

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PULLOXHILL LOWER SCHOOL**

Pulloxhill, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109501

Headteacher: Mrs D Thomas

Reporting inspector: Mr S Hill  
21277

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 246915

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fieldside Road Pulloxhill Bedford
Postcode:	MK45 5HN
Telephone number:	01525 713150
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Roscoe
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21277	Steve Hill	Registered inspector	English, Science, Design and Technology, Information and Communication Technology, Art and Design, Physical Education, Educational Inclusion	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements, How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9056	Val Cain	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22254	Hazel Callaghan	Team inspector	Mathematics, Geography, History, Foundation Stage, Religious Education, Music, Special Educational Needs,	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small school that caters for 61 boys and girls aged from four to nine. About half come from the village of Pulloxhill, and the rest from other villages in the surrounding area. All pupils have English as their mother tongue, and almost all are of white, United Kingdom heritage. The overall social circumstances of pupils' families are better than average, with no pupils currently entitled to free school meals. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school covers a wide range, and varies from year to year because of different levels of special needs in the small cohorts. Overall attainment on entry is average. The number of pupils currently identified as having special educational needs is below average. Since the last inspection there have been major staffing changes, particularly in the foundation stage. In the last year, the school has entered into a federation with a school in the next village, and the two schools now share a headteacher.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and improving school, where pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Pupils behave well, enjoy school and form very positive relationships. The headteacher provides very good leadership to an effective team. The school is well managed and provides good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- By the time pupils leave they attain above-average standards in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and art.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development.
- The school is well led and managed.
- The school works very well in partnership with parents.
- Assessment systems are used well to promote pupils' learning.
- Attendance is very good.

#### What could be improved

- Provision could be better in the foundation stage.
- Library provision could be better.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1997, the improvement has been good, particularly in the last two years. Standards have risen, and the quality of teaching is better. The key issues identified then have been addressed successfully. Written work has improved, and is more extensive. Assessment and its use have been improved, and are now good. Teaching and learning in design and technology have improved. A number of other areas, such as the provision for cultural education, have also improved.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	B	A*	A*
writing	C	A	A*	A*
mathematics	A	A	B	C

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

A\* means that standards were in the top 5% nationally.

Children enter the foundation stage aged four with broadly average standards. They make satisfactory progress and many will attain the nationally recommended standards (the early learning goals) by the time they start in Year 1.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils are making good progress. Standards currently are average in English and mathematics by the age of seven. Overall standards in Year 2 are not as high as last years' national test results would indicate. This is because the current cohort has more pupils with special educational needs than last years'. Standards in mathematics now match those in English because of improvements the school has made in the curriculum. Standards for seven-year-olds are good in geography and history, and are satisfactory in most other subjects.

By the age of nine, standards are good in English, mathematics, science, art, history and geography. In most other subjects, standards are satisfactory. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus at the ages of seven and nine. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards in music at either key stage.

Overall, pupils' achievement during their time in the school is good.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. They join in lessons with enthusiasm and are keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils' behaviour improves as they get older, and is often very good by the time they are nine.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and with adults in the school. They develop independence well, and often show initiative.
Attendance	Very good. Punctuality is good, and lessons start on time. All this supports pupils' good achievement.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 4</b>
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall, including in English and mathematics. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Relationships with pupils are positive throughout the school.

From Years 1 to 4, planning is good. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and share this with them. This means that pupils are clear about what they are doing and make good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, so explanations to pupils are clear and they learn effectively. Expectations are high and pupils are managed well; a positive, relaxed working atmosphere prevails in lessons. Lessons have a good pace and time is used well, so pupils make good gains in their knowledge in the time available. Pupils' motivation and enthusiasm are developed well through a range of interesting activities. All pupils are catered for well, whatever their ability, because work is carefully matched to their different needs, based on a careful assessment of their attainment.

Planning is weaker at the foundation stage, where assessment is not used sufficiently well to provide the

right level of challenge for different children. As a result, children too often have work that is either too hard for them, or too easy. Management of children is also weaker, and not enough attention is given to developing their listening skills.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Good provision is made for links between different subjects. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school's "Values Education" programme is a significant factor in the high standards achieved. Pupils also benefit considerably from the programme for personal, social and health education, and say they particularly enjoy "circle time", when they discuss a variety of issues together.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of pastoral care provided for all pupils is very good. Assessment procedures are generally good, and are used well to support pupils' learning. There are weaknesses in assessment procedures in the foundation stage.

The school works very effectively in partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very clear leadership to the staff team and has been responsible for significant improvements since her appointment. The role of subject co-ordinators is being developed well, but the impact of their work has not yet been fully felt.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They provide good strategic direction to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is clear identification of strengths and weaknesses, and effective action is taken to make improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Learning resources, accommodation and the provision of staffing are satisfactory overall. There is a need for better library provision in both accommodation and books. The resources of the school are used effectively to support pupils' achievements, and the principles of "best value" are used well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Children are expected to try their best.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The provision of homework.</li> <li>• Information about how children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive judgements. Homework is of good quality, and the range of extra-curricular activities is good for a lower school. Information about how children are getting on is very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils' achievement during their time in the school is good, because of the good teaching they receive. Boys and girls, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, and pupils with a range of abilities all make similarly good progress overall. Their good achievement is confirmed by the high results that the school has obtained in national assessments over several years at the end of Year 2 and, more recently, in standardised assessments at the end of Year 4. Currently, all pupils from Years 1 to 4 are making good progress and achieving well. In the reception and nursery class they make sound progress. Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection, particularly in writing and in design and technology.
2. Children enter the foundation stage aged four with broadly average standards. They make satisfactory progress and many will attain the nationally recommended standards (the early learning goals) by the time they start in Year 1, although a significant minority are currently falling short of this. Their progress is no better than satisfactory, because of limitations in how work is planned for children of different ages and abilities.
3. Although cohorts are small, with resultant fluctuations from year to year, results of national tests at age seven show good and improving results over time. Each year, a considerable number of pupils generally get to the higher-than-expected level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. Last year, all eight pupils got to the expected level 2. However, mathematics results were weaker than those in reading and writing. While above average compared to all schools, mathematics scores were only average compared to similar schools, while reading and writing were in the top 5% nationally.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards are average in English and mathematics by the age of seven. Overall standards in Year 2 at the moment are not as high as recent national test results would indicate. This is because the current cohort has more pupils with special educational needs than last years'. In addition, this group has had a somewhat disrupted time since it started at the school, with many staffing changes. Now that the situation is more settled, they are achieving well because of consistent good teaching. Standards in mathematics now match those in English, because of improvements the school has made in the curriculum. Standards for seven-year olds are good in geography and history, and are satisfactory in most other subjects.
5. Results of nationally standardised tests for Year 4 show that the pupils who were nine in 2001 had made insufficient gains in their understanding since they were seven. This was quickly identified by the headteacher when she took up post, as were the specific limitations in the progress of pupils who struggled with their work. Improvements were made to teaching and provision and, as a result, the pupils who were nine in 2002 made considerably greater progress, and had made better than average gains in their scores by the time they left. Particularly good progress had been made in reading, and writing, and sound progress in mathematics.
6. Inspection evidence confirms that, by the age of nine, standards are now good in English, mathematics, science, art, history and geography. In most other subjects, standards are satisfactory.
7. Throughout the school, the good progress which pupils are currently making in science is supported well by the good range of opportunities they have to undertake practical work and to plan investigations. This gives a firm foundation to their scientific understanding, and ensures that they remember what they are taught.

8. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus at the ages of seven and nine. Pupils have a secure understanding of different aspects of Christianity and some other faiths, and have a good understanding of the importance of religious belief in people's everyday lives.
9. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards in music at either key stage, although singing standards are clearly good.
10. Pupils' reading skills are good throughout the school and this stands them in good stead in their work in other subjects. They are able to access information readily from books and read instructions or worksheets with confidence. They are less secure in using the library, because of limited practice. Their writing skills improve steadily, are good by the age of nine, and they are used well for a range of writing across the curriculum. Pupils' speaking and listening skills, after a shaky start in the foundation stage, develop very well. This enables them to discuss their ideas effectively, and strongly supports their learning in all lessons, as well as developing their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils have a secure grasp of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and use them effectively to support their learning in other subjects.
11. In the school at the moment, a below-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and no pupils have a statement of educational need. Of those pupils who do have identified difficulties, mostly their needs are linked to their progress in learning in English and mathematics, although a few also have personal and emotional difficulties that slow their progress. Pupils are usually taught with the general class lessons and make satisfactory progress towards their individual learning targets.

