

INSPECTION REPORT

DURHAM LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eaglescliffe

LEA area: Stockton on Tees

Unique reference number: 111562

Head teacher: Mrs J Harrison

Reporting inspector: Mr C Smith
25211

Dates of inspection: 9th – 11th September 2002

Inspection number: 247123

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Amberley Way Eaglescliffe Stockton on Tees
Postcode:	TS16 ONG
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Strike
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25211	C Smith	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Music	The school results and pupils' achievements.
				How well are pupils taught?
				What should the school do to improve further?
19741	T Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18819	J Atkinson	Team inspector	English	
			Physical education	
			Equal opportunities	
			Special educational needs	
21397	I Bradbury	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How well is the school led and managed?
			Art and design	
			Design and technology	
12631	M McLean	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Geography	
			History	
22545	V Hobson	Team inspector	Science	
			Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is average in size and serves the needs of families who live in the small town of Eaglecliffe, near Stockton-on-Tees. There are 186 pupils on roll; 100 boys and 86 girls. Almost all pupils are white and all speak English. Nine pupils (five per cent) are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Thirty-three pupils have special educational needs (16 per cent), which is average, and nine pupils have statements. This figure reflects the needs of the 14 pupils in the speech and language unit, some of whom have autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils in the unit are included in mainstream classrooms for almost half of each school day. Two supply teachers were covering for absences during the inspection. Children's attainment on entry to school is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Standards are high in English and science and above average in some other subjects, including mathematics. Teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning are good and this enables pupils to achieve well, particularly those with special educational needs. The head teacher provides good leadership and governors and staff work hard to ensure that pupils are cared for and strive to improve standards. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high in English and science and above average in mathematics, art and design and physical education.
- Teaching is good, particularly in the Nursery, Year 2 and 6 and is very good in the unit.
- The head teacher, senior staff and governors provide good leadership and management.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and their personal development is very good.
- The school offers a good curriculum. This benefits all pupils but particularly those with special educational needs and enables them to make very good progress.
- The school maintains good relationships with parents.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough.
- There is scope to improve the quality of pupils' writing.
- More able pupils could achieve more in religious education, history and geography, if the work provided was more challenging.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements since it was last inspected in January 1998. Since then, the school has achieved Investors in People Status and gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The good standards in art and design and physical education have been maintained and standards in English, mathematics and science are all higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection. The improvements can be traced to the head teacher's effective leadership and better teaching. Checking on the work of the school has greatly improved. Staff and governors are strongly committed to examining teaching and learning, identifying and remedying the weaker areas and raising standards to move the school forward. They are aware that standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are too low and have not kept pace with the national rate of improvement. This is

the current school priority. Pupils with special educational needs both in the unit and in mainstream classes now make very good progress. There are better procedures for assessing pupils' learning but more needs to be done to use the information gathered to provide challenging work for the more able pupils in religious education, geography and history.

STANDARDS

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

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

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

From a broadly average starting point, children achieve well in the nursery and steadily in the reception class. By the end of the reception year they reach the levels expected in their knowledge and understanding and in their physical and creative development. Children reach higher than expected levels in the language and mathematical skills and in their personal and social development. Pupils achieve steadily through Year 1 and their progress accelerates in Year 2. Standards reached by seven year-olds have risen at least in line with national trends. By the age of seven, pupils achieve above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Overall, pupils achieve well through the juniors. Results have improved along with national trends, apart from 2001 when 42 per cent of the Year 6 pupils had special educational needs. Increasingly demanding targets have been set and reached in English. Targets in mathematics have been harder to achieve but with recent improvements in teaching and learning, the current targets are within reach. Standards by the age of 11 are now high in the core subjects of English and science and above average in mathematics. However, standards in reading are higher than in writing. Although pupils' writing is improving as a result of staff training, weaknesses in handwriting spoil the presentation of their work. Pupils achieve steadily in religious education, design and technology, geography and history to reach the standards expected by the ages of seven and eleven. In art and design and in physical education, pupils achieve well to reach above average standards at both key stages. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in ICT. A new computer suite is under consideration.

Pupils with special educational needs, in the unit and mainstream classes, are very well provided for. This enables them to make very good progress. More able pupils achieve well in the core subjects, where challenging work is provided. However, they could achieve more in religious education, geography and history if the work provided were equally demanding.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils participate well in activities, listen carefully and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils are considerate and supportive of others and show maturity in the way they conduct themselves around school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils in all classes and the unit show respect for others, act responsibly and respond well to opportunities to take initiative.
Attendance	Very good and well above the national average.

Pupils in the unit are well integrated into school life. They are accepted, encouraged and helped by other pupils. This contributes to the very positive learning ethos.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	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 and this plays an important part in raising standards. In junior lessons, teachers inject a greater sense of urgency and the pace of learning is often quicker than in some of the infant lessons. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and this helps them to experience success in learning. In the nursery and reception, a stimulating range of very carefully structured activities is provided to help children to learn and extend their spoken language. The reception class has suffered changes of teachers but a close partnership with the nursery has helped to ensure that teaching is at least satisfactory and children continue to learn. The key literacy and numeracy skills of speaking, reading and mathematics are taught well throughout the school. The mechanics of writing are also taught well in English lessons but pupils' writing skills are not used, extended and improved sufficiently in other subjects. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, and science and teachers have expertise in most subjects. Opportunities are missed to improve pupils' skills in ICT by using computers in the learning of other subjects. More able pupils respond well to the high level of challenge in the core subjects but do not fulfil their potential in religious education, geography and history where pupils often receive the same level of work, irrespective of their different learning needs. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is usually thorough and helpful in the core subjects but often fails to point out how pupils could improve in other subjects. Teachers manage pupils well and new ideas are very carefully explained. As a result, pupils become interested and confident learners.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; pupils' work is carefully planned in most subjects and they are able to build on earlier learning. Excellent extra-curricular activities and good personal and health education enriches their learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; their learning and social needs are very accurately identified and provided for. This raises their self-esteem and success in learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; pupils' moral awareness and social skills are reinforced throughout all activities. Good assemblies and first hand learning experiences strongly influence their spiritual development. Learning about other faiths and different cultures prepares them well for life in a diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; pupils' welfare is highly regarded. Their personal and academic progress is carefully tracked in the core subjects but not as well in the other areas.

The school continues to benefit from good relationships with parents and close links with the community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good; the head teacher has created an effective school by involving staff, parents and governors. There is a strong emphasis on driving up standards and, at the same time, much attention is given to pupils' personal development. As a result, the school is happy and successful.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; governors know the school well through many visits, meetings and by examining the good information provided by the head teacher. This enables them to plan well for the future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; assessment result are carefully analysed to identify and remedy any weaknesses. The quality of teaching is checked at regular intervals, particularly in the core subjects. However, there is scope to improve the subject leaders' role in assessing and improving standards in some of the other subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good; financial and future planning is guided well by comparing standards and seeking the views of parents, staff and pupils. These factors enable governors to know where to target their resources.

School accommodation is satisfactory and the levels of resources are good. The school is fortunate in having well qualified and experienced teachers and very well trained support staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school, are well behaved and make good progress.• Parents find the staff helpful and easy to talk to and feel well informed about their children's learning.• Parents appreciate the leadership of the school, the teaching and the additional activities.• The school is successful in helping children to act responsibly and to care for others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework.

The inspection team members agree with positive views expressed by parents. Teaching and leadership are good and pupils make good progress. It is difficult to please everyone with regard to homework but the team feels that the school has it about right.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Trends are difficult to interpret in this school. The school has a unit attached that provides educational support for pupils with learning difficulties, principally in the area of speech and language. As these pupils reach the ages of seven and 11, they take the national tests and their scores are absorbed into the school's results as whole. This affects the school's average, particularly when a cluster of these children is present in any one school year. For example, the school's results for 11-year-olds in 2001 fell sharply to a level that was below the national average. However, in that year, 42 per cent of the pupils taking the tests had special educational needs. The presence of these children also frustrates the setting of school targets. On the whole, realistic and achievable targets are specified but these are sometimes artificially increased to exceed previous years' results. When this happens, during years when the number of pupils with special educational needs is higher, the targets are not reached.

2 From the point at which they enter school to the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well to reach above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the age of seven. In the past, the results obtained by seven-year-olds in the school have barely reached average levels and have been a source of disappointment to the staff. Changes of teachers have made a difference but a concerted effort to improve teaching and learning, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science has paid dividends. Teachers now expect more, aim higher and analyse assessments of pupils' learning carefully in the drive to raise standards. These have proved to be successful strategies in both infant and junior classes.

3 Pupils also achieve well in junior classes, particularly in English and science where standards by the age of 11 are well above average and higher than in similar schools. Pupils are now achieving well in mathematics and standards are above average. Trends in this subject have fluctuated and have not paralleled the upward direction of the other core subjects. To remedy this, mathematics has been the focus of attention over the last two years. The school has become more rigorous in checking the quality of teaching and the assessment of pupils' learning to help to identify where the weaknesses lie. These are now systematically tackled in the course of normal teaching because all teachers are more aware of what to look for and concentrate on.

