissors very well. Consequently, the resultant frayed ends of string would ultimately blur the simple printing block the pupils were making. Teachers also miss opportunities for enriching pupils' imagination through access to real art, artefacts and sculpture, although they do acquaint them with the work of some major artists. Teachers do not use other subjects enough to broaden the scope of art and design. For example, there is not sufficient evidence of pupils embellishing and illustrating their work in history and geography to reinforce learning.

98 The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and provides good informal support to colleagues. There are no opportunities monitor and support teaching and learning in other classes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99 Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are typical for pupils of their age and are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

100 Year 3 pupils use simple tools and materials such as scissors and card to produce model creatures with mobile, concertina legs. They are taught how to fold paper with reasonable dexterity to produce a desired effect and work with enthusiasm and concentration. However, they are not encouraged to make choices because all necessary materials and tools are already prepared for them. Teachers use praise effectively to encourage higher standards and improve pupils' self-confidence. In

a different Year 3 class pupils learn about hinges and use this knowledge when making amusing folding books. These pupils are challenged to solve practical problems and to adjust their work in the light of developing understanding. The teacher monitors and supports their learning so that they are confident enough to ask questions or try things out. However, teachers in Year 3 do not build sufficiently well on the skills and knowledge pupils developed in the infant school so that projects are not challenging enough for many pupils.

101 Pupils in Year 4 link the subject with literature when they produce tree houses for characters from “The Owl Tree”. They use corrugated card, wood, cardboard and paint to good effect when producing their models and show pride in their finished work. Pupils measure and cut accurately and use techniques like bracing triangles to strengthen the corners of their models. Some use their imagination when adding windows and chimneys to enhance their work. They modify their models for different purposes, for example adding stairs with handrails so that a fictional elderly lady can use the tree house. Year 5 pupils use their knowledge of electrical circuits learned in their science lessons to plan and make simple torches. Pupils do not work together well on this project and prefer to work alone. As a result they argue or ignore each other and do not make good progress. They show weak design skills as when one girl includes 2,000 elastic bands in her list of requirements. By Year 6 pupils have learned how to use a wide range of tools such as coping saws, cramps and vices to make puppets using plywood, card and cloth. They make good use of their puppets to explore dialogue in plays such as ‘Great Expectations’ and add interest to their learning in English. Pupils maintain their positive attitudes to the subject but have still not developed the social skills of co-operation sufficiently.

102 The subject is taught satisfactorily although the skills of design and evaluation are not sufficiently emphasised in any year group. This means that projects do not usually challenge pupils to consider design requirements, modification and improvement of their work. Plenary sessions vary but the opportunity to improve pupils’ ability to evaluate their work is not used well.

103 The design and technology coordinator does not have sufficient opportunities to influence work in the subject. The time allowed to develop the subject is not used for monitoring and supporting teaching or checking on standards. The current policy for the subject has not been updated to include health and safety issues, use of control technology, pneumatic control and aspects of food technology. The use of design and evaluation sheets is not systematic and this hinders more systematic development of the subject throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

104 Standards in geography are typical of most 11 year-old pupils and have been maintained since the last inspection. On balance, teaching is satisfactory, with a few lessons where it is very good and a few that are unsatisfactory. The good teaching in Year 3 ensures that pupils know the cities and towns of the UK, the surrounding seas and the principal rivers. They have undertaken a local traffic survey, plotted accurately their own journey to school and planned road and overseas routes. Teaching is satisfactory in most lessons and by the time they transfer to Year 6, pupils are familiar with the water cycle and know the terminology of a river, having explored the River Wear from its source to its mouth. The well planned visits out of school and the residential visit of Year 5 pupils to Derwent Hill are used well to give pupils practical experience of different localities and how land is used.

105 Where teaching is very good, the teachers’ subject knowledge is secure and they demonstrate concepts enthusiastically with the use of appropriate materials. For example, Year 6 pupils learned effectively through the teacher’s well-planned analysis of a contour map to ascertain the steepest slope. The pupils were taught to realize why it is important to study a map when visibility is

poor, particularly at the top of a mountain. The pupils' thinking was confirmed by an aerial view of the mountain. By the end of Year 6, most pupils know how to use map co-ordinates and O.S. symbols. They accurately interpret aerial photographs and contour maps. Basic facts about weather and climate are learned and pupils have a good understanding of volcanoes and the management of forests.