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

12. Children really enjoy coming to school. In the foundation stage the youngest children settle in quickly and move happily about their tasks. The older children in the reception class participate well in their free-choice activities. From the start of school, children feel supported, welcomed and safe. They develop good relationships with their teacher and nursery nurse.
13. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their lessons are very positive and have been successfully maintained since the previous inspection. They come to school cheerfully and participate well in all activities. The atmosphere of the school supports these very good attitudes, as teachers show respect and encouragement for individual effort. Children are happy to discuss what they do, and instigate suitable conversations with adults, demonstrating interest but remaining polite. Older pupils are curious and questioning, wanting to know more about the world around them.
14. Pupils work well together in small groups and pairs, helping each other as in the computer suite, where one pupil said, 'I'll help you'. Older pupils are developing good skills of negotiation and collaboration as was seen in their preparations for presenting the argument for re-cycling in the school to the headteacher and the Chair of Governors.
15. Pupils' behaviour, both in class and around school, has remained good since the previous inspection. Pupils are particularly well behaved in assemblies and in the corridors when coming in from play. Their conduct during lunchtimes is also good. Older pupils show care and a good sense of responsibility as they act as table monitors at lunchtimes, often helping the younger pupils. Pupils respond well to class rules and the rewards system in the school. Pupils with special educational needs have similar attitudes and behaviour to their peers. They listen well in lessons, try hard to answer questions and participate in whole-class sessions. On the very few occasions when pupils are less well behaved, it has very little impact on the concentration or work of those around them. The youngest children in the foundation stage do not always sufficiently attend and listen to the teacher and the other children when they speak, but they usually work well together sharing equipment and toys. All pupils show growing self-esteem and confidence when their

contributions to lessons are sought and valued. There have been no exclusions for bad behaviour.

16. Playtimes are always pleasant affairs. Pupils play happily together, making good use of space and the games and toys provided. The Values Programme is having a significant impact on pupils' behaviour and consideration of one another's feelings. Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Consequently pupils of all ages and ethnic groups get on well. There was no evidence of any bullying or oppressive behaviour during the inspection. Pupils take good care of the school environment and treat the school animals with respect.
17. The very good relationships, established between all adults and children, underpin the quality of teaching and are reflected in the respect that pupils show for each other. They listen avidly to their friends during assembly, and are keen to hear more. They applaud other pupils' efforts and show great interest in how they have gained the coveted Headteacher's Award. There is a well-structured system for pupils of all ages to take responsibility, which they enjoy and carry out reliably and with enthusiasm. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 show good levels of initiative in their work and in promoting the general happy life of the school.
18. Levels of attendance are very good and remain above the national average. There are no unauthorised absences. Punctuality to school is very good and lessons start on time. This, together with the high levels of attendance, clearly has a positive effect on learning and attainment.

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

19. Teaching and learning are good overall, being satisfactory at the foundation stage, and good in other year groups. Examples of good teaching were observed in every class. During the inspection, most lessons in the foundation stage were sound. In the other classes, about two-thirds of the lessons observed were good, and one lesson in the oldest class was very good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen in the foundation stage class. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
20. Relationships with pupils are positive throughout the school. This is a major strength, which supports pupils' very good personal development as well as their good achievement. Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils and make these clear, so that behaviour is good. They present pupils with good role models, treating them with kindness and respect. Pupils respond very positively; they like their teachers and are keen to please them so they work hard and behave well. Teachers are very good at involving pupils in lessons and in reacting positively to their suggestions. As a result, pupils join in with enthusiasm and often take the initiative. They make suggestions about directions their work could take, and show a lively curiosity about a whole range of ideas. They are keen to contribute ideas, and can talk fluently about their work.
21. In most classes, adults are very good at establishing expectations about listening, so that pupils attend carefully to staff and to their classmates, treating their contributions with respect. However, in the foundation stage class, expectations are often not made clear enough, or sufficiently reinforced. Although children are not badly behaved, too many do not listen sufficiently carefully when the teacher is giving instructions, so that they get the wrong end of the stick and time is wasted in telling them what to do again. They are not good at listening and responding to other children in formal situations, and too often ignore them, chatting among themselves or becoming distracted by items in the classroom. This means that their listening skills do not develop well enough.
22. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, so explanations to pupils are clear and they learn effectively. This is particularly true in literacy and numeracy, where skills are taught well and are used effectively to support work in other subjects. Good use is made of specific expertise, such as the use of a specialist to contribute to music lessons, or the use of the headteacher's expertise in drama to develop the skills of the oldest pupils. The contributions of a classroom assistant, who has considerable expertise in ICT, contributes well to pupils' learning in this subject.



23. From Years 1 to 4, planning is good. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and share this with them. This means that pupils are clear about what they are doing and make good progress. Teachers provide an interesting range of things for pupils to do, including practical work in science, and good opportunities to use computers in a range of subjects. This results in high levels of motivation and considerable enthusiasm from pupils. Teachers are very good at linking different subjects together in a meaningful way, so that pupils' understanding of them is enhanced. For example, good use is made of their numerical skills and their speaking and listening skills in geography, as was seen in a very good lesson during the inspection. In drama lessons, for example, pupils develop their physical skills as well as their skills in English. Planning is weaker at the foundation stage, and insufficient attention is paid to the different ages of children, and the different lengths of time they have been in school.
24. In Years 1 to 4, good use is made of teachers' assessments of how well pupils are doing. All pupils are catered for well, whatever their ability, because work is carefully matched to their different needs. Pupils who find work easy are often given more difficult things to do, so that they are challenged to make further progress, rather than "coasting". Pupils who struggle with their work are given easier things to do, or are given extra help to enable them to succeed, so that they are not left floundering. Conversely, at the foundation stage, assessment is not used sufficiently well to provide the right level of challenge for different children. As a result, children too often have work that is either too hard for them, or too easy.
25. Marking of pupils' work is variable, although it is always done conscientiously, and is often very encouraging for pupils. There are some very good examples, particularly in mathematics and English, when teachers explain clearly to pupils in which aspects of their work they have succeeded, and where they need to improve to be even better. In other cases, however, marking simply acknowledges pupils' success, without helping them see how they could repeat it or build upon it.
26. Pupils with special educational needs also receive the good teaching identified in Years 1-4. It stimulates their interest and enthusiasm for learning so they want to do well. Pupils are usually taught with the general class lessons and make satisfactory progress towards their individual learning targets. Those pupils identified on the special educational needs register as requiring support at School Action Plus sometimes have additional withdrawal sessions with a learning support assistant. They generally make satisfactory progress according to the level of need.

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

27. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress. This is an improvement on the curriculum provided at the previous inspection when planning had weaknesses, especially in design and technology. The curriculum for children in the youngest class is appropriately based on the recommended six areas of learning for children in the foundation stage. The school successfully provides the appropriate coverage of all the required National Curriculum subjects and for the teaching of religious education according to the locally Agreed Syllabus.
28. A particular strength of the curricular provision is the way in which subjects are effectively linked together so that lessons are more meaningful and the pupils' interest and motivation are stimulated. The school has a good strategy for improving pupils' literacy skills. Teachers actively promote pupils' speaking skills in discussions and debates. Their reading skills are used well when doing research. Pupils' writing skills are now used in many subjects and more effectively developed than was seen at the previous inspection. Pupils are encouraged to write at length, to explain what they have learnt and to use this information in imaginative accounts, such as how they were caught up in the Great Fire of London. The school's strategy for developing pupils' numeracy skills is also good and effective use is made of them in a variety of subjects, particularly

in geography, science and design and technology. Similarly good opportunities are made for pupils to use and further develop their computer skills in many subjects. Research, using the Internet is frequently promoted, as is the use of word processing programs to present pupils' writing. Data, collected in science lessons and in mathematics, are presented on a variety of computer-generated graphs.

29. The well planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is used well. Pupils' health education and understanding of how to keep safe developed well in science and PSHE lessons. The school makes effective use of the Local Education Authority "Life Bus" that visits the school to promote pupils' understanding of the use and misuse of drugs. Sex education is not taught as the governors consider the children to be too young for formal lessons in this aspect, but pupils' questions are sensitively answered as and when they occur. Many opportunities are provided to promote pupils' independence, initiative and sense of responsibility so that, by Year 4, pupils are curious, questioning and eager to find out more. The school successfully fulfils its aim to set the pupils on the path to "life long learning".
30. All pupils, whatever their ability and ethnic background, are well supported and encouraged to do their best. There are only a few pupils in the school with special educational needs but their needs are appropriately identified and individual educational plans are provided to guide the provision of suitable activities and levels of support.
31. The curricular experiences provided for all pupils, whatever their ability or ethnic background, are very relevant to their needs. There are only a few pupils with special education needs, but targets for their individual learning are well focused and reviewed regularly. Teachers encourage all pupils who exhibit special gifts and talents and satisfactorily provide opportunities for their further development. Pupils have equal opportunities for learning across the curriculum, but sometimes opportunities are curtailed in one area to serve another. For example, pupils attending a support programme of work in mathematics sometimes miss the school daily act of worship and the opportunity to receive certificates in front of the school. Similarly those who receive violin instruction miss half of the weekly lesson on PSHE.
32. Boys and girls of all abilities in Years 1 to 4 are encouraged to develop their interests and skills through a good variety of clubs and out of school activities provided by the teachers at Pulloxhill, their partner school at Greenfield, by parents and other organisations. The clubs enhance pupils' sporting and musical skills, and the French club, open to all pupils, further enhances the range of learning opportunities provided. Older pupils confirmed that they enjoyed the variety of after school clubs that include French, unihoc, football, netball, violin, recorders and choir. The majority of pupils take part in at least one of these activities. Other good opportunities for learning are visits that are regularly planned to further pupils' knowledge through first-hand experiences. Visitors are also welcomed into the school to share their knowledge and experiences with the pupils. The range of learning opportunities is good and has improved since the setting up of the Federation.
33. The local area is used well as a learning resource for geography and history, and for sketching in art. Pupils enthusiastically take part in charity and fundraising events. The school is the focal point for the May Fayre that is a truly village and community event with excellent support. Good links exist with the nearby school, parish council, local people and Church.
34. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, because of the consistent application of the newly introduced 'Values Education Programme'. It successfully underpins the school ethos of promoting pupils' confidence, self esteem and respect for one another.
35. The Values Programme is used very effectively to promote pupils' spiritual development. In assemblies, religious education and PSHE lessons, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they feel and to consider how people's beliefs influence their actions. Pupils learn to be introspective