4 Children in the nursery and the reception class, who are in the foundation stage of their learning, make good progress overall. They are encouraged to select activities for themselves and become independent learners. There is also a strong focus on the development of spoken language and mathematical understanding. These factors significantly promote children's personal and social development and improve their language, literacy and mathematics skills, which are higher than the levels expected. Children make sound progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world, and achieve steadily in their creative and physical development to reach the levels expected by the end of the reception year.

5 Standards in English have generally remained above average over recent years. This subject has the highest priority in the school. The presence of the speech and language unit exerts a strong influence in the teaching in all classes and makes all teachers very aware of the importance of developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. In almost all lessons, pupils have good opportunities to discuss and explain their ideas. This significantly improves their speaking and listening skills, which are well above average by Year 6. Reading also has a central place in the curriculum. Pupils read widely

at home and in school and benefit from skilled teaching of how to break down words into recognizable parts and understanding the text. As a result, pupils read fluently and confidently, which helps their learning of other subjects. Standards in writing are not as high as in reading. On the whole, pupils learn to spell and punctuate effectively. They are also adept in editing and improving their written work. However, pupils' writing skills are not sufficiently extended in other subjects and standards of presentation, in some classes, are not good enough.

6 Standards in mathematics are improving quickly and catching up with English and science. Most pupils also enjoy the subject and respond particularly well to the quick-fire mental mathematics sessions, which are improving pupils' quick and accurate calculation. Most pupils have a good grasp of the different operations, such as multiplication and division, and realise that answers can be checked by reversing the process. These skills are deepened and broadened by good opportunities to apply what they have learnt to solve mathematical problems in mathematics lessons and in other subjects, such as science and geography.

7 Standards in science have considerably improved in infant classes over the last two years. As the level of challenge increases far more pupils are reaching the higher levels by the age of seven. Standards in science in junior classes have been well above average over recent years, apart from 2001. Most pupils have a good understanding of living things, materials and forces. Their understanding is helped by well-structured opportunities to find out more for themselves by planning scientific tests and observing and recording the outcomes.

8 Standards in ICT are below the levels expected by the time that pupils reach the age of 11, although standards are satisfactory in infant classes. Developments in ICT in the school over recent years have not kept pace with national trends. This is partly because of severe problems with hardware. The servers proved unreliable and work on computers in classrooms became very difficult. However, even when the machines operate reliably, as they do now, they are not used enough. In the course of the teaching week, pupils do not have enough time to learn and improve new skills. As a result, they are hesitant when using the keyboard and unsure of the steps to take to handle, edit and present information in different forms.

9 Standards in religious education are in line with those specified for schools in Stockton-on-Tees. Pupils develop clear insights into what it means to be a Christian and have a growing awareness of other faiths. However, teachers do not always provide activities that extend the learning of the more able pupils and in this respect there is scope to raise standards further.

10 In both art and design and in physical education, standards are higher than the levels expected throughout the school. These good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school has a history of producing good artwork and the excellent range of extra-curricular activities significantly increases pupils' gymnastic and sporting prowess. Standards in design and technology are at the levels expected, although pupils' design and making skills are not matched by their capacity to evaluate and improve their work as they go along. Standards in music are also at the levels expected and the 20 per cent of pupils who learn to play musical instruments reach higher standards in understanding notation and in performing. Standards in geography and history are at the levels expected at the ages of seven and 11. However, the work provided is not as well matched to pupils' different learning needs as it is in English and mathematics. As a result, the more able pupils do not reach their full potential in these subjects.

11 Pupils with special educational needs, in the unit and those integrated into mainstream classes, are very well provided for. The tasks they are given are broken down into very small and carefully sequenced steps to help them to understand. Their learning is well supported by adults in all

lessons. These factors, along with good assessment of their progress and specific targets to aim for in future lessons, enable them to make very good progress. More able pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science where the level of challenge is high. However, they could make more progress in some other subjects if the work provided were more carefully tailored to their specific learning needs. Over recent years boys have slightly out-performed girls, although provision for both groups in school is broadly the same.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 Attitudes to learning remain good. Pupils like coming to school and are ready to work. They listen carefully to their teachers, or to others who may be speaking, and respond sensibly. They settle quickly to each new task, and usually work with purpose and determination. Nursery children, who have only just started school, are already becoming familiar with the daily routines.

13 Behaviour remains good, both in and out of class. Pupils show high levels of self-discipline. They fully understand what is expected of them, and react accordingly. Bullying is not a problem, and no incidents were observed or reported during the inspection. Exclusions are also very rare, and none have been applied for many years. Pupils genuinely care for their school and show due respect for its fabric, fittings and resources.

14 Pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection, and is now very good. Most are confident, articulate learners, who are able to work well on their own, with more opportunities now being provided for them to do so. However, in some classes pupils do not present their work carefully because teachers do not stress its importance sufficiently. The school continues to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities. These are readily accepted and the duties are performed well. Notable examples of these include the school council, which is an effective body, and the Year 6 monitors who help out in classes around the school during playtimes.

15 Relationships within the school are now very good. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. There is a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere within the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and always ready to help those who find learning more difficult. They clearly understand the impact of their actions upon others, and work and play well together. They also show respect for other peoples' feelings and beliefs.

16 Attendance is well above the national norm. Unauthorised absence remains very low. Punctuality is good. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 Teaching is good overall. The good qualities noted at the time the last inspection, such as the effective management of pupils and teachers' good communication skills, still feature strongly. However the teaching of literacy and numeracy have improved following staff training and sharing expertise after lessons have been observed and discussed. These factors have led to a significant improvement in pupils' learning and have raised standards. Junior teachers encourage pupils to work quickly and accurately and set them time limits to work to. This sense of urgency is less evident in some infant lessons and the pace of learning is not as quick.

18 Teaching in the nursery is consistently good. The activities provided are stimulating and the teaching of language and number skills is very effective. This enables children to learn at a good rate and develop self-confidence. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory but has been affected by two changes of teacher over as many months. At this early stage in the term it is harder for the supply teacher to gauge the children's different learning needs and match the activities accordingly. However, the nursery and reception class teachers work closely together to ensure that children's learning continues unhindered during the period of transition. In both classes, the children's spoken language is very well developed and support staff make a significant contribution to children's learning.

19 All teachers manage pupils' learning and behaviour well. Despite the inspection taking place during the first full week of a new school year, good relationships have already been established between pupils and their teachers. Teachers expect pupils to listen, pay attention, take an interest in the lesson and contribute ideas willingly. This is exactly what happens. The atmosphere in classrooms is quiet and purposeful. Teachers encourage pupils to ask for help when they are unsure. As a result, pupils often double check that they have understood the task before commencing. In almost all lessons, pupils concentrate well on their work and persevere until the task is completed.

20 The basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. In addition, there are many good opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas and discuss different approaches to learning. This significantly improves pupils' speaking and listening skills. In reading, teachers ensure that pupils receive a good grounding in phonic skills, such as blending letters to make words, and in comprehending what they read. The teaching of mathematical skills is good and is continuing to improve as more and more lessons involve pupils looking at and explaining different ways to solve mathematical problems. Most of the writing skills are also taught effectively, such as spelling and punctuation, and pupils learn how to review their work and make alterations to improve it. However, teachers do not encourage pupils to practice and extend their writing skills enough in other subjects, such as religious education, history and geography. Not all teachers stress the importance of careful presentation in written work. This can lead to carelessness and unnecessary mistakes. For these reasons standards in writing are not as good as standards in reading.

21 In general, teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics, science, art and design and physical education. Teachers' good expertise not only helps them to set pupils suitable tasks, it also enables teachers to explain and demonstrate new learning effectively. To assist pupils' learning, teachers often make imaginative use of learning aids, such as pictures, models and real objects. Pupils find learning more interesting when such practical tasks are introduced. For example in a Year 2 geography lesson, pupils who were learning about maps made a model island from clay to help them to understand what a view from above looked like. Despite the effective use of printed resources, computers are very seldom used. ICT is not woven into learning of the different subjects as it should be and this is partly why standards in ICT are too low.

22 In most lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding at regular intervals. This helps them to know how quickly pupils can move on to the next learning stage. The use of questioning is particularly good in making pupils think. In a Year 3 religious education lesson, for example, the teacher asked, "Why might Jesus have had long hair?" This led to an interesting discussion on whether there would have been hairdressers in the past.

23 In English, mathematics and science, the level of challenge presented to the pupils is high. Many pupils reach levels higher than those expected in both English and mathematics and this is attributable to the level of challenge in the work provided. Pupils have to think and act quickly to keep up and in most cases pupils respond well to these demands. When teachers plan lessons in English and mathematics, they take good account of what pupils already know and identify activities that will suit those who find learning easy or difficult. As a result, most of the work given to pupils closely matches their learning needs and this helps them to learn smoothly and effectively. However, there are occasions when teachers do not remember to check that pupils who find learning mathematics difficult, understand what to do, just before they begin. As a result, they make unnecessary mistakes. In some other subjects, notably religious education, history and geography, more able pupils are not always challenged enough. In these subjects, teachers tend to provide the same level of work for all pupils, irrespective of their different learning needs. As a result, some pupils find the work too easy.

Although standards in these subjects are satisfactory, they could be higher if more challenging work was provided.

24 Pupils with special educational needs, whether in the speech and language unit or integrated into mainstream classes, are very well catered for. The support they receive from teachers and classroom assistants is of high quality. In the unit, learning is very carefully sequenced in small steps to enable pupils to understand and build confidence. In classrooms, pupils with special educational needs, benefit greatly from adult attention. During whole class sessions, classroom assistants sit near these pupils, quietly explaining new learning and discussing their ideas. This gives them the confidence to answer in front of the whole class. During individual and group work, there are good opportunities for these pupils to ask questions, revise earlier learning and improve the basic skills of speaking, reading and handling numbers. Their learning is carefully planned and well assessed. These factors enable pupils with special educational needs to make very good progress.

25 Overall, teachers make satisfactory use of assessment to help them to understand what pupils have learnt and what should be taught next. However this varies according to the subject. In English and mathematics, for example, pupils' work is very carefully marked and any difficulties they have are explained. In addition, teachers introduce a number of informal tests to measure pupils' progress. From these, targets are derived to show pupils what they need to learn next. In other subjects, such as religious education, history and geography the use of assessment is not at this level, nor does the marking of pupils' work show them what they need to do to improve. Consequently, the work given to pupils does not always reflect their particular stage of learning and therefore their progress is hampered. Although some parents feel that the level of homework provided could be better, pupils receive regular homework tasks to reinforce their learning in school. The provision for homework is at least satisfactory.

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

26 The school's curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. Children in the nursery and reception class are well provided for through a good range of carefully structured and interesting activities. Pupils in infant and junior classes receive a wide range of experiences and a broad education in all subjects, apart from ICT. In this subject, pupils do not spend enough time on computers to gain the necessary skills. The extra-curricular provision is excellent. There is a well-established programme of personal, social and health education, and the recently started citizenship programme enriches the curriculum very well. These extra dimensions also impact very well on pupils' personal and social development.

27 Teachers have adopted the national guidance to support their planning of the curriculum, and there is good guidance for teachers to plan for religious education. This planning provides a solid framework for what is to be taught in each year group, and is an improvement since the last inspection. However, despite good lesson planning in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science, teachers do not always specify what pupils with different learning needs are expected to learn in some other subjects. This is reflected in the lack of challenge for more able pupils.

28 The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. There are impressive opportunities for pupils to develop interests and skills in sport, writing and drama, ICT, music and chess and the participation rate is high. There are also before, and after, school clubs and good opportunities for pupils to take part in extended field study visits. The many activities impact particularly well on standards in physical education and on pupils' social development.

29 The school rightly spends a high amount of curriculum time on teaching English and mathematics. The impact is seen in the school's high standards in these subjects. Although pupils practice their speaking and listening skills very well across other subjects, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their good writing skills in some subjects, particularly in history and geography. Numeracy skills are good, with strengths in problem solving and the application of skills is often demonstrated in science and geography. For example, in geography, Year 5 pupils used data collecting skills effectively to collate information about a traffic survey in the locality, and then produced a variety of graphs to interpret their findings. Although pupils do not get the full range of experiences in ICT, there are opportunities for them to access the Internet to find information to support learning in other subjects, and they use word processing skills.

30 Provision for pupils with special education needs is very good. Pupils in the speech and language unit make very good progress. When these pupils are included in lessons with mainstream pupils, their teachers and learning assistants support them very well. Pupils in the unit are fully included in the life of the school. However, more able pupils are not challenged enough in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.

31 The school has very good links with the community. Visits support learning in many subjects and visitors, including the emergency services and church leaders, enrich the curriculum. There are very good links with the local Secondary school. Not only is the transition of Year 6 pupils to the Secondary school managed very well, there are also good links with literacy, music, drama and environmental work. This term some teachers from the Secondary school are giving Year 3 pupils recorder tuition.

32 The breadth of opportunities offered to pupils contributes very well to developing their personal skills. These opportunities not only contribute to the very good relationships that pupils develop with each other, their good attitudes to school and to their work, but they also contribute to the very good provision for pupils' social development which is a strength of the school.

33 The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall. The provision for multicultural development has improved since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness are provided in collective worship. This was illustrated most effectively when the Chair of Governors led pupils in enthusiastic hymn singing before the mood changed to one of quiet reflection about the events of September 11th last year. Pupils sat in absolute silence for one minute. Across the curriculum, pupils share their ideas with each other, and respect other people's beliefs and values. In English, pupils have written thoughtfully about emotions such as anger which "sounds like growling lions"; and love which "feels like red velvet". In religious education, pupils write their own prayers and these are sometimes used in collective worship. Some pupils contributed to Marks and Spencer's "Rainbow of Hope Charity" by writing their hopes for the future.

34 Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, and is a strength of the school. Pupils negotiate their own class rules at the start of the year. Pupils, who have just gone into Year 1, thought about rules for their next class at the end of their year in reception. These are now displayed, and include values such as kindness and care for others. Pupils in Year 6 are preparing their own "Ten Commandments". Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. By Year 6 pupils explain the impact their actions can have on others. Provision for social development is very good, particularly through the inclusion of pupils from the unit in the day-to-day life of the school. They are represented on the School Council along with representatives from each class. These pupils are proud of the improvements they have made such as banning large footballs in the playground one day a week, at the request of younger pupils. Pupils are often encouraged to work collaboratively in lessons. Older pupils have the chance to go on two residential visits. Together, with the range of sporting opportunities, these promote pupils' understanding of the importance of teamwork and co-operation. Pupils are given roles of responsibility around the school, and older pupils help to look after younger pupils, particularly during 'wet' playtimes. Pupils have responsibility for organising Harvest performances and the money raised goes to various charities.

35 Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. This reflects the school's improved provision for pupils' multicultural development. Pupils develop a good understanding of their own cultural heritage through visits linked to subjects such as geography and history. Pupils are taught to respect the beliefs and lifestyles of faiths and cultures other than their own. In mathematics, pupils learn about some world famous mathematicians; there has been a Latin music workshop for pupils in Year 5, and pupils learn about artists from other cultures. These contributions from the curriculum help pupils to understand the richness and diversity of cultures and faiths throughout the world, as well as in our present day society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 The school continues to place a high priority on pupils' general welfare and, overall, continues to look after them well. Attendance is monitored thoroughly. Registers are marked properly at the start of sessions and suitable arrangements are in place to follow up any unexplained absence. Suitable health and safety measures are in place and backed up by regular safety checks. Pupils are supervised carefully and the daily working practices adopted by all staff, are good. Child protection arrangements remain effective and reflect local authority guidelines.

37 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development remain effective. Teachers continue to place strong emphasis on building pupils' confidence and self-esteem. They know their pupils well, have good relationships with them and respond positively to their needs. Pupils in the unit are particularly well supported and are well integrated into school life. All staff promote high standards of behaviour successfully and, as a result, the school has a calm, orderly and relaxed atmosphere. Praise and rewards are used well to encourage effort and significant achievement is recognised each week in assembly. Teachers take pupils' personal development very seriously and provide a wide range of suitable opportunities for them to exercise responsibility and to show initiative. The School Council and residential visits are good examples of this.

38 Following the last inspection, teachers and support staff made a determined effort to improve the assessment of pupils' learning. Training was provided and new systems were introduced. These are constantly reconsidered in the light of the suitability and in response to national advice. Teachers and support staff in the nursery and reception classes, use assessment well to plan for their children. They keep careful notes about how children achieve in teaching sessions with adults in order to plan the next steps. Records are detailed and include all aspects of the children's learning. Parents are encouraged to add to the records so the staff has a full picture of the children's needs.

39 The procedures for assessing pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science in infant and junior classes are now good and provide teachers with detailed information about pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils undertake several tests at the end of each school year. The results are carefully analysed and used to adapt the curriculum to more closely match pupils' learning needs. This has been particularly effective in raising standards in all core subjects by concentrating the skills and knowledge that pupils have not fully grasped. Teachers also use the information gathered from assessments of their learning very well to set targets to take them to the next level. Parents and pupils are involved in checking on their improvement in these target areas. In the case of pupils with special educational needs, assessments of their success in learning determine the type and level of future support provided.

40 Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of how well pupils are learning in most of the other subjects. However, there is scope to improve the assessment of pupils' progress in ICT and religious education to raise the level of challenge in the work provided. Similarly, in history and geography, the information teachers gather on what pupils know and understand, is not always used to plan the next learning stage. As a result, the learning of the more able pupils is not sufficiently extended.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 Parents continue to express strong support for the school and, in general, hold it in high regard. Links with parents also remain strong and, as a result, a good home-school partnership has been sustained.

42 The school provides ample opportunities throughout the year for parents to talk directly with teachers about their children's progress and, in addition, regularly sends them details of current targets.

Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory. However, in some instances, the sections dealing with subjects other than mathematics, English and science do not inform parents of their children's strengths and weaknesses. On-going correspondence keeps parents well informed about life generally in school, and includes termly letters from teachers about forthcoming classwork. The governors' annual report fully meets requirements. The prospectus, however, does contain one factual error. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children entirely from assemblies. They can only exercise this right when it relates to the element of collective worship. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about all developments and invited to all review meetings.

43 The head teacher and governors frequently consult parents through questionnaires and use the findings to help sustain the good home school links. A small number of parents feel that the amount of homework could be better regulated. However, homework is used suitably to reinforce pupils' learning of the basic literacy and numeracy skills. Several good examples of marked work in English and mathematics over the school year were noted. Parents continue to give good support to activities, such as class assemblies, drama productions and events organised by the Parent Teachers Association. Parental help in school, however, has declined since the previous inspection because most parents now work or have other commitments.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44 The quality of leadership and management within the school is good. Since the previous inspection, relationships between key members of staff have remained very positive with roles that are well defined. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and leads by example. The effective partnership between the governors, deputy head teacher and the senior management team supports her leadership of the school. The school's development plan is comprehensive and focused, with financial implications clearly outlined. The school's needs are clearly stated, communicated, and linked to the standards achieved by the pupils.

45 The school ethos ensures a good standard of behaviour and a good working environment. In addition, the school has a strong sense of care towards its pupils. The speech and language unit is very well managed. In the unit and in classrooms, teachers and support staff operate very effectively. Support staff play an important role in teaching and monitoring the progress of pupils with a range of special needs. They provide valuable records and provide good links with external agencies.

46 Governors have a clear understanding of the school and fulfil their statutory duties well. They regularly check on the work of the school through visits, head teacher's reports and by studying assessment results. They make good use of their findings to plan future developments. They act as critical friends and raise important questions about school performance. This enables them to gain a good understanding of the needs of specific groups of pupils. Some governors work in school, for example to support pupils in ICT lessons or to order, organise and distribute school uniform. They often visit with a specific focus, for example, observing the pupils at lunchtime or looking at the books in the school to evaluate them in terms of equal opportunities and cultural mix. They write a report of their visits and these reports inform the senior management team and other governors of their findings. The head teacher and senior management team provide the governors with accurate information on which to base their decision-making. The governors make good use of questionnaires for both the pupils and the parents to find out if there are areas they wish to be informed about, are concerned about or are pleased with. They know the school well and understand areas that need to be developed. For example, they share the concerns of the parents about standards in ICT and the impact of the lack of sufficient, accessible and reliable equipment for the teaching of ICT.

47 School performance information, including attendance figures and tests results, is analysed in detail and shared with staff and governors. This ensures that there is a continuous focus on driving up standards. Systems to check the performance of teachers and provide training are well established and targets are set for teachers and the school as a whole to bring about the desired improvements. Lessons are observed regularly and teachers receive feedback, highlighting good qualities and identifying areas for improvement. The head teacher also samples work across the school, focussing on particular aspects, for example, marking. However, although the majority of pupils' work is marked carefully the head teacher is aware that in some subjects teachers do not always write comments to show pupils what they need to do to improve.

48 The monitoring of standards of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science has been thorough and this has had a positive impact on the standards in these subjects. However, in subjects other than the core, the monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work does not always highlight the correct areas for improvement, such as the level of challenge for the more able pupils. This makes it harder for subject leaders to check on standards and to ensure that work for pupils of different abilities is planned for. This is an area for development, which has been identified by the school in the most recent improvement plan.

49 Educational priorities are supported well through the school's financial planning. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate targets and ensures that resources are directed towards raising pupils' attainment. The personnel, resources and timing are identified clearly, and there are sound criteria by which the impact of these developments can be judged. New developments are linked appropriately to the annual budget. Governors have managed finances well to overcome budget deficits in the past. Careful housekeeping and additional government grants have resulted in a recently acquired budget surplus. However, this is already earmarked for much needed improvements in ICT and a school redecoration plan. The school makes good use of resources allocated to support specific groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs. The governors' finance committee monitors the school budget regularly and satisfactory financial controls are in place. All recommendations made in the last financial audit have been acted upon. The principles of best value are applied very well. The school seeks competitive tenders for all major spending decisions to ensure it receives good value for money. It assesses its performance in comparison with other schools, and consults widely using questionnaires to gain opinions. Day-to-day administration is efficient and computers used effectively for placing orders and for keeping pupils' records.

50 The school continues to have good staffing levels and adequate accommodation for the number of pupils on role. Overall, it is maintained in a satisfactory condition and kept clean. Classrooms are suitably furnished and displays, generally, are of high quality and include significant amounts of pupils' own work. Outside, the grounds contain a large grassed field and suitably-sized tarmaced play area. Resources to support pupils' learning are good overall, although are unsatisfactory for the teaching of ICT.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 To continue the improvements made, the head teacher, governors and staff should now:

(1) Raise standards in ICT in the junior classes by:

- Ensuring that pupils in all classes have regular opportunities to use computers.
- Fully implementing the plans that show the ICT skills to be developed in each year group.
- Ensuring that ICT is used to enhance pupils' learning in the different subjects.
- Devising a means of assessing pupils' learning in ICT and use the results to guide future planning.
- Checking on standards and on the quality of teaching and learning.

(Paragraphs 8, 21, 40, 97, 98, 99, 100 and 101)

(2) Further improve pupils' writing by:

- Raising standards of presentation.
- Encouraging pupils to write about their learning experiences in other subjects.

(Paragraphs 5, 14, 20, 68, 71, 91 and 93)

(3) Improve the learning of the more able pupils in religious education, geography and history by:

- Raising teachers' expectations of what the more able pupils are capable of achieving in these subjects.
- Using assessments of their learning to provide sufficiently challenging work
- Marking pupils' work more helpfully to show them how to improve.
- Ensuring that standards, teaching and learning are carefully monitored.

(Paragraphs 9, 10, 23, 25, 27, 30, 40, 48, 88, 92, 95, 96, 108 and 111)

THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT

52 In addition to the mainstream special educational needs support there is additional provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties who have a specific special educational need. The provision for these pupils is very good with some excellent features. The unit's provision has continued to improve since the last inspection. Firstly, despite admitting pupils with an increasing severity of autistic disorders and associated learning difficulties, there has been an improvement in the level of inclusion in mainstream classes because the planning between staff ensures that pupils' individual needs are effectively met. Secondly, the quality of teaching, supplemented by the professional expertise of the learning support assistants, has improved and has led to improved learning for the pupils. Thirdly, there is a greater degree of liaison between the unit and class teachers and this results in a much clearer understanding of pupils' individual learning targets. All pupils are fully included in mainstream classes and have full access to the National Curriculum. They spend an appropriate proportion of their time in a specialist base. The base is well resourced, well staffed and very skilfully led and managed. Pupils in the unit are achieving below the national expectations in English, mathematics and science. However they receive very good levels of support from the staff of the speech and language unit, the speech and language therapist and specialist learning support assistants. Consequently they make very good progress towards the specific learning targets set out in their individual education plans. This is very obvious in the pupils' improvement in their listening, language, literacy, numeracy and personal and social development.

53 The school has established an excellent ethos for the inclusion of pupils with speech and language difficulties. This is because all pupils and staff have very positive attitudes towards the pupils with speech and language difficulties and results in the very effective promotion of respect and understanding for the differences between groups of pupils. The specialist support assistants are good role models for pupils and use their talents and skills to nurture pupils' maturity and involvement in discussions and in the general life of the school.

54 The quality of the specialist teaching of pupils with speech and language difficulties is very good. There are very thorough procedures for joint planning between class teachers and the teachers in the speech and language unit and support staff. This leads to lessons with challenging activities, which are accurately matched to pupils' abilities. The teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. As a result pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, apply themselves conscientiously and persevere with tasks. Consequently they have high levels of self-esteem and their confidence in communicating with others is impressive and a good example of the benefits of the inclusion policy of the school. The teachers have very secure subject knowledge, question pupils skilfully and provide many opportunities for them to be actively involved in lessons. For example, in a science lesson pupils conducted an experiment into what foods that they liked and recorded their findings in a data base on the computer. In the very good lessons a range of strategies are used to captivate pupils' interests and build upon the very good relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils. In these lessons, teachers transmit their enthusiasm for the topic being taught, give supportive feedback and set targets for pupils to help them make the progress they are capable of. Pupils are able to work individually and co-operatively in groups, are always engrossed in the activities and have a real enjoyment of learning. The high level of expertise and hard work of the learning support assistants considerably enhance the teaching. The support assistants have immense skill in anticipating pupils' needs and therefore pre-empt many potential difficulties.

55 The curriculum provision for pupils in the unit is very good. They have full access to the National Curriculum and are making very good progress in all subjects. They are fully included in every aspect of school life and are valued members of the school community; for example pupils based in the unit are members of the School Council and participate in outdoor and adventurous activities.

The individual education plans effectively identify specific learning targets, particularly in language. They are implemented to a very good standard by all the staff. Pupils' progress is carefully assessed, monitored and evaluated. The school is rightly proud of its provision and has the active support of the whole school community.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	21	22	0	0	0
Percentage	2	14	41	43	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	186
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	33

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	11	14	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	22	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88% (87%)	92% (90%)	88% (94%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	22	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88% (90%)	92% (94%)	96% (90%)
	National	85% (85%)	89% (89%)	89% (89%)

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

Where the number of boys or girls is 10 or less, figures are omitted.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	9	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	17	22
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	28	24	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85% (71%)	73% (61%)	(94%) (82%)
	National	75% (75%)	73% (71%)	86% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	16	20
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	26	25	-
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79% (N/A)	76% (N/A)	88% (N/A)
	National	73% (72%)	74% (74%)	82% (82%)

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

Where the number of boys or girls is 10 or less, figures are omitted.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	178	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	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4.8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	555,554
Total expenditure	551,852
Expenditure per pupil	2,816
Balance brought forward from previous year	54,181

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5
Total number of education support staff	0.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

Balance carried forward to next year	57,883
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	41	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	40	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	45	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	55	17	0	2
The teaching is good.	61	37	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	46	7	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	34	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	36	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	54	7	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	37	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	40	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	46	7	2	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56 Thirty children attend part time in the nursery and 15 children attend in the reception class, although some are still part time as the inspection took place very early in the school year. When the children start in the nursery their knowledge, skills and understanding are generally at the level expected for their age although there is a wide range of ability. It includes some children who have specific learning difficulties and higher attaining children.

57 Children make good progress in the nursery because good teaching and stimulating activities develops them in all the areas of learning. Children make steady progress in the reception class. The quality of teaching in the reception class is satisfactory but more variable because the recent frequent changes of staff have made it difficult to use the assessment information to pinpoint the children's attainment. However, staff work hard to plan appropriate activities which ensure the children use all their senses to learn. By the time they start in the reception class, they have made good gains in all areas and particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. They settle into routines very quickly and are ready to learn. This also helps those children new to the school in the reception class to settle in quickly. By the end of the reception year, children's attainment is in line with the expected levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their mathematical, creative and physical development. In personal, social and emotional development and in communication and language, children attain above the expected levels. Staff provide a calm and supportive environment which quickly establishes routines so new children quickly become confident. The teachers are very aware of the needs of young children and make appropriate changes to lessons in order to meet their levels of concentration.

Personal, social and emotional development

58 Children make good progress during their time in the nursery and reception classes. Staff have high expectations and are skilful at working with young children, recognising their individual personalities and managing them very well. Through well planned activities and effective support the children learn to listen to each other, share and play well together, and choose from the range of activities provided. They quickly gain in confidence and are soon fully involved. Where a child has a particular difficulty settling, parents are invited to stay and help until their child becomes assured and confident.

59 Many children concentrate well for a long period of time and stay at chosen activities even when an adult is not present. The children play well alongside each other with bricks and rail tracks and the small group activities encourage children to talk with each other. Staff plan very good opportunities for children to think about their own experiences and to ask searching questions. While watching the bathing of a small baby, children were enthralled as the mother applied talcum powder. One child asked, "will I be a baby again?" in an emotional response to the experience. Staff plan other group activities which provide good opportunities to develop children's confidence speaking within a group. They join in happily with nursery rhymes and songs and share stories. Children who have attended the nursery for a few days are confident to sing on their own to the whole group. The children are encouraged to clap and learn to appreciate other people's attempts. By being aware of individual needs and supporting children effectively, staff build very good relationships in a calm and purposeful setting.

Communication, language and literacy

60 Children make good progress developing their skills across all the aspects including reading, writing, and speaking and listening. This is because the staff plan a wide range of activities to develop children's experiences and vocabulary. They are skilful at asking questions to develop children's thinking. The majority of the children reach the standards expected. Children with special educational needs receive good support from all members of staff. Their learning needs are identified early and tackled quickly, enabling them to make very good progress. The co-ordinator for the nursery and reception class has developed her knowledge of the needs of children with learning difficulties by working closely with the staff in the speech and language unit.

61 Staff give a high priority to developing children's spoken language. They clearly identify new vocabulary and children are encouraged to answer in longer sentences. Staff provide good role models when they are matching pictures with the children. They ask questions such as "can you match the green pea pod?" This provides the children with good descriptive language. In the reception class, the children find out about different fruit from a story and then use a 'feely bag' to guess what is inside. The children and the teacher carefully build up longer descriptions. They are encouraged to use all their senses to learn about these new experiences. The children enjoy listening to stories and remember details well. They are encouraged to take games and books home to share. In the nursery the children show their understanding that print has meaning and can identify where the words are on the page. The children in the reception class are beginning to recognise sounds of letters and some can write their name. The writing of the more able children shows a good understanding of the way in which sounds build words. The staff plan valuable activities to encourage children to write and they keep detailed notes about the children's achievements when they work with them in their groups. The majority of the children meet the expected level in writing by the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

62 Children make steady progress in all areas of mathematics and significantly improve their vocabulary. In counting and recognising numbers, children in the nursery and reception classes are achieving the expected levels. They make good gains in describing objects using mathematical language through a wide range of activities. They talk about long and short arms when making dough models and describe objects appropriately as heavy and light.

63 In the nursery and reception classes, staff provide many opportunities to practice counting objects accurately. Many children can recite their numbers to ten and some beyond twenty but they have more difficulty in counting objects. They count the number of animals in pictures, and use the hopscotch game in the playground to develop number recognition. They sing number songs and rhymes to practice counting forwards and backwards practising simple adding and taking away one. Teachers are skilful at asking different levels of questions of children with different abilities. In the song, "Ten in the bed" the reception teacher asked a child how many had fallen out of the bed altogether. He worked it out accurately and provided all the children with the opportunity to practice counting back from a given number. The majority of children achieve the expected levels by the end of the reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64 Children have a sound general knowledge when they start school and the staff build effectively on this in the nursery and reception classes. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall and good in the nursery. By the end of the reception year children have a broad general knowledge at the level expected. Teachers plan interesting and appropriate activities that allow

children to explore and widen their experiences. Staff provide good support to help children explain their understanding and responses. In the nursery, for example, children play with wet and dry sand and water and learn about their different qualities when pouring them into containers. The children think about themselves and learn about the features of faces and the shapes of their bodies through playing with dough and painting self-portraits. The reception children extend their understanding of living things by visiting a farm and looking at different animals and their babies. These activities build well on their previous work and extend their vocabulary and knowledge effectively.

65 In the reception classes, the children have a satisfactory level of skills with the computer mouse to click on icons and move shapes around the screen. They also use saws and glue safely to create small pictures with wood and thick card. At this early stage in the term staff plan a range of activities to familiarise new children with areas in the nursery and around the school. These enable the children to become confident quickly in the new environment.

Physical development

66 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and children make steady progress in this area of learning. Most of them achieve the levels expected by the end of the reception year. Children take part in outdoor play almost every day and staff interact well with children, sharing games and teaching the skills of throwing and catching. Children play with prams and tricycles, although the larger toys are less accessible for staff until the proposed development of the outside play area is completed. In the hall, the reception children develop a good sense of space around them. The staff encourage them to move in a variety of ways, extending their understanding of body shapes through very good demonstrations. Children learn about the benefits of exercise and talk about the way in which it affects their heart. One child described hers as “boiling” when asked to feel the difference after vigorous movement. The children thoroughly enjoy their lessons and listen very well to instructions.

Creative development

67 Children start in the nursery with average skills expected and make good progress in developing their skills across a wide range of activities. In the nursery children draw, paint and make collage pictures using different materials. They learn about colour when looking at their faces and eyes and begin to position the features appropriately on their faces. They begin to use paint programs on the computer and learn the names of colours as they draw their houses. In the reception class, teaching is satisfactory and children make steady progress. By the end of the reception year, children reach the expected level. Children use crayons, chalks and paint to print and draw fruit which they learned about in a story. Most of the children handle the materials well but need adult supervision to look carefully at details. When staff discuss these with the children they produce interesting and well-shaped fruits. In the baby clinic they learn about the care of others and act taking their poorly child to find out what is wrong. This extends into the playground activity where boys and girls take their babies for walk to look at the garden. The presence of a member of staff helps to extend the play effectively. Questions give children good opportunities to talk about their play and suggest new activities.

ENGLISH

68 Pupils achieve well to reach above average standards in reading and writing by the age of seven and high standards in English by the age of 11. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with speech and language difficulties, make very good progress throughout the school. Since the last inspection standards have improved and are high for a number of reasons. The learning of the more able pupils is fully extended and, as a result, many pupils reach the higher levels. Also,

assessment procedures have improved and pupils' progress is now closely monitored with targets being set to enable them to reach the next level of attainment. Classroom assistants are well deployed and are very effective in helping pupils overcome their difficulties, giving them the confidence and determination to work harder. In addition, the quality of teaching has improved and there is now an emphasis on giving time for pupils to draft their writing so that they can check and refine their work. However, the standard of writing in both infant and junior classes is not as good as that being achieved in reading. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and improve their writing for different purposes in subjects, such as history, geography and religious education.

69 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well above the national expectation and is a strength of the school. In both infant and junior classes, pupils express themselves confidently and clearly, using a wide range of vocabulary. They listen attentively to their teachers, and to each other, and contribute maturely to group and class discussions. For example Year 6 pupils made astute comments about the effectiveness of a particular poet in making poetry humorous and enjoyable. In lessons, pupils listen intently to stories, poems, non-fiction texts and to teachers' comments. They are willing to ask and answer questions and are very enthusiastic about contributing their own ideas. Pupils' skills are developed well through the planned opportunities to express opinions about events and characters. Speaking skills are particularly enhanced when there are appropriate links with other subjects. For example in a science lesson, pupils in the speech and language unit, discussed the foods that they like and significantly added to their vocabulary.

70 By the end of Year 2, the good standard of reading is evident in the way pupils read with fluency and expression. This is because pupils are listened to regularly at home and at school and the school has good procedures for monitoring their progress. When reading, pupils use picture or contextual clues effectively and draw on their good understanding of how letters sounds can be blended to read unknown words. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils have a reading age well above that expected of 11 year-olds. Pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Most pupils are fully independent readers who read accurately and expressively with good comprehension. Pupils justify their choice of favourite author and are able to review books critically, taking account of aspects such as character and plot. The school is very successful in whetting the pupils' appetite for reading and the outcome is that pupils enjoy books and have very good reading habits.

71 Pupils' attainment in writing is just above the levels expected by the age of seven and 11. Infant pupils achieve well and give careful attention to handwriting, punctuation and spelling. By the end of Year 2 pupils' writing shows clear structure and the correct use of verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Pupils write in clear sentences and adapt their writing well to suit the purpose. For example, Year 2 pupils write clear instructions about 'How to make a sock puppet' and produce very good extended writing for a story entitled 'The day the giant came to town'. Junior pupils also achieve well in a number of aspects of writing and by the end of Year 6 most pupils are able to plan and redraft their written work effectively, including stories, drama scripts, instructions, poetry and letters. Some of the work is of a very high standard; in particular Year 6 pupils wrote with feeling and expression when continuing the story of the book 'The Silver Sword'. Pupils write in a range of styles, paying good attention to punctuation and employing specific techniques, such as the use of similes and alliteration. The good work done in developing pupils' skills in persuasive writing is a significant contribution to their personal development. For example, Year 6 pupils debated the question 'Should children under 16 be allowed to baby-sit?'. They are able to construct powerful letters with convincing arguments on a number of issues, ranging from letters of complaint against poor service to the arguments against the closure of the school swimming pool. Not all teachers place enough emphasis on careful legible handwriting. This varies from class to class and the presentation of pupils' work is often weak and does not do justice to their true abilities.

72 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of English, teach with enthusiasm and confidence and, as a result, pupils enjoy what they are learning. This leads to pupils being motivated, working hard and concentrating for sustained periods of time. Excellent and very good teaching occurs in lessons with pupils with speech and language difficulties. These lessons are thoroughly prepared, expectations are high and challenging activities are used to captivate pupils' interests. As a result, pupils show great interest in their lessons, behave very well and respond enthusiastically to the teachers' skilful questioning. The good relationships between teachers encourage pupils to participate willingly in discussions, freely offering their opinions and feelings. Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and learning and set targets for pupils to help them make progress. Teaching has a good balance of class, group and individual work. Most pupils are able to work both independently and collaboratively and this leads to good relationships with each other. A strength of the teaching is that teachers and support staff collaborate very effectively to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all English activities.

73 The subject leader provides good leadership and management and has established clear priorities for the subject's future development. There are effective procedures for checking on and improving the teaching of English and literacy throughout the school. This results in teachers reflecting on their teaching and constantly striving to improve the quality of pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

MATHEMATICS

74 Standards in mathematics are now above average at the ages seven and 11. This is higher than at the time of the last inspection. Trends have fluctuated. Standards slipped in 2000 and fell to their lowest point in 2001, when high numbers of pupils with special educational needs affected results. In the past, standards in mathematics have never been as high as in either English or science, although they are now catching up. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented particularly well and this has raised the quality of teaching. The assessment of children's learning is also much better and the subject leader analyses all results to pinpoint weaker areas and drive through improvements. In addition, the subject leader sets a good example of how the subject should be taught and is exerting an increasingly strong influence over teaching in other classes. Leadership is good and standards are continuing to rise.

75 Overall, pupils achieve well as they move through school. They make steady progress in Year 1 where they concentrate well for lengthy periods and play mathematical games enthusiastically. They could achieve more if they were set specific goals to aim for when they work individually or in small groups. Pupils' progress accelerates in Year 2. The level of challenge is high and pupils have mathematics targets pasted into their books to show them exactly where they are heading. As a result, many reach levels higher than expected by the age of seven. In Year 2, most pupils confidently handle numbers to 100 and master the processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with numbers to 20.

76 Average and above average pupils achieve well in junior classes. In recent years the culture has changed. Teachers are no longer satisfied to take their pupils only as far as the level of work prescribed for their year group. They are ambitious for their pupils to move further ahead. This is particularly noticeable in Year 6 where increasing numbers of pupils reach levels beyond those expected by the age of 11. Occasionally gifted pupils reach very high levels. By the age of 11 most pupils perform well in all areas of mathematics. Their understanding of number, including decimals, fractions and percentages is well grounded. They are confident in working with shape, angles and handling data. They have good opportunities to apply their learning to solve mathematical problems. This gives them confidence to look for and find solutions in several different ways. Most pupils respond well to the demands placed upon them. Pupils with special educational needs in all classes, infant and junior, make very good progress. They are never left to struggle and are always well supported by teachers and very capable classroom assistants who talk to them quietly and encourage them to suggest ideas. Occasionally, when pupils have started their own work, teachers omit to check that they have fully understood the tasks. When this happens, these pupils make unnecessary errors. There is potential to improve teaching and learning in this respect. There is also room for improvement in the way pupils present their work in junior classes. In Year 4, presentation is of a very high standard but this is not the case in other classes. Although pupils are encouraged to show their working out, which is a good feature, there are occasions when untidy writing and careless positioning of numbers leads to miscalculation.

77 Teaching and learning are generally good. Teaching is often very good in Years 2 and 6. Lessons always begin with a quickly paced mental mathematics session. Pupils are swept along, thinking hard and trying to be the first to answer the questions. These sessions contribute greatly to speedy, but accurate, number calculation. In most lessons, pupils are invited to estimate, approximate and suggest their own ways of tackling mathematical problems. This very effectively improves their speaking and listening skills and develops their powers of reasoning. In addition, pupils come to realise that there are many ways to find an answer and this deepens and broadens their mathematical understanding. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were asked to look at the value of the tens and units digits in numbers written on a card and anticipate where their number would fit into a sequence

of numbers being written on the whiteboard. The teacher instilled a sense of urgency and challenge by saying, "Call out your number before I have time to write it on the board, if you can." This illustrates how well pupils are encouraged to think. In all classes, teachers manage pupils well and provide a positive climate of learning. This enables teachers to give uninterrupted time to each different group during the week. These discussions are extremely valuable because teachers can assess how well pupils understand. Their finished work is carefully marked and the outcomes are used as basis for starting the next lesson. Although pupils have good opportunities to investigate numbers, computers are not used enough. This restricts pupils' understanding of just how effective computers can be in handling numbers and is an area requiring improvement.

SCIENCE

78 Standards in science are above average for children who are seven years old and well above average for pupils who are 11 years old. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection because of the emphasis given to the subject as a whole and to the skills of scientific enquiry in particular. The quality of teaching is good with well-planned activities that meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of learning but do not pay enough attention to the presentation of work. Therefore, pupils' written work is sometimes untidy and difficult to read. The school has carefully analysed results of national assessments made of pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers are well informed about pupils' stronger and weaker areas of learning and they make appropriate changes in their planning to strengthen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good levels of support in the speech and language unit and in classes, from well-trained and knowledgeable staff. This enables them to make very good progress. Subject leadership is good and has been effective in improving standards by monitoring all aspects of the subject including teaching, learning, and provision of resources.

79 Pupils achieve well in infant classes. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of scientific vocabulary well for all pupils, beginning in Year 1. Therefore most pupils write detailed accounts and draw informative diagrams of their investigations. On occasions, the marking of their work reflects the emphasis on good spelling and punctuation, rather than the scientific content. By the age of seven, most pupils have a good understanding of what it means to carry out a fair test. They measure and record the outcomes accurately, which helps them to understand and explain differences, for example, in the speed a vehicle travels down a ramp. Their use of scientific vocabulary, for instance, when talking about "reversible changes" from liquids to solids, is accurately described in their written work. Good use is made of numeracy and literacy skills in science and pupils make good progress in recording their findings.

80 Pupils achieve well in the junior classes. The development of practical activities means that pupils are well motivated to learn and have some control over their own learning. Pupils learn effectively how to test out their ideas, control the factors that might account for their results and draw logical conclusions. They make effective use of bar charts, and simple graphs to present their findings and many pupils read the graphs accurately to discover further information. Pupils become competent in gathering information from books, CD-ROM's and computer programmes when studying seed dispersal, for example. In Year 5, these research skills are developed well enough for pupils to extract information using contents pages and indexes. Teachers are skilful in posing questions to develop pupils' thinking and understanding. However, pupils in Year 3 have some difficulty in drawing conclusions and the teacher's evaluation of the lesson focuses clearly on the need to reinforce this aspect of their work.

81 The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. This enables them to play a full part in lessons, undertake experiments and share their ideas with other pupils. Teachers manage pupils well and ensure that they remain well focussed on practical tasks. Staff maintain a purposeful working atmosphere by checking on work in different groups and offering support. Pupils listen well to their teachers and are confident to ask and answer questions. Resources are accessible for pupils and staff and are used effectively to extend pupils' experiences. In Year 3, for example, pupils are given a range of materials to test for magnetism while in Year 5 a wide collection of seeds and plants are available to examine. These activities widen pupils' knowledge and help them to understand difficult ideas, such as seed germination. Pupils have good opportunities to make predictions and test out their ideas. They develop their understanding well by writing down what they know at the beginning of each topic. They then assess what they have learned by the end of the topic. This helps both pupils and teachers to assess their progress.

ART AND DESIGN

82 Pupils achieve well to reach standards higher than expected at the ages of seven and 11. The quality of teaching and learning is evident in the effective displays throughout the school, including batik work by pupils in Years 4 and 5, and whole school projects worked on with a visiting artist. Effective subject leadership has enabled the good standards to continue since the last inspection. Pupils experience a wide range of techniques using a variety of materials. They investigate ideas well, exploring shape and texture through their drawings and painting and the development of their artistic skills is good. Pupils' learning in art is valuable in reinforcing their understanding of other subjects. For example, by studying Islamic art, pupils deepen their knowledge of other religions. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good quality support they receive from specialist teachers and support staff.

83 Infant pupils mix primary colours effectively and draw and paint well from direct observations, such as portraits. They are able to work with natural material to decorate small branches and create an arrangement. Junior pupils replicate the work of famous artists to good effect. For example, Year 4 pupils, capture the styles Van Gogh and Rousseau, in their artwork and Year 6 pupils create work in the style of Paul Klee, using colours effectively. A study of Rene Magritte inspired the pupils to create a well-made and effective collage in the style of the artist.

84 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' use of resources, visits and visiting artists supports the pupils' work and development of skills well. Teachers communicate clearly what they want the pupils to learn. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teachers' careful explanation of ways of representing the drawing of movement, helped pupils to learn a difficult technique. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long leaving little time for pupils to practice and improve their skills. ICT is very seldom used, which limits pupils' understanding of graphics.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85 Standards are at the level expected at the ages of seven and 11 as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils often produce work of good quality and their design skills are satisfactory but their evaluation and understanding of how to improve and modify their work are not at the same high level. This is because pupils are not always encouraged to reflect on the quality of their work and explain how they might improve it on a future occasion. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject leader has expertise and is keen to raise standards. This ensures that the subject continues to have an important place in the school's curriculum. The weaknesses in pupils' evaluation of what they have made have been recognised and action has been taken to improve this area.

86 Pupils achieve steadily through Years 1 and 2. In Year 2 they design puppets well from different angles and label their drawings. They are able to compare different ways to join materials and begin to handle needle and thread dexterously to sew the puppets. Pupils develop a clear understanding of working safety and the importance of hygiene when preparing food. Pupils achieve steadily in the juniors and older pupils are able to explain clearly that planning is important in making an object. They use a range of tools competently and show creativity in the decoration of the finished item. Year 6 pupils design and make hats and slippers, while working in pairs, which will fit both partners comfortably but without being too loose or tight. ICT is seldom used to support learning, for example, to examine and modify designs. Pupils work well together in pairs and small groups and this has a positive impact on their social development.

87 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are well managed and well organised. Practical activities such as sawing wood are carefully supervised. The skills of making

such as cutting, joining and painting are taught well. This is why pupils' finished work is often of good quality. Lessons are planned well to build onto previously learned skills, for example, looking at previous designs made. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress. Classroom assistants ensure they understand what to do and adapt the use of tools to suit their learning needs, for example, providing larger needles for sewing. The teacher's clear explanation of the instructions ensures that pupils learn, for example in joining two pieces of fabric by sewing. However, the needs of the more able pupils are seldom highlighted in the planning. As a result, not enough is expected of their capacity to reflect on the quality of their work and make modifications. This limits the progress they make.

GEOGRAPHY

88 Standards in geography are at the levels expected for pupils aged seven and 11. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection, although guidance for teachers is better. However, few pupils reach above average standards. This is because a few teachers do not plan in sufficient depth all the topics they are expected to teach. Lesson plans do not identify what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn in lessons. This results in a lack of challenge for more able pupils. There are few opportunities for pupils to use their good writing skills in geography.

89 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and they make very good progress matched to their abilities. This is because of the very good teaching in the speech and language unit. When these pupils are integrated into mainstream classes, teachers and assistants support them very well.

90 Pupils achieve steadily in infant classes. In Year 2 they make perceptive comparisons with the island of Struay and their own town of Eaglescliffe, and they are beginning to justify their opinions. For example, one pupil wrote, "I would choose to live in Eaglescliffe because I like being in a big school". Pupils are learning to recognise places beyond this country, and they follow the journeys of Barnaby Bear with enthusiasm. In junior classes, pupils achieve steadily in understanding and making maps and in using the correct geographical vocabulary. For example, in Year 6, pupils explain terms accurately, such as 'meandering' when describing the course of a river. These pupils also work collaboratively in small groups, researching information to produce booklets about mountains like Ben Nevis and Snowdon. However, pupils' knowledge about India, the school's chosen country for study, is not good enough. This is one of the reasons why standards are no better than satisfactory.

91 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers question pupils well about what they have previously learnt and what they are learning in lessons. However, this information is not always used to plan future lessons that provide activities that challenge more able pupils. Teachers make effective use of educational visits and successfully link learning in geography with subjects like mathematics. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory but it is better in some classes than others. For example, work is often only ticked, and some work in Years 3 and 4 is not marked. This impacts on the rate of pupils' learning, because they do not know what they need to do to improve. Too often, teachers have low expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' work.

92 The management of geography is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, subject planning has aimed particularly at promoting pupils' multicultural understanding. In Year 6, pupils are aware of the impact of too much, or too little, water in some developing countries. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet as effective as it could be. Whilst the subject leader looks at teachers' planning, and pupils' work, what needs to be improved is not identified well enough. If this were better, the school would have a clearer picture about standards in the subject and be able to improve the inconsistencies in lesson planning and the marking of pupils' work.

HISTORY

93 Standards in history match the levels expected for pupils aged seven and 11. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection, although teachers now benefit from clearer guidance on how and what to teach. However, few pupils reach above average standards because teachers seldom plan activities to further the learning of the more able pupils. In particular, they do not have enough opportunities to use and extend their good writing skills in the junior classes. The quality of teachers' marking and expectations of the presentation of pupils' work are much better in some classes than others. Despite these shortcomings, pupils achieve steadily overall. Those pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because specialist teachers and support assistants support them very well.

94 In infant classes, pupils develop a growing awareness of the differences between the past and present and of the passage of time. In Year 2, for example, pupils sequence major events correctly on a simple 'time line,' and more able pupils use their writing skills well to explain why things happened as they did in the past. For example, to account for why the fire of London spread so quickly. In junior classes, pupils are learning to explain some of the differences between periods of history by looking at objects of the past. In Year 6 pupils prepared their own questionnaires to ask older relatives about their personal experiences. As a result, they have a good understanding of how people lived during the Second World War. Pupils use a range of evidence to find out about the past, including the Internet. There are few opportunities for pupils to write in the first person giving account of historical events, or for them to write accounts about the consequences of historical events and changes.

95 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use resources, including visits and visitors, to support pupils' learning well. Some pupils in Year 6 recalled their visit to a local Roman fort in Year 3, and the day they spent acting as Victorian school children in Year 5. By asking probing questions, teachers find out what pupils have learnt, but this information is not used well enough to plan future lessons to extend the learning of the more able pupils. This is why standards are no better than satisfactory. There is scope to improve the marking of pupils' work, which is often simply ticked, and some work in Year 4 was unmarked. This impacts on the rate of pupils' learning because they do not know what they need to do to improve. Teachers seldom comment on pupils' poorly presented work.

96 History is managed satisfactorily. Since the last inspection, the subject leader has improved the range of resources, particularly objects that tell about the past. The monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour and is not effective enough. The subject leader looks at teachers' planning and collects examples of pupils work at the end of the year, but what needs to improve is not identified well enough. If this were better, the school would have a clearer picture about standards in the subject, and be able to improve the inconsistencies in lesson planning and the marking of pupils' work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97 Standards in ICT are at the level expected at the age of seven but below the level expected for pupils aged 11. Standards in junior classes are comparatively lower than they were at the time of the last inspection. The teaching and learning of ICT has not kept pace with national improvements. This is partly because the school has had a troubled history in updating the computers. Last year, for example, the new server would not function and programs could not operate in any of the classrooms. Developments ground to a halt until the problem was solved. However, although the computers are now more reliable, they are not used enough in normal classroom situations. As a result, Year 6 pupils are unsure of the procedures and processes to enable them to operate computers independently and

they do not have enough opportunities to learn and practise new skills. Staff and the governors are aware of the need to improve the access to machines and the use of ICT across the curriculum and have identified the need for a computer suite as a priority for development. The computers within the school are located around the building. This makes for difficulties because some of the pupils have to leave the classrooms to complete tasks. Teachers use projectors linked to laptop computers well to demonstrate skills, but the laptops are unreliable, often caused by battery failure, when used by the pupils and this limits their opportunities to consolidate their learning.

98 Pupils achieve steadily in infant classes but older pupils make slow progress because of the limited use of ICT in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs, particularly those in the unit, benefit from greater access to computers and from the programs tailored to their specific needs. This helps them to achieve well in ICT and in other subjects. Subject leadership is weak because the omission of ICT in teachers' planning and teaching has not been remedied. Currently, there is no certainty that more able pupils are given work to extend their skills. Much of the subject leader's time over the last 12 months has been used in dealing with faulty equipment and creating a suitable scheme of work. She also has other priorities, such as maintaining and developing the provision for children in the nursery.

99 By the age of seven, most pupils use a simple word processing program with only occasional help from the teacher. However, many are still hesitant about the position of keys on the keyboard and confuse the return, delete and enter keys when correcting their work. Their work shows that skills are developing steadily from simple mouse control in Year 1 to using a computer generated graph to answer questions about the data collected in Year 2. Most pupils are able to use a simple graphics program to present and modify images on screen. However, all the pupils are given the same tasks, irrespective of their different starting points.

100 In Year 3, pupils manipulate the fonts and size of a text competently and are able to use simple graphics and text in the same piece of work. Year 5 and 6 pupils understand how to give the correct commands to operate a programmable toy. They use spreadsheets at a basic level to analyse lists and add simple totals. However, although they can answer questions about information in a database, they are not able to create a simple database themselves, even in a program which has this facility. They are not sure how to enter simple formula into a spreadsheet to add or subtract lists of numbers. They had learned the formula but sufficient opportunities to practice were not available to reinforce their knowledge and skills. Year 6 work on presenting a combination of graphics and text closely resembles the example the teacher had demonstrated. Very few pupils had the knowledge or confidence to generate their own ideas. In discussions with older pupils, they explained that they do not always draft, correct and produce good quality work on the computer, but often 'write it out in their books, then use the computer'. As a result, pupils are unaware of the potential of ICT to make the handling, editing and presentation of information expedient. There are limited opportunities for all the pupils to access email although many of the older pupils do this from home, not at school. There is limited use of the internet for research, although some examples were seen in history.

101 ICT was used in very few lessons during the inspection. Teachers' planning and records of pupils' work indicate that teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory in the junior classes. Teaching builds insufficiently on pupils' prior knowledge and offers too few opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills. All teachers have undertaken specialist training and have satisfactory subject knowledge. There is satisfactory teaching of basic skills, such as the use of the keyboard, menus and the mouse in the infant classes. However, lack of opportunities to practice and apply these skills in other subjects is the weakness.

MUSIC

102 Standards are at the levels expected at the ages of seven and 11, as they were at the time of the last inspection. A fifth of the pupils learn to play musical instruments, including recorder, cello, violin and flute. Many of these pupils reach high standards in understanding musical notation and in performing. They often accompany singing and play pieces during school assemblies and concerts, which creates a suitable atmosphere and stimulates the interest of younger pupils. The subject benefits from sound leadership. Although the subject leader has only recently taken over, she has worked in other classes to build up a clear understanding of standards throughout the school and knows where more development is needed, such as greater use of ICT.

103 Pupils achieve steadily throughout the school. In infant classes, they respond well to encouragement to listen carefully and are able to repeat patterns and simple melodies accurately. By the age of seven, pupils have acquired a good repertoire of songs, which they sing enthusiastically. They know the names of the instruments and how to play them and are beginning to select sounds and instruments to illustrate parts of a story. Junior pupils pick up rhythms and new melodies quickly. They sing in tune and pronounce the words clearly. When teachers remind pupils to adopt a good singing posture, the quality of singing greatly improves. In lessons, pupils have good opportunities to listen to different types of music. For example, in Year 5 pupils have written some interesting descriptive accounts based on Grieg's, 'Hall of the Mountain King.' However, pupils' knowledge of different types of music and composers could be better if musical excerpts were played and discussed more often during school assemblies. By Year 6, pupils have acquired a good grasp of musical notation, which they use effectively to record their compositions.

104 Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully organised and well managed. For example, pupils are often arranged in a circle with musical instruments in the centre. This provides easy access to the instruments and enables all pupils to see and hear each other. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. Teachers and support staff are very mindful of their learning needs. They provide extra help and encouragement to ensure that pupil's confidence grows and that they are willing to answer questions and perform for other members of the class. This helps them to make good progress. The technical aspects of music are often taught well. For example in Year 6, pupils were able to use of what they had been taught to identify correctly the different phrases in a song. However, in lessons, teachers do not always give sufficient consideration to extending the learning of the more able pupils, although pupils with musical talent are well catered for through additional instrumental music sessions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105 Standards are higher than expected at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a strong commitment to extra-curricular activities. Pupils' learning and enjoyment of the subject benefits from the well-organised inter-school events and the input provided by coaches in activities, such as gymnastics and football. The skills gained in these sessions influence their achievements in normal class lessons. Infant and junior pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum through a good range of physical activities. This is undoubtedly due to good leadership of the subject. The subject leader, despite the pressures of all the other aspects of teaching, has continued to ensure that teams and clubs are staffed and available on a regular basis. All pupils have a thorough understanding of the relationship between exercise and health and fitness. These good qualities and above average standards have continued since the last inspection.

106 By the age of seven pupils are able to travel and balance well when moving across the floor. They perform simple skills with agility showing good control of their movements when running, walking and changing directions. In dance, Year 1 pupils combine a sequence of movements and are beginning

to pay attention to starting and finishing positions. By the age of 11, pupils have good levels of co-ordination and are agile and balanced in their movements. A strength is that pupils are able to make perceptive evaluations of their performances and are keen to refine their ideas in response to suggestions for improvement. Pupils have regular swimming lessons and the standard is good with the vast majority of pupils being able to swim 25 metres by the age of 11. In Years 3 to 6 pupils have very good opportunities to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities. The dedication and commitment of the school in organising two 3 day visits to outdoor centres has led to pupils having experiences in canoeing, climbing, abseiling, walking and orienteering. This has made a significant impact on pupils' personal development in promoting their confidence, self-esteem and team building skills.

107 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of demonstrations by pupils to show how movements should be done. Teachers show enthusiasm for the subject and use praise effectively to motivate pupils. This inspires pupils to try harder to improve and ensures that pupils are prepared to persevere with tasks and practice their skills. The space in the school hall is used well and teachers ensure that pupils are mindful of safety. Consequently pupils show an appreciation of the importance of warming up and relaxing after exercise. Pupils co-operate well in pairs and are sensitive when commenting on each other's performances. This is most evident when pupils from the speech and language unit are included in general class lessons. The good support they receive from teachers and assistants and encouragement from their peers helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108 Standards are at the levels prescribed for seven and 11 year olds in Stockton on Tees schools. These findings are similar to the last inspection, although there have been improvements. In particular, religious education now plays a greater part in raising pupils' awareness of other cultures. Enough time is allocated for the subject to be covered in sufficient depth in all year groups. Despite these improvements, few pupils reach above average standards. This is because the assessment of what pupils know and understand is not yet securely in place. As a result, more able pupils are not always challenged enough in lessons. The quality of planning for lessons is better in some classes than others. However, pupils achieve steadily overall.

109 In the infant classes, pupils have sound knowledge of the most important events in the life of Jesus. They are also aware of some important events and lives of Muslims. In Year 2, pupils gain important insights into the life of Jesus and Christianity. For example, they know that Jesus was a historical figure and explain why he had long hair and wore the clothes that he did. They write their own prayers and hopes for the future, and pupils understand what it means to 'belong' to a group. Junior pupils are beginning to understand some important similarities and differences between religions. For example, they know the Christian and Hindu creation stories well and by Year 6 they explain correctly the important festivals in Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. In Year 6, pupils are starting to understand the symbolism, and importance to Christians, of the Holy Trinity. However, standards are no better than satisfactory, because by Year 6, some pupils are still confused about the differences between Hindu and Muslim worship and the religious buildings used for that purpose.

110 Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although the differences in the quality of teachers' planning in some classes impacts on standards by Year 6. Some very good teaching and learning was seen in lessons with pupils in the Special Learning Unit, and in Year 3 where some pupils from the Unit were integrated with mainstream pupils. This was because teachers' planning was very thorough, relationships were very good and teachers' had high expectations of what pupils could do. Teachers use resources and visits to places of worship well to support pupils' learning. In Year 6, pupils talked intelligently about important aspects of a Jewish synagogue such as the Ark and the

Torah. Teachers use good questioning skills to assess what pupils already know and how well they are learning, but this information is not used well enough to inform future lesson planning in all classes. Pupils are not always given challenging activities. For example, pupils in Year 2 sequenced pictures of the Easter story and wrote a sentence about each picture. This same activity was repeated in Years 3 and 6, with pupils still only writing one sentence. Marking of pupils' work is generally supportive, but does not indicate what pupils need to do to improve.

111 Religious education is managed effectively. The subject leader has worked hard to provide teachers with guidance about the faiths they are expected to teach. Assessment was highlighted for development in the schools' Action planning following the last inspection, but this remains an area for improvement. There has been monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work. This is not yet as effective as it could be in giving an accurate picture of standards, improving the consistency of teachers' planning and the quality of marking of pupils' work. These weaknesses explain why standards are satisfactory rather than good.