106 Most pupils make good progress in developing geography skills and in interpreting their surroundings. For example, Year 4 pupils used a travel brochure successfully to ascertain information on Europe. By Year 6 they research a European country of their choice, using an atlas to find its location and the Internet for information on flags and population. Pupils worked independently of the class teacher and talked about their work and how they planned to complete their project. Pupils with special educational needs learn well when they are supported and given an appropriate task, which motivates and helps them participate fully in the lesson. This occurred in a Year 4 lesson on Europe when the teacher instructed these pupils to cut out appropriate pictures from a brochure to match written clues.

107 Attitudes and behaviour are mainly good and only slipped in few lessons in Year 4 where teaching did not match their needs and they lost concentration. Pupils respond with great interest when the class teachers have positive working relationships with them and motivate the most reluctant. For example, in a lesson on urban and country settings in Year 6 the teacher's good introduction gained the interest of all pupils and they concentrated well. The good use of open questions kept pupils listening, thinking and articulating. In many lessons in Years 3 and 6 where teaching is often good and sometimes very good, a prompt start, clear exposition, effective use of time and the use of stimulating materials with appropriate visual aids seizes the pupils' attention and they are totally absorbed. In one such lesson in Year 6, a visitor with specialist knowledge on the importance of map reading for mountaineering was able to capture and sustain pupils' concentration for an hour using maps, overhead projection slides and climbing equipment. However, where teaching was unsatisfactory in a few lessons in Years 4 and 5, teachers did not support well enough pupils' lack of confidence with language and unfamiliar vocabulary and did not provide examples of how geographical terms should be used.

108 The senior staff have compiled a geography policy and scheme of work with satisfactory resources. The newly appointed co-ordinator has begun to monitor teachers' planning to see if the aims for the term are being met in lessons. The co-ordinator has no opportunity to gain an overview of developments in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the current policy. There have been no opportunities to check on the variations in teaching and learning and their impact on standards.

HISTORY

109 Most pupils reach levels in history, which are similar to those, reached by other 11 year olds. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and organize interesting activities. They often use their own experiences and interests well to motivate the pupils and so learning is often good. This was evident in Year 4 where, pupils recalled the Greek myths with enthusiasm. Younger pupils understand that place names indicate the language of their ancestors, for example Chester and Dorchester are Roman, Wragby and Grimthorpe are Viking and Loughborough and Edinburgh are Saxon. They plot chronological time lines to show their own development, to show Henry VIII and his wives and to show the main events in British history from 1930.

110 Planning is thorough and materials such as videos, pictures and artefacts are used well to support pupils' learning. Teachers encourage pupils to prepare for and follow up their lessons at home and are keen to show such contributions. Teachers make good use of ICT and pupils in Year 5 were excited about 'sending' e-mails to the Cairo museum to find information about the life of Tutankhamun and to discover how he died. Most teachers maintain a crisp pace in lessons and this sustains pupils' interest and there is good re-enforcement of learning. Contributions by pupils are always positively used. Teachers' holiday input and display of souvenirs also bring enthusiasm to a project and assist learning. Sometimes, teachers use good opportunities in lessons to stimulate pupils' sense of discovery or appreciation of beauty. In a Year 5 lessons, pupils were astounded to discover that papyrus was made from leaves.

111 Teachers in Year 6 encourage pupils to become independent workers collecting their own data and researching documentary evidence such as birth, death and marriage certificates to compose a detailed bibliography. They use the Internet, Encarta CD, books and videos to collect information on a topic such as Victorian Education. Most pupils understand the difference between primary and secondary sources. Pupils' learning is enhanced effectively through first hand experience of the work of archaeologists through visits such as those to Bede's World and Arbeia roman Fort. By the age of 11, pupils have a sound understanding of many historical facts, know how to collect information and have a firm understanding of chronology.

112 Pupils are enthusiastic about history and behave well when work is challenging and lessons are orderly, well structured and delivered. They appreciate that there may be many reasons why events happened. By Year 6, pupils also appreciate the difficulty of finding clear-cut evidence. In one lesson relating to the possible murder of Tutankhamun, Year 5 pupils were able to argue and state their opinions supported with reasoned evidence. They listened well to each other and are most animated yet respectful in disputing a range of ideas. In another lesson, Year 6 pupils were eager to share milestones in their own personal history and to listen to the experiences of others.