- and they confidently reflect on their experiences and the actions of others. All staff promote pupils' awareness of the beauty of the world around them. The site manager, who plays an important part in promoting pupils' enjoyment of school, regularly takes time during playtimes to point out the changes in the seasons and delight in things around them. Similarly, teachers encourage pupils to appreciate the gifts of composers and artists.
36. Pupils' moral and social development is also very good and very well promoted through the Values Programme. Pupils effectively consider themes, such as peace, happiness, thoughtfulness and respect. Through stories in assemblies and further discussion in 'circle time' and PSHE lessons, pupils gain a good understanding of how to live together in harmony. They successfully consider the impact of their actions on those around them and think about how they can positively improve the life of others. In a PSHE lesson in the Year 3 and 4 class, for example, the teacher successfully led the discussion about emotions. Pupils had clear understanding of how a range of negative feelings were created and thought of many positive methods to improve them. During the inspection, the school was considering the value of co-operation. A very effective and humorous demonstration in assembly of how the friends of a sick man needed to work together to lower him down through the roof of a house to meet Jesus, had a significant impact. Pupils are given many opportunities to co-operate with each in pairs and groups, for example to produce joint work. Pupils in Year 4 are also now joining pupils in the partner school for residential visits to France.
37. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The good opportunities to learn about and to participate in local traditions and festivals, such as the May Fayre, are still firmly in place. Visits to the theatre and visitors to school, as well as lessons, successfully promote pupils' awareness of music, art, drama and stories from around the world. The school has improved its provision for promoting pupils' multi-cultural education. In religious education pupils have dressed in costumes from Islamic countries, and learnt about different festivals and religious traditions of Islam. In geography, studies of villages in Mexico and India have also stimulated pupils' knowledge and questions. Children in the foundation stage have enjoyed preparing and eating a Chinese meal. Much fun was had as they tried their hand at using chopsticks. Pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class have made links with schools in Australia and recently with a family in Egypt. These activities are an effective preparation for pupils' life in a multi-cultural society.

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

38. The quality of care provided for all pupils is a clear strength of the school. Pupils feel safe and secure and are confident in approaching staff for help. Parents, both at the meeting and through questionnaires, confirmed that they value the support given to their children and consider it a very positive aspect of the school.
39. The monitoring and promotion of attendance is very good. Parents quickly inform of absences. There is no unauthorised absence and no truancy. There have been no exclusions. Registrations take place twice daily before morning and afternoon sessions. They are prompt and efficient with pupils aware of the routines. A major factor in pupils' very good attendance is their enjoyment of school.
40. The standard of behaviour is generally good because procedures to promote it are good. There is a comprehensive behaviour policy, and class rules have been agreed by pupils. The themed assemblies and Values programme re-enforce high standards. Pupils are fully aware of the need to behave well and do so. Rewards are keenly sought and sanctions known. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly. Good lunchtime supervision is in place with staff well trained. Pupils interviewed were very happy and enjoyed their friendships. Staff know their pupils' needs well and effectively monitor personal development on an informed basis. Whole-class discussions during "Circle Time" are used well to discuss issues, and rewards are given for good behaviour and adherence to the values taught.

41. Staff are vigilant and an effective child protection programme is in place to handle issues should they arise. Good use is made of professional agencies for their advice. The site is clean and tidy and there are no significant health and safety risks. Regular fire drills and electrical equipment checks take place. Pupils' medical needs are met well through trained First Aiders, with parents contacted if there are concerns. There is a very comprehensive PHSE and Values programme in place to enhance personal development. Transition arrangements to the next school are good and pupils feel confident transferring.
42. Satisfactory support and guidance are given to pupils identified as having special educational needs. Those with personal and emotional difficulties are given good levels of care and helped to settle well in the school so that their learning progresses as well as possible. The needs of those pupils identified on the special educational needs register as School Action Plus are identified appropriately by outside agencies and effective guidance is given to the school in devising appropriate levels of support.
43. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Data from assessments are used well to evaluate the work of the school and to monitor the achievement of individual pupils and groups of pupils. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There is a clear and comprehensive plan, which guides the timing of a wide range of assessments and evaluations across the curriculum.
44. The use of this information is not as strong in the foundation stage as it is in the rest of the school. Shortly after children are admitted to school, their attainment is assessed using the local education authority procedures. This helps to establish areas of strengths and weakness, but not enough use is made of the information to establish targets for children's future learning. Informal observations are made to identify children's progress and these are satisfactorily recorded on pupils' individual profiles and reported to parents each term. The information is not sufficiently used, however, to plan activities that build on what children already know so as to ensure they make good progress. Notes are made of which children complete certain tasks and activities, but there is no process to ensure that all children have an opportunity of completing the activity at the level appropriate to their needs.
45. There are effective procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 4. Teachers regularly evaluate pupils' understanding and development in reading, spelling and knowledge of letter sounds. Each term, pupils' writing is judged against National Curriculum levels so that their writing progress is monitored. These assessments are monitored by the assessment co-ordinator, who ensures that teachers' judgements are secure and weaknesses across the school are recognised and addressed. In mathematics and science, assessments are made at the end of units of work to ensure key areas of learning are understood. Weaknesses are identified and, where there is a general concern, elements of the work are revisited.
46. The school uses data from baseline assessments, from National Curriculum tests in Year 2, and from optional tests in Years 3 and 4, to establish how well pupils are making progress in English and mathematics. This is used effectively to identify pupils who are underachieving. Their work is analysed and support is provided where required. Targets are set for all pupils in English and mathematics and shared with them and their parents, so that home and school are working together to help the pupils succeed. Pupils with special educational needs are successfully identified and individual educational plans are appropriately written. The pupils' work is suitably monitored and regular reviews are held with parent to discuss their progress and future targets.
47. Test papers in English and mathematics are analysed to identify any general areas of weakness and strategies developed to address these concerns. In mathematics, for example, it was recognised that there were comparatively fewer pupils attaining the higher standard of Level 3 than in similar schools. The school is now looking at strategies for promoting the learning of the potentially higher attaining pupils.

48. In most other subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills are assessed against the areas being taught. Those pupils who are doing particularly well, and those who need extra help, are identified so that future work is planned to meet their different needs. The information gathered is also used effectively to adapt curricular planning. Efficient and effective assessment procedures and the successful use of the information acquired have had a significant impact on raising standards.

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

49. Parents' and carers' views of the school are generally positive. The school has been through an unsettled period in terms of staffing, and parents at the meeting made this clear. Parents are particularly pleased that their children like school, are making good progress, are expected to try their best, behave well, and that teaching is good. They believe that the school is well led and managed. The inspection team agrees with these views. Some parents would like to see improvements in the range of activities outside lessons, the provision of homework and in information about how children are getting on. The inspection team's judgements are that homework is of good quality and supports learning well. The range of extra-curricular activities is good for a lower school and reports to parents are very informative. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress. Strengths and weaknesses are explained and individual targets given for future development.
50. The school strives hard to involve parents in their children's learning. The quality of information provided is very good. Letters are clear, friendly and encourage participation; they detail events and give useful information throughout the year. The Governors' Annual Report to parents is comprehensive and now complies with requirements. The prospectus is clear, and has been updated, but does not include a statement on special needs provision, which is a legal requirement.
51. The school has an effective "open door policy" and parents confirm that staff are very approachable and many praise the new headteacher. Parents were seen chatting informally to staff. A range of meetings give parents useful information. The parents' meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms are very well attended. Additionally, information on national assessment procedures and topics are given with a workshop on general information. New parents are invited to school prior to their children starting so that good relationships can be made right from the start. Parents are invited to discuss reports in the Summer term. Parental views are sought through questionnaires, so that the school can respond to any concerns.
52. Parents clearly support their children's work at home. This includes reading, spelling, English and Maths, with project work given to older pupils. Several parents help in school with the library, art and games. Additionally many have helped with redecoration and installation of the new playground equipment.
53. A very successful Friends' Association hosts a range of both social and fundraising events that are extremely well supported. The May Fayre is a community event with the whole village involved. Monies raised by the Friends' Association are used to purchase extra resources such as play equipment, books, blinds, games equipment thus benefiting all pupils.
54. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and involved in the assessment of their children's needs. Parents are invited to the termly reviews of pupils' progress. Their opinions are sought and targets identified on the individual educational plans are shared with parents so that home and school work together to help the child succeed. The work of the home and school together supports the progress of these pupils effectively.

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

55. The school is now led and managed well after a period of great uncertainty and considerable change since the last inspection. None of the teaching staff currently at the school worked here then, and there have been many comings and going of teachers over the last two or three years. Both parents and governors are full of praise for the contribution of the site manager, who provided a constant element of stability for children during this time. This has helped to maintain the very positive ethos and strong pastoral care, which were features at the time of the last inspection, and remain positive features now.

56. After a period with an acting headteacher, the Local Authority asked the head of a school in a nearby village to “look after” Pulloxhill, as well as continuing to run her own school. After advertising to appoint a permanent headteacher, the governing body was unable to find suitable applicants. Following on extensive debate, and with considerable help from the Local Authority, the governors of the two schools, Pulloxhill and Greenfield, agreed to form a federation. This is now in place, and the two schools share a headteacher, who is officially in Pulloxhill for two days each week, and in Greenfield (a bigger school) for the other three. This development is proving very successful, and parents at the pre-inspection meeting, who said that initially they were very dubious about the arrangement, are now full of praise for its effectiveness.
57. The headteacher is providing very clear leadership to the school, and has quickly formed an effective team of staff who are now working together well for the benefit of the pupils. The school is now good at evaluating its own strengths and weaknesses and taking action to address the latter. A number of issues of concern identified by the Local Authority or the previous acting headteacher have been dealt with well. Others issues have been identified by the head herself, and are being addressed effectively. The many issues successfully tackled include the quality of planning, the weak provision for pupils with special needs, the weak provision of religious education, staff expertise in ICT and standards in design and technology. All have improved, and this is confirmed by records of the monitoring of the school by the Local Authority, as well as by comparison with the last report. Since the new head has been appointed, and the considerable improvements made, the Local Authority have removed the school from its list of those giving rise to concern. Since the last inspection, despite the turmoil the school has experienced in staffing, and the introduction of a new version of the national curriculum, a new foundation stage curriculum, and the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies, the improvement has been good. In particular, standards have been improved, as has the quality of teaching.
58. The school’s good analysis of its areas for development and its effective work to make improvements are exemplified by the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Management of this provision is now satisfactory. The headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) in both of the partnership schools and this is a significant burden. However, soon after taking up post at Pulloxhill, she identified that the provision for pupils with special educational needs was unsatisfactory and had significantly declined from that reported at the previous inspection. There was no register of pupils needing support or records of pupils’ individual needs. Analysis of the National Curriculum tests showed that the achievement of pupils with special educational needs was poor because their needs had not been appropriately identified and consequently support was not provided. This has been improved and pupils now receive support and appropriate tasks to enable them to make steady progress towards their individual targets. There are plans to further improve the provision for special educational needs through the training of additional personnel.
59. At the time of the last inspection, subject leaders played little part in the school’s management. This is now better, is satisfactory, and is continuing to improve. The co-ordinators for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are providing effective leadership and are managing their areas well. They are clear about the strengths and weaknesses within each subject, and work well with colleagues to improve provision. An innovative system has been introduced within the federation so that, in other subjects, staff are taking responsibility for co-ordinating the subjects across both schools. This is in its infancy and its impact is not yet clear, but it has the potential to make a considerable contribution to provision in the next few years. Staff are starting to get a grip on the standards in the different subjects, and to get some idea of what to do next. There are clear plans to make time available to enable them to function more effectively in this new and challenging role, and to share the expertise of a much wider number of teachers than is usually available to such a small school.

60. The governors are doing a good job, contribute well to the clear strategic direction in the work of the school, and have a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They played a considerable part in establishing the good quality of education now provided, and the good leadership and management in the school, through “grasping the nettle” in setting up the federation, and in sensitively supporting its implementation. They have good systems to monitor the work of the school, and are appropriately involved in the management of finances and the school development plan.
61. Financial management is good. Decisions are taken by carefully balancing the school’s educational priorities against the finances available. The relatively high contingency fund of just over 8% is carefully judged to help pay for new building and to ensure that separate key stage classes can be maintained despite minor budget fluctuations. The last auditors’ report said systems were satisfactory and since then the school has addressed all the major issues identified, and others are being addressed. The school uses the principles of best value well. Very careful analysis of pupils’ progress is undertaken and action taken to address any shortcomings. Costings are average compared with those of other similar schools in the authority, and care is taken to ensure that the best price is obtained when making major purchases. The school is starting to use the increased buying power of the federation, for example in getting a better price for replacement windows when both schools needed this upgrade. Consultation with parents is effective, for example in setting up the federation. This was done very sensitively, so that despite initial misgivings, most are now convinced “converts”. Consultation with pupils is currently at an informal level, but there are plans afoot to establish a school council, which will put this on a more formal basis.
62. Resources are generally satisfactory, although there is a need for more non-fiction books in the library, and the foundation class needs a greater range of construction equipment, and more multicultural toys and equipment.
63. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and is used well. The school and site are extremely clean and well maintained by a very effective and enthusiastic site manager. Classrooms are adequate for the number of pupils on roll and there is a hall that is used for assemblies, dining and PE. There is now a safe and secure area for the youngest children. Good displays add interest and celebrate pupils’ work. The grounds are pleasant and spacious with hard surfaces, a well equipped play area, grassy areas, an environmental area and a swimming pool that is used in the Summer term. However, the hall’s small size and limited headroom restrict provision for gymnastics, particularly for older pupils. Other space is restricted. The staffroom has to be used for the small computer suite, and sometimes serves as a base for small groups. The library is in a small corridor, which limits its use. There is nowhere for staff to hold confidential discussions with parents, without disrupting other aspects of the school’s work. The limited space is managed well, however. It is vastly to the credit of staff that they work hard to ensure that all these limitations have minimal impact on pupils’ standards. The school plans to obtain a mobile classroom, and this expansion will enable it to provide better space for the library and the computer suite.
64. Staffing is adequate for the size of the school, and good use is made of staff expertise by combining talents across the federation, for example by using the sports expertise of a classroom assistant from Greenfield to support games lessons. The process of performance management is well established, considering the major staff turnover in the last two years. Targets for development are linked effectively both to the school’s priorities and to the individual professional development of teachers. The governing bodies of both schools are involved in setting targets for the headteacher.
65. The school’s costs per pupil are high compared to national figures, but for schools of a similar size in the Local Authority they are somewhat below average. In view of pupils’ good achievement and behaviour, the good quality of education, particularly teaching, the good and improving management, and the very good provision for pupils’ personal development, the school gives good value for money.



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

In order to build upon the current good provision the school should, in line with its current priorities:-

1. Improve provision in the foundation stage (paragraphs 66 – 76) by
  - a. Using the information from assessment to ensure that work is more closely matched to the different needs of different pupils.
  - b. Being more consistent in establishing and reinforcing expectations about children’s listening skills.
  - c. Ensuring that “free choice” activities give children more specific challenges.
  
2. Improve provision in the library (paragraphs 63. 79) by
  - a. Providing a better space, utilising the increased space which is due to be available when a new mobile classroom is installed.
  - b. Buying a better and wider range of non-fiction books, so pupils can undertake meaningful research in the library.
  - c. Providing specific lessons to teach pupils how to use the library.

The governors should also consider including two more minor issues, also identified already by the school, in their action plan.

1. Make sure that the quality of marking is more consistent, by building on the good practice which already exists in some classes and subjects. (paragraph 25)
  
2. Continue to develop the role of the subject co-ordinators (paragraph 59) by
  - a. Making sure they have adequate time to monitor the standards in their subjects systematically.
  - b. Using their expertise to lead colleagues in improving practice in the light of any issues identified in “a” above.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		1	13	12	1		
Percentage		4	48	44	4		

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

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

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	4	56
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	7

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

The table giving details of pupils' national curriculum assessment results in 2002 is not included, because the numbers are low and might lead to the identification of individual pupils.

*Ethnic background of pupils*

*Exclusions in the last school year*

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	59	0	0
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	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YN – 4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.14
Average class size	20

**Education support staff: YN – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

**Financial information**

Financial year	2002 - 3
	£
Total income	187640
Total expenditure	181158
Expenditure per pupil	3031
Balance brought forward from previous year	8431
Balance carried forward to next year	14913

Separate staffing details are not given for the small number of nursery children, as these are fully integrated into the reception class.

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
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	56
Number of questionnaires returned	40

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72.5	27.5	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57.5	37.5	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	30	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	37.5	15	2.5	10
The teaching is good.	60	32.5	2.5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	50	15	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	15	10	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	27.5	2.5	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	47.5	32.5	20	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	12.5	7.5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62.5	27.5	7.5	2.5	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	40	20	7.5	2.5

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

66. Children are admitted into the school in the term after their fourth birthday. Only a small number start school each term and they exhibit a wide range of knowledge and skills. At the time of the inspection there were fourteen children in the foundation stage class; five children in the nursery year group and nine in the reception group. Each year the proportion of children with above-average attainment and those with special needs fluctuates. This year the balance within the reception class is similar to that found nationally.
67. Most children have already spent some time at a local playgroup or nursery and they have developed good social skills. Children settle very quickly into the class routines and adapt to new activities well. During the foundation stage children make satisfactory progress in their learning and most are able to attain the expected levels, the early learning goals, in all areas of learning.

#### Teaching

68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. After many recent changes there is now a stable staff that is developing an improving learning environment for these young children. The teacher and nursery nurse quickly establish good relationships with the children and promote their good levels of confidence and independence. The activities provided are planned satisfactorily to follow the recommended foundation stage curriculum and effective use is made of the secure outside area to extend the learning opportunities. Each day teacher-focused activities appropriately introduce children to identified skills and knowledge. Other activities provided tend to be free choice opportunities, which lack targets for children to explore. This limits the potential progress of the older children. Children's attainment is identified appropriately using the local education authority's early baseline assessment and suitable observations are made through the year to monitor children's progress. The information gained, however, is not sufficiently used to ensure that activities provided build securely on what children already know and can do, and so children do not always achieve as well as they might.

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

69. Children make steady progress in developing their personal and social skills owing to the sound teaching in this aspect of their learning. Children are given good opportunities to make their own choices and to develop knowledge and skills through their own free play. Staff provide a variety of opportunities for children to explore and investigate. This is good provision for the youngest children, but the older children are not yet being given opportunities to plan their work and to develop strategies for organising tasks to a given target or expectation. Most children enter school with good social skills and continue to work and play together well, sharing equipment and toys sensibly. They make good relationships with adults around them, even the youngest happily asking for help when required. Most children have developed sustained levels of concentration when working at their chosen activities but the youngest show less persistence when working at teacher directed tasks. When going outside, even the youngest are able to find their coats and many put these on with little or no help. The children join the rest of the school each day for assembly. Most do so with confidence and show good awareness of the routines. Self-confidence and self-esteem are further nurtured by the positive approach from all the adults in the school, praising children consistently when they have done something well or when they are kind. All children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year and many are of a higher standard.

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

70. Many children start school with above average levels of speaking skills. Effective opportunities are provided for them to speak in front of the class and most do so confidently. Many children confidently use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary to express their ideas. Their listening skills are, however, less well developed and many children find it difficult to listen quietly and with good attention to their teacher or to the other children in class sessions such as 'Show and Tell'. This is because adults do not sufficiently encourage children to listen when others are speaking, and consequently some children often appear rude and show a lack of respect for other's ideas.
71. Regular opportunities are provided for children to share books with an adult and for children to read and enjoy books each day. Children handle books with care and enjoy listening to their favourite stories in lessons and assemblies. There is a good focus on the teaching of letter sounds. By the time the children are in reception, they are beginning to read some familiar words and most have learnt the letter sounds. They use this knowledge in their attempts to write and to help them recognise words. When writing, the higher attaining children have a suitable pencil grip and write their names and some simple words for themselves, forming most letters correctly. Most children show an interest in writing and enjoy making lists and writing notes at the writing table. This term, more emphasis is to be given to preparing children for more extended periods of directed activities similar to those that they will meet in Year 1. As yet there is not sufficient focus on ensuring that the older and higher attaining children are developing more sustained concentration and the skills and knowledge expected. Most children are close to attaining the early learning goals in reading and writing and have the potential to do so if the increased pace and teaching activities are implemented.

### **Mathematical development**

72. Most children start with average attainment in mathematical development. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but the work set is often for the whole class to attempt and, consequently, not always appropriate for individual children's needs. Older children and the higher attaining children are often required to complete work that lacks challenge and does not sufficiently extend what they already know and can do. They make good progress in counting and recognition of numbers. Most days the children participate in counting games which increase their ability to recite numbers up to 30 and for older and higher attaining children to develop a satisfactory ability to order numbers correctly.
73. Children in the nursery group are not yet able to order toys according to their size, but this is well understood by most children in the reception group. Children develop a satisfactory understanding of mathematical language. They correctly use terms such as larger, smaller, taller and shorter. Simple practical activities help children understand the concept of heavier and lighter. By the end of the reception year, most children recognise simple regular shapes and understand the concept of "how many altogether?" Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall and many children attain the expected levels.

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

74. Many children have good awareness of the world around them and talk about what they know with confidence. The children were learning about pets during the inspection and many understood what was necessary for their pets to be happy and healthy. They discussed how different animals need different foods and could compare different animals in the school, using simple comparisons of size and colour. Teaching in this aspect is sound and children's interest and curiosity are satisfactorily stimulated. Children have regular use of the computer to play games that support their learning and to draw pictures using an art program. Displays of their work show good control of the mouse to draw images. The activities help the children to develop specific skills as well as giving them the freedom to use their imagination to make their own pictures. Activities satisfactorily promote children's awareness of other cultures, but there is a lack of resources to develop children's awareness of other ethnic groups, such as pictures, a variety of dolls and of

costumes to use in the role-play area. There is a rather limited range of construction equipment in the classroom, but children enjoyed building hutches, cages and beds for their pets, having a sound awareness of the pet's size and needs. A pet shop was set up in the role-play area and children in both the nursery and reception groups showed enjoyment looking after the toy animals and playing shopkeeper. By the end of reception, most children attain the levels expected.

### **Physical development**

75. When the children start school, they run and jump with satisfactory levels of control and move safely when outside at play. Teaching is satisfactory and children continue to make steady progress in this area of learning and attain the expected levels by the end of the reception year. There is a small range of wheeled toys to help them improve and practise their skills. They have regular opportunities to throw, kick and catch a range of balls in the outside area. It is a little small for them to gain practise in a meaningful way and so specific lessons are used so they make effective progress in developing hand-eye co-ordination. Lessons are also provided to promote children's balance and control using the school gymnastics equipment. Movement and dance sessions give additional opportunities to develop children's imagination and spacial awareness, but the sessions are not always used well to promote children's range of movements and their physical response to music. The children regularly take part in making, drawing and painting activities and these help to develop their skills to a satisfactory level. They use scissors, pens and pencils with satisfactory control.

### **Creative development**

76. Children start school with average creative development. They make satisfactory progress overall although, because activities are often too adult-directed, the children are not given enough opportunity to use their imagination. Resources are readily available and children are encouraged to use them in their free play activities. Paints are often already mixed so, although the children are learning how to use a paintbrush and explore with a different medium for making pictures, they are not learning the necessary skills of mixing colours. There was very little of children's individual artistic work on display. Most of the work seen was in response to an adult directed task. In music activities, children use untuned instruments appropriately and enjoy singing songs and rhymes, using actions to help them recall the words. By the end of the reception year, most children are attaining the levels expected.

## **ENGLISH**

77. Standards in English are generally above average, and this is shown by consistently good scores in national assessments at age seven. However, current standards are average at the age of seven and above average at the age of nine. Seven-year-olds' attainment is good in reading, and in speaking and listening, but is only average in writing. Nine-year-olds attain good standards in all aspects of the subject. The relatively weaker standards of the current Year 2 pupils are partly due to the disruption this group have had during their time in the school, and partly because there are more pupils than usual with special needs in the group. The class is now much more settled and, like all pupils in Years 1 to 4, these pupils are making good progress because of good teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were generally average. Writing, in particular, has improved.
78. At both key stages speaking and listening skills are good, and are very good by Year 4. Pupils throughout the age groups are encouraged to contribute their ideas and to answer questions in class sessions. Because teachers value their contributions, while insisting that they try to express their ideas clearly, they make good progress. Pupils listen well because of teachers' clear expectations. This was seen in a good lesson when Year 1 pupils listened carefully to a story about a dragon. As a result, they were able to undertake the writing task that followed on from it

with confidence. Their skills are fostered well by a series of tasks requiring them to collaborate, such as when Year 2 pupils worked together to write the ending to a story. Pupils' confidence in speaking aloud to a group was demonstrated when the oldest class made a presentation to the head and chair of governors about the need for the school to be involved in recycling. This was done very skilfully. Significant contributions are made to pupils' listening skills in a range of subjects when they work collaboratively, but particularly in drama. In a good lesson with Year 4 pupils, they made very good progress in their speaking and listening skills when they had to work together in groups to organise a performance. They discussed ideas sensibly, listening to each other and taking on board each other's ideas, before arriving at a conclusion. Boys and girls worked together amicably, with everyone contributing to the work, being taken seriously by their classmates, and being prepared to compromise when necessary.

79. Reading skills are good throughout the school. Phonic skills are taught systematically and well. This helps pupils to tackle unknown words with confidence and accuracy. In the younger class, even those pupils who struggle with reading have a good knowledge of single sounds, and can work out regular words that are not within their sight vocabulary. Almost all pupils enjoy reading and do so fluently and with good expression for their ages. Their good reading skills support them in their work in other subjects, where they are able to tackle research tasks with confidence, and to read instructions on worksheets capably. By Year 4, virtually all the group are reading at the expected level, and a good proportion do better than this. Using their very good phonic skills, they coped well with Roald Dahl's complicated made-up words in "The BFG". Using non-fiction books, they are able to use the index and contents pages to find particular information. They know what a glossary is, and can use one effectively. About half of them have good scanning skills, and can find a specific piece of information on a page quickly without reading all of it. Most of the class can read a short passage silently, and give an account of the main points, although a few pupils need to read this aloud to themselves to fully understand it. A weakness is in pupils' skills in finding books in the library. This is because the inadequate space in which it is housed, and the lack of a good range of books, mean that teachers seldom make use of it, and pupils do not have much practice.
80. Writing skills are developed effectively. Standards are satisfactory for seven year olds, and are good by the time pupils are nine. Most pupils in Year 2 are reaching the expected standard. Average pupils can write in a range of styles, although their use of vocabulary can be mundane. They make good use of their phonic skills in spelling, although the results are not always accurate (writing "appel", "enybody", and "uncul" for example). Punctuation skills are good, and they use full stops and capitals accurately, and are starting to use speech-marks and commas appropriately. They write in fluent, legible handwriting, and usually join their letters. A few pupils still struggle to get to the expected standard. They struggle with spelling of even simple words, and are just starting to use full stops and commas accurately. Their letters are generally clearly formed, but there are occasional reversals, of "S", for example. They struggle to write a series of sentences in a coherent account. A few pupils are attaining above the expected standard. Their writing is well structured, imaginative and clear, and their spelling is good, for example "disappear" and "anything". Punctuation is used well, although a few still do not usually join their handwriting.
81. At Year 4, pupils' writing skills are good. Almost all attain the expected standard, and a significant proportion exceed it. Several pupils are already at the standard expected of Year 6 pupils. The vast majority of pupils produce writing that is structured and clear in a range of styles, using the main features of story, poetry and factual writing to an appropriate standard. Most write in a fluent, joined handwriting. Spelling is average, and some pupils tend to make careless mistakes with common words. Punctuation is used accurately. Even the weakest pupils in the group are gaining the expected standards in most elements of writing, although one or two lack fluency in writing quickly, which might depress their scores in any test situation. The higher attaining pupils produce writing that is lively and thoughtful, and often imaginative. One girl, describing the Virgin Mary from the donkey's viewpoint wrote "a beautiful woman (quite chubby)". Grammatically complex structures are used well and pupils' ideas are developed logically in stories. Factual

writing, such as that about spiders and tarantulas, is clear and well organised. Pupils' best work includes the accurate use of paragraphs, and spelling skills are good, as is punctuation, including the consistent, accurate use of speech-marks and exclamation marks.

82. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. The literacy strategy is used well to plan work, and teachers' subject knowledge is good. Pupils work hard and behave well because of the good relationships they have with their teachers, and their interest in the tasks they are given. Work is carefully prepared to meet the different needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. In the younger class, different work is prepared for the Year 1 and 2 pupils and good use is made of the skilled support staff to teach different groups. Within each year group, tasks are also chosen differently, so that the writing demands are less on the pupils in Year 1 who struggle, than on those who are more fluent, for example. Good ideas are used to engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm, such as the puppet that joined Year 2 pupils in developing its phonic skills. They tried hard to help it, were keen to give their ideas on the different ways of writing the long "A" phoneme. (a\_e, ai, ay,) and confidently explained this. Marking is variable, but is particularly good in the oldest class, where written comments make clear to pupils which aspects of their work are successful, and how they can improve.
83. The subject is well managed by the headteacher, and she gives very good leadership to colleagues in their teaching. Samples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils give her a clear view of how pupils are doing, as does a careful analysis of test and task results at the ages of seven and nine. Significant changes in practice, such as sharing with pupils what they are intended to learn in each lesson, have helped to improve achievement. She has correctly identified that improvements in the library and the need to make marking more consistent are suitable current priorities, having helped colleagues to improve achievement in writing. She introduced the regular drama sessions for older pupils, which are contributing well to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Resources are satisfactory, except that there is a need for more non-fiction books in the library, as well as a better space to house it.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Standards in mathematics have risen significantly over the last three years and pupils in Year 2 usually attain standards that are above those found nationally. The range of abilities in each year group changes from year-to-year and currently there are fewer pupils capable of attaining these above average standards. In addition, this group had an unsettled experience of school, with many staff changes, until their current teacher took over the class. Consequently, standards seen during the inspection were more in line with those expected in Year 2. Pupils in Year 4, however, were achieving well and standards are above average.
85. The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 to 4 and this results in pupils' good learning and improved standards. Teachers effectively plan their lessons and provide activities that are well matched to pupils' needs so they build on previous learning. Teachers assess pupils' work satisfactorily and give good levels of feedback, so that pupils understand what they need to do in order to improve. Targets are set for their progress and are shared with the pupils and their parents, so home and school are working effectively together. Teachers are effective in stimulating pupils' interest and making learning fun, so that they show good levels of concentration and attention. Pupils with special educational needs do not achieve as much as other pupils, but they are provided with satisfactory support and they usually try hard to succeed. They make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets and in line with their abilities. Higher attaining pupils achieve well, but the school has identified the need to promote the learning of the potentially higher attaining pupils through more problem solving activities so that standards continue to rise.
86. The mental quick-thinking oral sessions introducing each numeracy lesson are usually well taught and appropriately paced, with teachers using a variety of methods to keep pupils alert and

interested. The strategies that pupils use to find their answers are often discussed, so that the class explores different ways to achieve the correct answer. In Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils know that many numbers have the same factors and, in a simple game, stood up as they recognised multiples of their number. The teacher had effectively divided the class into groups according to their knowledge so they focused on the 2, 3, 5, 10 or 6 times tables. Similarly, by Year 4, pupils have developed a good understanding of the many links between numbers and use them to help them solve calculations. In a lesson observed, for example, they confidently looked for different ways to partition numbers to make subtraction questions easier for them to manage. The higher attaining pupils confidently worked with numbers over 1000. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons are also used effectively to reinforce learning and as a quick assessment of how pupils have understood the work.

87. The curriculum for mathematics is planned appropriately following the National Numeracy Strategy. Information and communication technology is used effectively to motivate pupils and make learning fun. Mathematics is also used effectively in other subjects, so that pupils successfully use and develop what they know. Data handling, for example, is used effectively in science to record information. In the Year 1-2 class, pupils collected and recorded information about favourite crisps. In the Year 3-4 class, pupils presented their data using computer-generated graphs, exploring which type of graph was the most useful to the task. In geography, pupils in the Years 3-4 class used their knowledge of mass to estimate and measure the amount of waste paper that was created in the school in one week.
88. The subject is well led and managed. There are effective procedures used across Years 1 to 4 to assess and monitor standards of individual pupils and whole year groups. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work to ensure appropriate progress and observes teaching so that weaknesses are identified and support is given. There have been significant changes in the staff over the last three years. The co-ordinator monitored teaching last year and aims to repeat the process again this year, providing support where it is required. Test papers are analysed to identify areas of weakness and strategies developed to address these concerns. For example, it was recognised that last year there were comparatively fewer pupils attaining the higher standard of Level 3 than in similar schools. The school is now looking at strategies for promoting the learning of the potentially higher attaining pupils, such as the introduction of a lunchtime Maths Club. It was also recognised that problem solving was the weakest element and this aspect is now taught every week in the oldest class. The school continues to work effectively towards raising standards further and ensuring all pupils, irrespective of the ability, gender or ethnicity, make good progress.

## SCIENCE

89. Standards in science are in line with expectations at the age of seven, and are above expectations by the age of nine. This is an improvement for older pupils since the last inspection.
90. National test results generally have shown above-average standards at age seven, but the current Year 2 group includes a larger number of pupils with special educational needs than is usual, and they have suffered somewhat from disruption over the last couple of years. Work in their books shows they are now making good progress, particularly in the development of their practical skills. They have tackled a good range of topics and their written accounts show a sound understanding of sound and light, of living things, and of change in materials, such as ice melting and water freezing. Although virtually all pupils, including the least able, show work which matches the expectations, there is little indication in their books of work that exceeds this level, and all pupils seem to have tackled the same tasks, at least in terms of recording their work. In the lesson observed during the inspection, pupils made good progress, and showed a good understanding of the parts of a flowering plant. They knew that plants need water to grow, and that they need sunlight, although they were unclear why.

91. Pupils in Year 4 are attaining good standards. Almost all get to the expected level, and a significant number exceed it. They have covered a good range of work, and know, for example, about criteria for differentiating between living and non-living things, and about the properties of different materials, such as thermal insulators and conductors. Most can explain clearly why particular materials are suited to particular purposes. They understand the principle of a fair test, and brighter pupils can explain this very clearly. They can design on suitable methods to investigate the absorbency of paper, for example. They can make predictions based on their scientific understanding, and present their observations in graphs and tables.
92. Teaching is good at both key stages. A significant strength is the use of practical and investigative work to support pupils' understanding. Lessons are managed well, and pupils are encouraged to contribute thoughtfully to discussions, through challenging questioning. Pupils' own ideas are used well, so they are confident in offering suggestions. During the inspection, one lesson was seen in each of the older classes. There was a good lesson in the Year 1-2 class, and a satisfactory lesson in the Year 3-4 class. The good points above were all present in the latter lesson, but on this occasion the teacher tended to over-simplify some of the issues about the suitability of habitats for different animals, and how habitats changed. This meant that, although all pupils made sound progress, brighter pupils were not challenged to go beyond this by considering more complex issues. Pupils understood that different animals were suited to specific environments, and could give a wide range of examples, but were unclear about why, for example, desert rats were suited to hot, dry conditions. Work in pupils' books makes it clear that this is not usually the case, and that pupils are making good progress because of good teaching.
93. Pupils enjoy science, and work hard in lessons. They undertake practical work sensibly, and work together amicably in groups on collaborative tasks. They concentrate well, listen carefully to the teacher, and settle quickly to work. When occasionally the odd younger pupil is silly, this is dealt with well by the teacher, and other pupils do not allow themselves to be distracted.
94. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The skilled teacher who is the co-ordinator has a wide range of other responsibilities, including assessment and ICT, and these have taken up the majority of her time in the year she has been in the school. This was a sensible decision in view of the good standards, which standardised assessments showed were in place in science, and the weaknesses elsewhere. She has a sound understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses in the subject, through informal monitoring. She has not yet had the chance to monitor standards in any more systematic way, although this is planned for later in the year.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

95. Standards are in line with national expectations in Year 2, and above expectations in Year 4. This is an improvement in standards at Year 4 since the last inspection.
96. No lessons were seen at Year 2, but work in pupils' folders shows generally sound standards. All pupils have done a variety of three-dimensional work using card, fabric, thread and straws. Some satisfactory work was done on a variety of textures, using black and white, and all had attempted portraits in a range of different media, using crayon, pencil and paints, and using an ICT package. This was all of the standard expected of pupils of this age, with one exception. One pupil in the sample of work seen is clearly a talented artist. His portraits were of particularly good quality, being lively, carefully executed, and showing very good control of the medium. They were of the standard normally to be expected of more able Year 4 pupils.
97. The work done in Year 4 is of a consistently good quality. They have produced some good quality, unusual self-portraits using cut-up photographs of themselves (from the digital camera), combined with crayon. The results are of high quality, showing care in completion, and imagination in design. They have also done some unusual print work of good quality, printing in shades of blue and white,

on a black background, using designs on polystyrene. The layered prints produced show a subtle use of colour and an unusual variety of different effects. Both the photograph portraits and the printwork are of a good quality from all pupils.

98. The standard of pupils' work indicates that teaching is good. This was confirmed by the one lesson seen, which featured good teaching and learning, with the pupils in Years 3 and 4. They produced designs for a chair for a particular person, based on the observation of a number of unusual chairs which had been brought in. This lesson was one in a carefully structured series to develop the design aspects of the subject. Good questioning by the teacher got pupils to think through their ideas and to offer suggestions. Good attention was drawn to the form and function of the chairs, and pupils were successfully encouraged to consider the advantages and limitations of different styles and materials. When they drew designs for their own chairs, some working with a graphics package on the computer, they showed care and imagination, and the finished results were of a good standard. Pupils were enthusiastic, behaved very well, and took great pains to produce work to the best standard they could. Their designs were imaginative, and showed creativity as well as that they had listened carefully to their teacher.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. Standards meet expectations at the ages of seven and nine. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but samples of pupils' work were of a sound standard.
100. Pupils in Year 2 have undertaken two main projects during the year. They have made card models with moving parts. The finished products seen were of a good standard, and were well made considering the ages of the pupils. Their designs were satisfactory. One pupil had done a good detailed drawing, clearly labelling different parts, but most designs were more simple. Their second project, to design a multi-coloured coat was also of sound quality. As well as designing the coat, they had evaluated their work and made simple suggestions about how it could be improved.
101. The work from pupils in Year 4 indicates that they are all getting to the appropriate standard, but none are significantly exceeding it. All have done a major project to make a moving monster, with parts worked by pneumatics. All work was planned in advance, with labelled sketches, and detailed plans for construction from one pupil. All produced a written evaluation of their design's effectiveness, as well as suggestions about how it could be better. The previous term, pupils had designed and made a photo frame. The quality of design improved considerably between then and their making the monsters, showing good progress in their understanding. The finished products, some of which were on display in the classroom, showed good originality in design, and they were made and finished to a satisfactory standard.
102. The co-ordinator for the subject works at the other federation school. So far, she has just had time to look at examples of work, teachers' planning and the subject action plan. She has correctly identified the sound standards, and that the curriculum, based on national guidelines, meets the requirements of the national curriculum well. She is getting a good grip on the subject in the school, and is well placed to continue to move it forward, and to provide advice and support to her colleagues.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. Standards in geography have been effectively maintained since the previous inspection and are above average in Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and acquire a good range of knowledge and skills. The curriculum is broad and well balanced and is enhanced by a good range of additional activities, such as e-mail links with Australia and Egypt, and visits to

places of local interest. This promotes pupils' good learning and interest.

104. By Year 2, pupils have a good awareness of the locality around the school. They make satisfactory maps of their route to school and are developing a clear view of the different types of buildings they pass. In their study of a village in Mexico, pupils have developed a good understanding of how the people's lives are different to their own and some of the ways in which they are similar. They recognise how weather affects the way people travel and their clothes.
105. By Year 4, pupils have developed a good understanding of how the environment affects where we live. This work effectively supports pupils' learning in history and they gain a secure understanding of why people settled in the areas they did. Pupils also gain a good understanding of the impact people have on their surroundings, for example through a study of pollution and the need for recycling. Pupils develop effectively the skill of using primary and secondary sources of information in their research, and use their literacy skills and numeracy skills well in developing a thorough understanding. This good learning is promoted well by the teachers. In the Year 3-4 class, pupils were challenged to find out how much waste was created in the school. Pupils gathered weighed and sorted the different types of paper and card produced. A visitor from the council gave them a clear view of the impact of infilling on the landscape and they researched the topic in books and on the Internet. Armed with this information, they presented their case to the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body, trying to persuade them to start re-cycling in the school. The pupils were well informed and thoroughly involved in their task. In groups, they showed good skills of collaboration and negotiation as they organised their arguments.
106. The quality of teaching is good and has a significant impact on promoting pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. The teachers have a good understanding of the geography skills to be taught and provide activities that also encourage pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The work has a strong input into developing pupils' personal development, their independent learning skills and their awareness of the cultures around the world. A satisfactory system of assessing pupils' knowledge is used and the information gained informs future planning so that the activities provided build on what pupils already know and can do.
107. The co-ordinator is new to managing the subject. She has started to monitor standards by reviewing pupils' work, but it is too early to assess the impact of this. There has been little time as yet to implement any other form of leadership or co-ordination.

## **HISTORY**

108. Standards have been effectively maintained since the previous inspection and are above those expected in Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils make good progress in acquiring a wide range of knowledge and skills. The curriculum is broad and well balanced and enhanced through stimulating activities that promote pupils' interest and desire to do well.
109. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of how things change over time. They recount historic events with accuracy and good detail. For example, pupils recalled the events of the Fire of London well and used their sense of empathy for people trapped in burning houses to give detail to their accounts. They can describe how people's lives have changed and how inventions, such as fire engines, have changed out lives. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy looking at books to find out information. In their recent study of Egypt in geography they have shown interest in its ancient history, the pyramids and Pharaohs. By Year 4, pupils have developed a sound understanding of how historical periods follow each other in time. They talk of the good and bad legacy from the Romans, seeing the building of roads and the bringing of food and wine to England as positive happenings, and the battles and war as bad. Higher attaining pupils talk about how people's ideas of right and wrong have changed, and wanted to discuss why Henry VIII divorced or killed his wives to get a son. They have a secure understanding of how we learn about the past,

recognising that some evidence erodes over time and other evidence survives.

110. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but from this lesson and the clear evidence of pupils' enthusiasm for learning about the past, teaching is judged as good overall. An interesting range of activities, the good use of books and resources, including the Internet, and the teachers' own enthusiasm promote good levels of pupils' knowledge and motivates their desire to know more. They are encouraged to think about what they learn and to see links between different aspects of their work. During a discussion, several pupils in Year 4 wanted to discuss the Catholic religion, as it is now and in Henry VIII's time, looking for reasons for his behaviour. Pupils' literacy skills are used effectively in history. Pupils' own writing is now encouraged and much improved since the previous inspection. Teachers have high expectation for pupils' participation. A good use is made of homework to encourage research and, in the expectation that it will be completed, the work in lessons is based on what pupils have done. Parents are very supportive of this element of pupils' work and give good levels of support. One family made a trip to Bosworth Field over the bank holiday weekend so that their children could find out more.
111. Teachers use satisfactory procedures for assessing what pupils know and understand and this information is used appropriately to adjust the curriculum as necessary to ensure pupils' learning progresses well. The subject is now co-ordinated by a teacher in the partner school, who has only limited time to monitor standards at Pulloxhill. However, at the present time this has not proved a disadvantage, as standards are high.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards at each key stage meet the national expectation. At the last inspection, standards were identified as good. However, since then the requirements of the national curriculum have been increased, requiring more extensive use of the internet and e-mails for example. Although current pupils are still able to do all the things that were identified at the time of the last report, this now just meets the national expectations rather than exceeding them.
113. Pupils in Year 2 can write several sentences using a word processing package, and with help can combine this with a photograph taken on a digital camera. They have make a range of interesting pictures and patterns using a graphics package, and can use the simpler tools in the program with confidence.
114. Pupils in Year 4 continue to use this package, producing work of increasing sophistication and interest, using more complex tools to copy and print different sized pictures of a fish they have drawn, for example, to produce a complicated picture. They have used a scanner to print copies of collages they have made in art. The finished products are of high quality, and exemplify the typically good links that are made in the school between different subjects. They have used their skills well in other subjects, such as mathematics and geography, where they have produced graphs on the computer showing where children in the school live. Pupils in Year 4 use computers with great confidence. They can move text around and change font sizes, styles and colours with facility. They are able to direct the movements of an on-screen "robot" and experiment confidently with this. So far, however, they have not had the opportunity to use e-mail. They struggled when asked to log onto the school's web-site, but persisted, helped each other without prompting, and eventually succeeded.
115. The quality of teaching is good. A particular strength is the way in which the use of ICT is fully integrated into a range of subjects. This helps pupils develop their ICT skills, as well as supporting their learning across the curriculum. Only one dedicated ICT lesson was observed during the inspection, when a skilled classroom assistant worked with a group of pupils from Year 2. This was a good lesson, in which pupils made good progress in giving instructions to a "screen turtle".

They were given a challenging task, which interested and enthused them, and they had good opportunities to have “hands-on” use of the computers. They worked in pairs, which helped to develop their collaborative skills well, although one pupil found it difficult to share ideas with his partner, and eventually worked by himself. All pupils greatly increased their skills and understanding in using the program, and higher attainers were starting to be able to write a program in advance for a series of movements, rather than moving the turtle by a number of sequential one-off steps.

116. The pupils are making sound progress in their ICT skills despite the limited space and numbers of computers in the suite, which is in the staff-room. They are making good progress in using computers to support work across the curriculum because their teachers make a point of integrating ICT into a wide range of lessons across the curriculum. The skilled classroom assistant who often works with pupils in the suite is contributing significantly to their progress. The co-ordinator, who has correctly identified the strengths of the subject, as well as its shortcomings, provides clear leadership to colleagues. The subject is managed soundly, and is organised well to make the best use of limited resources. The school has plans to provide a bigger and better-equipped suite in the new mobile classroom, and this will have the potential to raise standards further by enabling more direct teaching to pupils.

## **MUSIC**

117. No lessons took place during the inspection so it is not possible to give a secure judgement on standards at either Year 2 or Year 4. Pupils throughout the school were, however, observed singing in assemblies. They sang with enjoyment and had a sweet tone. They are confident and tuneful. The words are sung with satisfactory precision so that they are heard clearly by the audience. When accompanied by the piano, rather than the usual CDs, they listen carefully to the introductions and therefore are guided to crisp and precise rhythms. Unfortunately, pupils were not reminded to sit up straight or requested to stand as they sang and so some of the top notes were rather strained. A choir was formed in September. The boys and girls who attend obviously enjoy this activity and were very pleased to perform to new audiences during the inspection. As yet, their repertoire is mainly restricted to school hymns and carols, but is being extended. The recorder club and violin instruction gives those pupils who want, good opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument.
118. The curriculum is satisfactorily planned and provides suitable opportunities for pupils to compose and perform their own compositions. Pupils in the oldest class, for example, have been experimenting with ways to produce animal noises and create their own music for an animal dance. Listening to music is also an important element of the scheme of work, but this is only satisfactorily fostered. Music is played each day as pupils enter for assembly, but it is only infrequently discussed so that pupils’ awareness and knowledge are increased. In discussion with pupils in Year 4, they had only limited recall of composers’ names. A few remembered hearing music named after the seasons and a higher attaining pupil suggested they were written by V...., but couldn’t say the whole name.
119. The curriculum is enhanced by the work of the music teacher who attends each Friday. She accompanies lessons and leads the choir and recorder clubs. She is also a great support when rehearsing and performing whole school productions. Overall the provision is sound and satisfactorily promotes pupils’ aesthetic and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. Standards are in line with expectations at the ages of seven and nine, as at the last inspection. During the inspection, a games lesson was seen in each of the older classes, and a drama lesson

with Year 4 gave some insight into pupils' attainment.

121. Pupils in Year 4 have good levels of agility and control when moving around the confined space of the school hall. They are able to show a good sense of balance and of space, and awareness of each other so that they move around the hall safely. Pupils in Year 2 can throw a quoit in the intended direction, and most can throw to a good distance for their age. They can bowl a hoop in approximately the right direction, but few can do so with any accuracy. Year 4 pupils have variable skills in throwing and catching a small ball, and hitting a ball with a bat. Overall, their skills are average for their age. They are developing a sound understanding of the tactics of a simple game of rounders, but for about half the class their throwing and catching skills do not enable them to put their understanding into practice.
122. Teaching is satisfactory. The lessons observed were taught under the supervision of the class teachers, but most of the instruction was provided jointly by a classroom assistant from the other school in the federation, and a parent. Both of these have good subject knowledge, which resulted in a number of strengths in the teaching. Good attention was paid to health and safety, and pupils were clearly taught how to warm up and stretch their muscles at the start of the lesson. Both lessons started with pupils making good progress, because all were involved in simple warm-up activities, and put in a lot of effort and got out of breath. The major strength of both lessons was the clear teaching of specific techniques, of how to throw a quoit and how to bowl a hoop for the younger pupils, and of how to throw a ball and catch it for the older pupils. Explanations were clear and accurate, and pupils who had faulty technique were given personal support and help. This meant they gained a much better understanding over the course of the lesson.
123. However each lesson had some weaknesses. For the younger pupils, too much time in the second part of the lesson was spent standing to wait for a turn, and they did not get enough time to practise the techniques they had been taught so clearly. For the older pupils, not enough flexibility was built into the practice, so that the task was too easy for some and too hard for others; again they did not have enough practice at the right level of challenge. In both lessons, some time was wasted in organising pupils into pairs or into teams, when this could more easily have been established in the classroom before the lesson began.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124. Standards have been satisfactorily maintained since the previous inspection and are in line with those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 4. Pupils acquire a sound range of knowledge about the traditions and symbols of Christianity and other major world faiths. They develop good skills of empathy and understanding for the feelings and beliefs of others, and a satisfactory awareness that people's faith affects the way they live.
125. In the topic about 'Special People' pupils in Years 1 and 2 have gained a good knowledge of the life of Moses and how he changed the lives of the Israelites enslaved by the Egyptians. The higher attaining pupils retell the story of Moses and the Exodus well, using their writing skills to advantage. Pupils who struggle with their work have a good recall of the basic parts of the story, even if their recording skills are not as competent as their classmates'. Pupils' knowledge of the last plague was satisfactorily revisited later in the year when the class studied the Seder Meal. They started to understand how the different foods act as a symbol and reminder to the Jews about their time in slavery. Lessons in religious education and those in PSHE successfully promote pupils' reflection about what they think and they are developing an understanding of their own importance and respect for others.
126. These skills are well promoted in the older class and pupils in Year 4 develop a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and have a developing awareness of the different emotions engendered by people's actions and words. Pupils are sensitive to each other's

ideas. They have a sound recognition of the role of symbols and explain the importance of the candles and the crucifix to Christians, and the importance of the ceremonial act of washing before prayer for the Muslims. Pupils recognise that religions have special books and special buildings. They visit the local church and can give simple explanations of the purposes of the different areas. Higher attaining pupils have sound recall of the Last Supper and explain the symbolism behind the altar and the sharing of bread and wine.

127. Teaching is satisfactory overall and it is often good. Although only one lesson was observed during the inspection, evidence was also gained from teachers' planning and from discussions with pupils. Teachers use resources well and ensure they have a good knowledge about the lesson they are to teach, so that explanations are clear and pupils' questions are answered as thoroughly as possible. In the lesson observed, the teacher engendered a sense of due reverence when showing the pupils the Torah. She gave a good explanation of its purpose and importance to the Jews and made suitable links to pupils' previous learning about the Bible. The pupils' learning is enhanced through visits. Teachers use stories in assembly well to extend pupils' knowledge, and festivals and celebrations also play an effective part in helping pupils understand the important parts of the Christian calendar. Parents attended a Christingle service at Christmas and the whole school played an active part in the recent Easter Service held at the church. The local vicar visits the school each week to take a whole school assembly. His stories complement the school Values Education theme and enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding.
128. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Planning and assessment is suitably based on the locally Agreed Syllabus.