113 The senior staff compiled a policy and scheme of work with satisfactory resources. The library has an excellent history section. The co-ordinator provides sound support to colleagues and monitors teachers' planning to ensure the work identified for each term is taught. The co-ordinator has only been in post a year and was not involved in drawing up the policy. There has been no

opportunity to monitor lessons, assessment or pupils' work in order to gain an overview of how the subject is developing throughout the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114 Standards are at the expected levels by the time pupils are 11 years of age, with a few pupils who attain above average standards. This shows a substantial improvement on those reported in the last inspection. Since then the school has improved provision by establishing a well-resourced computer suite, buying new computers for each class and obtaining a wide range of software. This, together with well-planned training has ensured that teachers are more confident and teaching is mainly good. These factors have enabled the school to raise standards and to ensure that most strands of the ICT curriculum such as controlling devices and modelling are now taught in sufficient depth. The school does not fully develop pupils' ability to use sensing equipment to monitor experiments in science since there is insufficient up-to-date equipment.

115 All pupils have access to the computer suite and this regular development and practise of skills is used well to enable pupils to link their learning to other subjects. Teachers are increasingly identifying these links in their planning. For example, in a well-taught English lesson with the more able Year 3 pupils, the teacher took the lesson in the computer suite. The teacher used a laptop computer linked to an interactive whiteboard to demonstrate to the pupils how best to use their word processing program to write a story using the starting point she had given them. The pupils responded very well and wrote imaginative stories about a magic bottle using language such as 'Out of the bottle came a dragon with hot, fiery flames.' The use of computers gave confidence and there was effective learning as pupils found the correct icon to run 'spell-check' to ensure accuracy. In a Year 4 class, pupils used the Internet to find information on Martin Luther King as part of their religious education topic. Pupils built on their earlier work on ICT to open up websites. They know that there are many sites linked to the topic and the teacher gave useful key words to enable them to access a suitable website. All pupils in the mixed ability class opened the website; the less confident were helped by other pupils or staff and the more able used their skills well to search for information. Most used the headings well to locate what was relevant and quickly printed out the sections they needed. The work was matched well to the different abilities in the class. The pupils appreciated this practical application of ICT to their learning. 'It's a much quicker way to find out a lot of information' was the consensus.

116 Pupils make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6. Older pupils had limited opportunities in previous years to acquire a wide range of skills to match the demands of the curriculum. The teachers have greater confidence and use resources well, which means that any gaps in pupils' learning are being filled and standards are rising steadily. The good balance between the direct teaching of skills and opportunities for pupils to practise enables them to make good gains in their learning. The teachers organise the lessons well and the pace of learning is good. A support assistant is deployed well to work with classes in the computer suite and her very good expertise enables pupils to learn effectively. The school also has a very able ICT technician who uses his expertise very well to support staff and pupils. The benefits of these staff are evident in the way pupils respond and learn.

117 Pupils are very eager to learn and some build well on skills developed at home and share these with those less confident. Pupils now have experience of modelling programs and of using computers to control devices. For example, Year 3 pupils can program a 'Roamer' floor robot to move about and change direction. Older pupils use the 'Logo' program to plot directions and rotate shapes. Pupils use the Internet and CD-ROM confidently to support work across the curriculum. In a good lesson Year 5 pupils learned how to compose e-mails; they used their work in history to good effect to compose e-mails to 'send' to a museum in Cairo to find information about the life and death of Tutankhamun. The school has good procedures to safeguard pupils' use of the Internet.

118 The effective training means that teachers now have greater confidence in promoting a wider range of learning opportunities. They are beginning to actively plan opportunities for using ICT across

the curriculum and to identify a range of opportunities for all abilities. Programs that enable pupils to gain skills in literacy and numeracy are sometimes used to support those with special educational needs. More could be done to ensure teachers regularly plan for these opportunities to be a regular feature in English and mathematics lessons with the pupils in the lower ability groups.

119 The co-ordinator has good expertise and leads the subject well. He has worked with the head teacher to develop the subject since the last inspection. However, he has little time to monitor the work in other classrooms to check on teaching and learning or on how the subject is developing. Since senior staff have produced written guidance for all subjects, with little involvement of the co-ordinators, the lack of these opportunities mean there are too few opportunities to identify future priorities. For example, opportunities for pupils to use sensing equipment to monitor experiments in science are limited by the lack of up-to-date equipment. Other resources for ICT are good and enable pupils to enjoy a wide range of experiences and as a result they are making good progress.

MUSIC

120 Standards in music have remained broadly the same since the last inspection. Pupils achieve similar levels to those expected of 11 year olds. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

121 Opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills, knowledge and appreciation occur both in the planned curriculum and in the daily life of the school. In assemblies, music is played as the pupils enter and leave the hall and pupils are encouraged to sit and listen. Pupils join in singing in assemblies and sing their favourite hymns and songs sweetly and accurately, but often with a lack of vigour. However, during one-whole school session, led by the new co-ordinator for music, pupils sang with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils are encouraged to use actions to enhance the meaning of words. As a group, pupils refine and adjust their singing as they become more familiar with new words and tunes.

122 Teaching and learning are satisfactory although not all teachers allocate sufficient time for pupils to create, develop and process their own musical ideas through to a conclusion in order to produce their own, unique compositions. Teachers use appropriate activities to enable pupils to learn how music can create particular moods and effects. For example, pupils in Year 5 considered how the musical elements of pitch, dynamics and tempo could be used to create different effects. Pupils used the words 'calming', 'relaxing' and 'romantic' after listening to and reflecting on the song 'Lady in Red'. In Year 6 pupils explored musical scales and sang in the correct pitch and time. They created short sequences of notes for others to follow and record. Most pupils were able to evaluate their own performance and that of others.

123 The subject contributes well to the development of pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills when learning and singing the words to new songs. Pupils have opportunities to practise their drama skills during musical productions such as 'Oliver' and 'Joseph' and in the annual Christmas celebrations.

124 Resources are at least satisfactory with a good range of musical instruments including several keyboards for pupils to use. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their musical skills in the choir and recorder group. In addition, visiting groups of musicians to the school enhance pupils' musical experiences. Links with the community are fostered when the school choir sings at the local residential home for the elderly. The Christmas production is also performed for various community groups.

125 The co-ordinator is new to the post but has already begun to make an action plan to enhance the curriculum and extend the musical traditions in the school. As yet there is no formal assessment of pupils' progress or opportunities for her to monitor teaching and learning in order to check on the effectiveness of new initiatives in the curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126 During the inspection it was only possible to observe dance, gymnastics and games skills. Discussions with the co-ordinator, other staff and pupils, plus the examination of documents and teachers' records demonstrate that all strands of the physical education curriculum are taught according to the season. From this, and lessons seen it is evident that by the age of 11, pupils attain standards that match the levels expected for their age, with a few pupils who achieve well. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The school provides extra-curricular football and netball plus opportunities for football coaching from staff at Sunderland F.C. Pupils have opportunities to take part in events with other schools and teams are often successful in matches. For example, the school's rugby team has represented Sunderland. After school clubs are well attended and older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit where they enjoy outdoor activities such as orienteering, abseiling and canoeing. Non-swimmers in Year 6 are taught to swim and by the time they transfer to secondary school most pupils can swim at least 25 metres using a recognisable stroke. The school also benefits from sporting opportunities provided through links with a local EAZ. Specialist staff, funded by the EAZ, work in the school to teach dance and gymnastics.

127 Teaching is at least satisfactory throughout the school with good teaching in a few lessons. In a well-taught games lesson in Year 6, the teacher planned a vigorous warm up that ensured that the pupils joined in enthusiastically. Clear instructions ensured that pupils knew what was expected and the teacher intervened well to present greater challenges that gave the lessons a brisk pace. The pupils responded very well as they practised netball skills and learned to stop quickly, pivot and direct the ball to a partner. The teacher effectively demonstrated different ways of passing the ball and reinforced the need for 'keeping your eyes on the ball' so that pupils refined the accuracy of their chest passes. The teacher's good subject expertise ensured that pupils understood how the skills could be applied to the formal game.

128 The teaching by staff funded through the EAZ initiative is very good and enables pupils to gain confidence and to achieve well in dance and gymnastics. They work for a half term with different year groups and school staff can then build upon their work. In a very good dance lesson taught by an EAZ specialist teacher, Year 3 pupils built on skills learned in previous lessons to create dance sequences on the theme 'Space'. The teacher's very effective demonstration enabled pupils to match their movements to the music with increasing confidence. They learned quickly as they refined different steps and movements to create individual and group 'virus' shapes. The teacher's excellent subject expertise resulted in a very well planned sequence of lessons that ensured very good learning. The teacher's enthusiasm was a key in motivating all pupils and they were totally involved and listened well to instructions. They showed good control for their age and the teacher's excellent briefing reminded them of the movements they had practised individually and how these could be transferred to a group shape. The excellent choice of music motivated and inspired the pupils who responded very well as they worked together to use their bodies to show the nucleus and tendrils of their space 'virus'. Pupils behaved well because they were so interested that they did not want to waste a minute! This effectively planned and very well taught unit of work enabled pupils to achieve well and attain good standards for their age.

129 Pupils' games skills are built on throughout Years 3 to 6 and they attain satisfactory standards for their age. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise a wide range of ball skills and apply them to formal games of football and netball. Many of the pupils tend to be out of school clubs and participate in coaching sessions organised by the school; they apply the expertise they have gained to improving their performance in games lessons.

130 Most teachers have sound subject expertise and benefit from sharing dance and gymnastics lessons with the EAZ specialist staff. Lessons are planned carefully and take account of national and other guidance introduced by the co-ordinator. The leadership of physical education is good and the co-ordinator is developing useful links with the receiver secondary school and a local sports college. Although she has analysed teachers' planning there have been no opportunities for her to visit lessons in other classes to observe practice or work alongside colleagues to develop the curriculum. She has a good understanding of the subject and works with colleagues and outside agencies to develop the range of activities available. For example, she has led the school's successful bid to receive the 'Active Mark' award in physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131 The school spends too little time each week on teaching religious education. This time allocation is well below that recommended in the agreed syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. With such a low time allocation the school is unable to provide the depth of study required and pupils' knowledge and experience are therefore restricted. This means that standards are below those expected for pupils by the end of Year 6. Standards are below those reported at the last inspection. A lot of content from the agreed syllabus has been introduced but not developed and work selected has always matched the syllabus. The school has chosen to teach Hinduism and not Buddhism or Judaism.

132 Pupils know that Christmas is the festival of Christ's birth and have visited an Anglican and a Roman Catholic Church. However, there was uncertainty about Easter and pupils were not confident about Christ's baptism or the Ten Commandments. They also needed much prompting to describe the daily work of an Anglican vicar and did not mention the role in Communion or visiting the sick and old, even though this work had been touched on. Most pupils know the meaning of Christ's teaching through the stories of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. They talked enthusiastically about assemblies conducted by the incumbent of a local church. They have a good recall of these parables through her work in these assemblies. They have also rewritten a parable using the characters of Bart Simpson and Nelson. They also study briefly the life of Martin Luther King and in Year 5, used the Internet appropriately to find information on this modern example of how faith has affected people's lives.

133 By Year 6 pupils know some characteristics of Islam and are familiar with the name of Guru Nanak but most have never visited a mosque or a Gurdwara. Younger pupils label the features inside and outside a church and use accurately terms such as font, aisle, nave and pews. Pupils also relate emotionally to 'Faith' stories and show empathy with the victim or disadvantaged. For example, in a well taught lesson about Christ and the Samaritan woman the teacher systematically worked through the stages of the encounter so that pupils appreciated each subtle change of mood and were able to articulate feelings with suitable vocabulary. Pupils learned and began to use correctly words such as 'dehydrated', 'apprehensive', 'exhausted', 'hypothesise' and 'speculate'.

134 Attitudes to religious education are mainly good. Pupils are interested in this subject and listen attentively to instruction from the teacher and suggestions from other pupils. They justify their choices and ideas and are keen to engage in activities. Contributions by Muslim pupils to demonstrate washing rituals, the need for silence, prayer and use of prayer mats enhanced lessons on Islam and raised their self-esteem and standing with their peer group. Other pupils concentrated particularly well and were sympathetic on these occasions. Pupils are proud to show their work and to read out their own writing.

135 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, sometimes good or very good and occasionally excellent. In the best practice, teachers share their aims with the pupils, provide effective materials and question and motivate pupils towards deeper thinking and originality. Technical language is used repeatedly and pupils assimilate new vocabulary. Teaching was most effective in Year 6 when pupils were encouraged to speak extensively in answer to open questions and when the teacher used subject vocabulary to summarise ideas. This enabled pupils to copy the teacher's example.

136 Assembly themes contribute to religious education both in theme and spirit. Pupils hear Bible stories such as the parable of the talents and experience the respect and love of the larger school family. The school also uses the assembly to communicate the need to care for others and pupils participate in money-raising projects for charity.

137 After a difficult year of staff changes the management of religious education has very recently been taken over by a new member of staff. She has just begun to audit resources and to consider planning. The library holds excellent book resources for this subject but there are too few artefacts, pictures, software and videos to enable pupils to gain maximum benefits in their learning and to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus.