

INSPECTION REPORT

DEAN BANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ferryhill, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114086

Head teacher: Mr J S Denham

Reporting inspector: Mr D Hardman
17794

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 26th September 2002

Inspection number: 247425

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dean Bank Ferryhill County Durham
Postcode:	DL17 8PP
Telephone number:	01740 651512
Fax number:	01740 654835
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Conroy
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17794	Mr D Hardman	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it?
				The school's results and achievements.
			Art and design	How well are the pupils taught?
			Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
			English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
13462	Mrs B Mothersdale	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?
10782	Mr H Moreton	Team inspector	Science	
			Design and technology	
			Special educational needs	
22881	Mr G Halliday	Team inspector	English	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Music	
			Physical education	
			Education inclusion	
			Citizenship	
30346	Mrs P Lowrie	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Geography	
			History	
			Foundation stage	

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited
14 Enterprise House
Kingsway
Team Valley
Gateshead
NE11 0SR.

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33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Dean Bank Primary School is a larger than average sized school situated on the edge of the small town of Ferryhill in County Durham. The area around the school has changed significantly since the time of the last inspection and is now one of high unemployment and social deprivation. However, there is a broad social mix in the school and the full range of ability is represented. The school's initial assessments of pupils' attainment when they start school show that many pupils are well below the levels expected for their age. There are 135 boys and 125 girls currently on roll. There are no pupils who are taught English as an additional language. There are 92 pupils eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Sixty two pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, this is broadly in line with the national average and five have statements of special educational need, which is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils with special educational needs have speech and communication difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties or moderate learning difficulties. There is a very high turnover of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal entry dates.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that is successful in creating an environment in which pupils feel secure and are keen to learn. Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and most behave well. Although the attainment of pupils remains well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science when compared to pupils in other schools, there are signs of improvement. The school has a high percentage of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the normal entry dates and this, coupled with the number who have special educational needs, affects its results. However, all pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress and learn effectively. The school is improving because of the commitment and hard work of all the staff and the good leadership and management of the head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff. The costs of the school are about the same as most primary schools and the quality of education provided means that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff, and the quality of teamwork by staff and governors, are good.
- The provision and teaching for children in the foundation stage, this is the reception class, is good.
- Pupils' attitudes are good. Relationships and opportunities for personal development are good. The caring, family atmosphere created in the school makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- There is a good curriculum, which is enriched through good links with the community and a good range of visits and visitors. The school works very hard to promote links with the parents.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and design and technology.
- The number of support staff in classrooms.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been satisfactory and sometimes good progress in dealing with the issues identified in the previous inspection in 1998. The management plan for the school provides a clear framework for the head teacher, senior management team and governors to set out and check on the progress of all initiatives. The school makes good use of established, clear guidelines to plan lessons. The efforts to raise standards in reading and writing by developing teachers' planning is leading to some improvements but the school system for setting targets in English and mathematics now needs to be refined so that pupils know exactly how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve further. The head teacher and subject co-ordinators are now playing an important part in the development of the curriculum. They have written policies and adapted national guidelines for their subjects and they lead discussions with other staff and governors. However, only the head teacher and the co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy regularly observe teaching and learning to check pupils' learning and progress. This system needs to be expanded to include all subject co-ordinators and so make a larger contribution to improving pupils' attainment. Governors fulfil their role well. They have taken positive steps to deal with most of the key issues identified in the last inspection and they play a full part in discussions to develop the curriculum both through their committee structure and in full meetings of the governing body. They evaluate the effects of spending on the standards pupils reach and have improved the quality of the school plans for improvement since the previous inspection. These show the priorities identified by the school, likely costs and the evaluation of effect on pupils' attainment and learning. The school is well set to meet its targets and continue to raise pupils' attainment and improve progress.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	E	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	B	D	E	C	
science	A	C	C	A	

In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, the school's results were well below the national average in English and mathematics and in line with the average for science. When compared to schools with a similar level of free school meals, pupils' performance was average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. The better results in science were mainly the result of teachers being allowed to read the questions to some pupils with special educational needs and so their limited language skills did not hold them back. Pupils' achievements in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 improved slightly in all subjects but comparisons with other schools are not yet available. The attainment of the present 11 year olds is well below the level expected in English and below the level in mathematics and science. A major cause of these low standards is the number of pupils with special educational needs and the high turnover of pupils in the school. For example, for pupils who were at the school and completed the National Curriculum tests as infants in 1998, there has been an improvement in their results in 2002 showing at least satisfactory and often good progress during their time in school. There are signs of improvement in all subjects

because of the emphasis the school has placed on improving pupils' reading and writing skills but this has not yet had time to raise standards higher. The standards achieved by the present Year 2 pupils are below average in English, mathematics and science. The school's assessments of this group of pupils from their entry into the school show that they have made good progress in most subjects.

The recent establishment of a computer suite has greatly improved the opportunities for pupils to use up to date resources. Good teaching in the suite is improving pupils' skills, which are now in line with those expected for their age in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in religious education are in line with expected levels throughout the school. Children in the reception class make a good start to their education. Although many start school well below the level expected, good provision and teaching is already having a positive impact on their attainment. Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment has fallen in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, mainly due to the changes in the local area and the transient nature of the school population. The small number of higher attaining pupils are provided with work that extends their learning and are achieving at levels higher than expected for their age. The school has set challenging targets and, because of the commitment of all staff, is likely to achieve them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school and their work. Most enjoy coming to school and their enthusiasm for school life improves their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils know what is expected of them and their behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils are polite and courteous towards one another and adults. There have been 16 exclusions, for a small number of pupils, from the school in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are good. Most respond well to the school's encouragement to take responsibility for their actions.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory, for this year it is below, but close to the national average. The school procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good.

Pupils' good attitudes result from the school's positive, caring, family atmosphere. Most pupils are considerate of others when they move around the building, use the dining hall and play at break times. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with staff. They respond well to the trust and respect they are shown. For example, older pupils are "buddies" and they give assistance to any pupil requiring help. The above average number of exclusions shows that the school responds quickly to any unacceptable behaviour and this ensures that the education of other pupils is not disrupted unnecessarily.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Some good teaching was seen throughout the school, particularly in numeracy and information and communication technology. The quality of teaching throughout the school has been maintained since the previous inspection. The head teacher, deputy head teacher and English and mathematics co-ordinators have observed teaching and learning. Observations of good practice are shared and are having a positive impact on the quality of

teaching throughout the school. The teaching for children in the reception class is consistently good or very good, which is a major factor in their improving attainment and learning.

Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum is good. Teachers' planning in English and mathematics is clearly linked to the guidance of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Most tasks are organised to challenge different groups in classes and pupils make steady and sometimes good progress. Planning for all other subjects follows national guidelines or the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. As a result, all subjects receive sufficient time to ensure that teachers are providing a varied curriculum in their lessons. Standards are improving in the school and the use of assessment data to set targets in English and mathematics for each pupil is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and learning. The school is aware of the need to implement the marking policy and so provide information to pupils so they understand how well they are doing and what they must tackle next to further improve. Classroom assistants give effective support to individuals and groups of pupils when they are working with them. Staff value all pupils equally, whatever their needs, and work hard to make sure they get the best from their time at school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is a wide range of learning opportunities for all pupils. The school has adopted the most recent national guidelines and teachers are following these in their planning to ensure that all pupils have a varied and interesting curriculum. Particular strengths are the good range of visits and visitors, links with the community and other local schools, which enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers and support assistants know the pupils well, ensure that they participate in the same activities as their classmates and this makes a positive contribution to their attainment and learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision ensures that a positive climate for learning is established which makes a significant contribution to the positive attitudes shown by most pupils. This provision makes a good contribution to promoting the school aims.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the results of these are used effectively to guide teachers' planning.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and goes beyond this to include several features that enrich it considerably. For example, there is considerable effort put in to visit places of interest, including a residential visit for older pupils, and a range of visitors gives pupils a wide experience and helps them learn. The school puts a great deal of effort into the links with parents and the community which makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff provide good leadership and management, which give a clear educational direction for the school. The quality of teamwork by all staff is very good and fosters a positive family atmosphere in which all pupils are valued and their efforts well supported.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is committed to helping the school move forward. Governors make an effective contribution to the running of the school and are committed to raising standards further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school knows its strengths and areas for development. For example, the key focus this year is to improve pupils' writing and presentation.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses the resources available well. Support staff play an important role in the life of the school and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. However, the school is aware that many pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, require more adult support than is available at present. The accommodation is satisfactory and very well maintained. The library is satisfactory and used effectively to support pupils' learning in all subjects. The school's finances and administration procedures are good.

The good leadership and management provided by the head teacher and governors are major factors in the quality of teamwork and positive atmosphere in the school. The good strategic management of the school is evident in the way that literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology have been given priority for development recently. The school uses funds designated for particular purposes well. Governors and the head teacher keep a close eye on spending to ensure that they follow the principles of "best value" well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school helps children to become more mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of information about their child's progress. • The way the school works with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Most parents consider that they have a good partnership with the school and express satisfaction with the majority of its life and work. Inspection findings confirm the positive views expressed by parents. Parents are kept well informed about school events through regular, informative newsletters. The inspection team agree with the concerns of parents that the information provided about their children's attainment and progress is unsatisfactory because annual reports do not give sufficient information on what each child has achieved in all subjects. The range of activities outside lessons is very similar to that provided by many primary schools and, therefore, the team does not agree with the parents' concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 In this school the foundation stage is made up of one reception class. The provision is good and a strength of the school. The school's assessments of children's attainment show that many enter the foundation stage with levels of attainment that are well below those of most children of the same age. As a result of the good teaching, children achieve well and by the time they leave the reception class they have made good progress although attainment remains below that expected for their age in all areas of learning.

2 The standards attained by 11 year olds in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well below average in English and mathematics but in line with the average for science. When compared to schools with a similar level of free school meals, pupils' performance was much better because it was average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Pupils' achievements in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 improved slightly in all subjects but comparisons with other schools are not yet available. The attainment of the present 11 year olds is well below the level expected in English and below the level in mathematics and science. A major cause of these low standards is the number of pupils with special educational needs and the high turnover of pupils in the school. There are signs of improvement in all subjects because of the emphasis the school has placed on improving pupils' reading and writing skills but this has not yet had time to raise standards further. The school sets challenging targets and, because of the commitment of all staff, is likely to achieve them.

3 The standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Similar results were achieved in 2002 but national comparisons are not yet available. The standards achieved by the present Year 2 pupils are below average in English, mathematics and science. The school's assessments of this group of pupils from their entry into the school show that they have made at least satisfactory progress and sometimes good progress in these subjects.

4 By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with the level expected for their age. This is the result of good teaching in the computer suite, better resources and increased confidence amongst the staff. In religious education pupils' attainment, by the age of seven and 11, is in line with the level expected in the Agreed Syllabus, although their language and literacy difficulties restrict higher attainment. In all other subjects, except design and technology and physical education for 11 year olds, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age. In design and technology pupils' attainment is below the level expected, mainly because the subject is often taught as a combination of art and design for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and there is insufficient emphasis on the designing and evaluating elements of the subject for older pupils. In physical education, pupils' attainment is above the level expected for their age and their swimming achievements are good. During the inspection, no significant variation was noted in the attainment of boys and girls in any subject. The trend of pupils' attainment over time is slightly below the improving national trend.

5 Other subjects of the National Curriculum make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, for example, through discussions in history and geography, recording their visits to places of interest and producing graphs in science. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. All staff, led by the special educational needs co-ordinator, are committed to supporting and encouraging these pupils. Each pupil with special educational needs has an appropriate plan that is

kept under review. Those pupils with behavioural needs are managed effectively, sometimes with support from external agencies. Overall, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but it is slowed by the inadequate level of support staff, especially for pupils with behavioural problems.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6 Pupils' attitudes to school are good and they enjoy the activities provided for them. Their positive attitudes make a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are keen to volunteer for tasks, for example, talking to visitors, taking registers back to the office and helping take out playground equipment during break time. Pupils especially enjoy practical tasks in lesson, for example, Year 5 pupils were enthralled with a booklet they made of the phases of the moon and Year 1 pupils enjoyed choosing different features for a face on a computer program. In a mathematics lesson for Years 3 and 4, one pupil was so interested in discovering a missing number in a calculation, that he devised a method and formula that led to his teacher considering whether he had discovered a new mathematical law. Generally pupils listen attentively to their teacher, for example, in a lesson for Year 3/4 pupils on historical sources for work on the Romans and Celts, pupils suggested a variety of ways that they could find out about important historical persons such as Boudicea. Reception class children have already gained the confidence to chant out the days in the week, make a decision on the weather and even to tell their teacher that she appeared to be reading the Big Book upside down, and enjoyed the humour of the teacher's "mistake". Pupils enjoy school assemblies and appreciate when their fellow pupils have done well, for example, when three pupils won prizes in a "Ferryhill in Bloom" competition and were awarded their prizes by the local mayor, their friends were loud in their appreciation and applause.

7 Pupils' personal development is good. They have taken very seriously the concept of a school's council and are keen to share the suggestions of their fellow pupils. They enjoy the range of games available to them in the playground and co-operate in traditional games such as rope quoits and noughts and crosses on the new play benches. In the reception class, children respond well to the activity of tidying up and putting equipment away and this makes a positive contribution to lessons starting and finishing on time. Pupils are enthusiastic fundraisers for charity, supporting a local hospice, a fund for facilities for the homeless and collecting postage stamps to support "Guide Dogs for the Blind". The school choir enjoys vast venues such as the "One World Concert" to raise funds for Great Ormond Street Hospital, and more intimate occasions singing for residents of local homes for senior citizens.

8 Relationships in the school are good and have a positive effect on learning. Most pupils work together well, for example, when sharing control of a mouse in the computer suite. In a religious education lesson, Year 6 pupils worked well together to share ideas for the Passover meal and their own idea of a special meal.

9 Behaviour is satisfactory with the majority of pupils getting on well and being polite to each other and to visitors. A small amount of bullying is acknowledged to take place and, in the last school year, there have been 16 temporary exclusions, for a small number of boys. With the limited support available in school for pupils with behavioural difficulties, staff occasionally struggle to maintain order. However, because of the generally good relationships, most pupils will respond to their teacher when asked to pay attention. However, there are a significant number of pupils who require frequent reminders to behave well.

10 Attendance is satisfactory. It is slightly below compared to the national average, but in line compared to other similar schools in the area. The school's unauthorised absence figures are in line with the national average, but as a significant number of parents do not let the school know the reason

for their child's absence from school, this increases the percentage of the unauthorised absence figures. Pupils are generally punctual and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11 The quality of teaching for children in the foundation stage is good and often very good. The teacher has a very thorough understanding of young children's needs and the curriculum they require to make good progress. There are well focused, teacher led activities as well as opportunities for pupils to learn from structured, purposeful play. All adults are good examples for children to follow because they treat everyone with care, courtesy and respect. They make sure that all children have access to all activities and children know that they are being treated equally and fairly. The classroom assistant contributes effectively to children's learning and the achievements they make.

12 Throughout the school, teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. Discussions with teachers and analysis of pupils' work show that the quality of teaching is improving, especially in English and mathematics. A significant amount of this improvement has resulted from the observations undertaken by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy. They observe colleagues teaching and check to ensure that all pupils are learning effectively in these two subjects. They provide feedback in order to improve the quality of teaching. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and pupils' standards are gradually improving in virtually all subjects by Year 6. Teachers regularly use a range of tests, including statutory and optional National Curriculum tests. The information available from these tests is used satisfactorily to identify pupils' weaknesses and to guide teachers' planning, for example, by setting general targets to improve pupils' attainment. However, because teachers' marking does not show pupils what level they have achieved and precisely what they need to do to improve, they do not take as much responsibility as they could for their own progress and improvement.

13 The teaching of basic skills in English is satisfactory and good for mathematics. Teachers' planning is clearly linked to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The pace of most lessons is satisfactory and teachers use the techniques of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to best effect. Pupils have good relationships with teachers and adults in the classroom, which has helped to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort are good and pupils are expected to do their best. This was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, when pupils improved their knowledge and skills of mental recall when working out the correct method to be used to solve different problems. They listened attentively to others' answers. The brisk pace of the lesson and the sensible attitude of pupils led to good learning and pupils' improving skills in the use of multiplication using different number patterns. Teachers use the Literacy Strategy effectively and plan lessons that are challenging and interesting. For example, in a Year 1/2 English lesson, pupils joined in enthusiastically with the shared discussion about the feelings of characters in a story. They improved their knowledge of how to explain to others why they feel angry or frightened because of the skilful questioning of the teacher.

14 Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum. For example, the school recognised that teachers' skills needed to be improved, especially for older pupils, in information and communication technology, and training courses have been undertaken. As a result, teachers are using the computer suite well and pupils' attainment is improving. Teachers use the correct language to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the particular subject. This was particularly evident in English and mathematics where specific technical language was used well. For example, in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson, pupils understood the concept that subtraction was the opposite of addition and used their skills effectively to find missing numbers in simple equations.

15 Teachers know and manage their pupils well and provide good support for different activities. The good relationships between staff and pupils create a secure climate in which to learn. Teachers use their daily observations of pupils' work to set challenging tasks. For example, in a Year

2 science lesson, pupils identified the reasons why we all need food and this led to lively discussions, led by the teacher, into how different foods are healthy and provide the energy needed for life. The school has an established homework policy that most teachers use consistently and, as a result, the amount of homework given is about right for pupils' ages and has a positive effect on their learning. The school has a good policy for the recent initiative to ensure all pupils are treated equally. Teachers follow it well and ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are included in all activities, which makes a positive contribution to their learning.

16 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers make early identification of pupils with special educational needs. They work closely with the available support assistants to plan work for these pupils that is matched to the work of other pupils in their class. All staff have a positive attitude towards these pupils and this enhances their learning. Class teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff all work very effectively together ensuring pupils take full part in the curriculum and make satisfactory progress. The provision for special educational needs is well organised throughout the school. All adults working with pupils with special educational needs are enthusiastic in their approach and keen to recognise and praise success. This effectively encourages pupils and helps them develop confidence.

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

17 The school's curriculum is good. The school provides a very broad and relevant curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils. This is an improvement since the previous inspection brought about by two factors. Teachers now use national guidelines to help them plan interesting lessons. They also use a locally Agreed Syllabus to teach religious education. A wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities provide a good enrichment to the curriculum. After-school clubs are popular with pupils and include sport, music, chess and cycling proficiency. Pupils in Year 6 visit a residential field study centre and this benefits their educational and social development. All statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, including the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education, are met. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Boys and girls are treated with equal value and respect, whatever their background, circumstances and abilities. The governing body has approved policies for sex education and an awareness of drug misuse.

18 The school makes good use of the immediate locality of the school and the community to enhance curriculum studies. For example, visits to the Darlington Railway Museum provide pupils with information on the industrial history of their locality and attending the Safety Carousel at Aycliffe Centre, promotes personal development initiatives for older pupils. There are strong links to the churches in the parish, especially the Baptist Church and St Luke's. Sports links to other schools in the area are strong and pupils benefit from attending the Broom Cottages Primary School Swimming Pool, supported by visits to Willington Leisure Centre and Spennymoor Swimming Pool to improve their physical skills. The school benefits from a small group of dedicated voluntary helpers and visitors who are generous to the school in such ways as awarding an annual prize of a bicycle for good behaviour. The school enjoys good partnerships with other schools in the area for student and work experience placements and meets regularly with other schools, for example, to review planning and resourcing the Literacy Strategy.

19 Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Teachers use discussions in "circle time" to provide valuable opportunities for pupils to talk about their experiences and feelings. The importance of healthy eating, hygiene and exercise are taught as part of the personal, social and health education programme. Sex education and drug education are also included in the programme. In the reception class, children respond well to the various activities and the teachers' planning ensures that all aspects of the curriculum for young children are followed.

20 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early age. All staff are committed to supporting and encouraging them, and they have appropriate individual education plans that are kept under review.

21 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The main reason for the improvement is the way the school provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss their inner feelings in lessons designed to promote their personal development. In other lessons, especially religious education, teachers seek to help pupils to develop insights into values and beliefs, by setting a tone where pupils understand that their own ideas are valued by the teacher and other pupils. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils reflect on the fundamental questions of life. For instance, they consider how they can improve themselves and help others. In assemblies, staff make the most of set weekly themes to create spiritually reflective opportunities. Pupils listen attentively and sing hymns tunefully to celebrate the beauty of the world.

22 The school's provision for pupils' moral development is underpinned by the staff's positive approach. They serve as good examples and teach the difference between right and wrong. They teach pupils the benefits of values such as reason, fairness and honesty. Staff show they care for pupils and take time to reason quietly with those who infringe rules. They use assemblies well to promote moral and social values. This is reflected in the good relationships with each other and adults and the way in which they show personal responsibility for making the school a worthwhile community for everyone involved. For example, the "buddies" help any pupil who approaches them. The school encourages good behaviour by making use of time during assemblies to present certificates. Planning in lessons often includes opportunities to discuss the moral and social issues involved when studying other countries. The school takes many opportunities to encourage support for a wide range of charities on a regular basis and pupils respond very positively.

23 The school's provision for pupils' social development is good and closely linked with how it promotes moral development. Staff encourage pupils to work together responsibly and sensibly, especially in lessons such as physical education where group work depends on teamwork. The school's personal, social, health and citizenship education programme makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' social skills. Pupils' awareness of their responsibilities as citizens is promoted well. For instance, pupils' achievements in the town's "Flowers in Bloom" competition were rewarded when the mayor visited to present prizes to the winners of the competition. Pupils recall with pride a recent visit by the Prime Minister. In lessons, teachers give pupils many opportunities to discuss issues, such as drugs awareness in Year 6. The school puts great emphasis on positive social behaviour and attitudes. It rewards pupils with recognition in special weekly assemblies. Pupils are expected to undertake class duties as monitors from an early age and to take on greater responsibilities, as they get older. For instance, each year group is represented by pupils serving on the School Council. In Year 6 pupils act as "Buddies" to help others.

24 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good and promoted through numerous visits and visitors, as well as in lessons and assemblies. Visits are made locally to places of interest such as churches and museums. Similarly, visitors introduce pupils to new learning. For instance, an artist at the local comprehensive school helped pupils create an attractive display of clay tiles. Pupils become aware of their own heritage and traditions through the wide variety of local visits that they make as part of their studies in subjects such as geography and history. The close links that the school has with local churches and visits to Durham Cathedral enhance their understanding of their place in the Christian tradition. The multi-cultural aspect of the school's provision is as well developed as others, because it is given equal priority through displays, visits and visitors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25 The school works hard to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Staff know their pupils very well and use this knowledge to monitor and guide pupils' personal development, both formally and informally. For example, "circle time" with pupils in Years 1 and 2, is seen as a time when pupils discuss their feelings openly amongst classmates, or a lesson on "being special" has the aim of looking after yourself to keep healthy. The opinions of pupils are taken into account when suggestions are brought to the attention of the school council, for example in suggesting that four "Buddies" would be useful in the school playground rather than just two. Pupils' transfer to secondary school is well supported and the Year 6 pupils talk confidently of the arrangements in place for them in the summer term to visit their next school.

26 The school's child protection procedures are satisfactory. Procedures to monitor and promote behaviour and discipline and to eliminate bullying and oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. The school has a detailed Code of Conduct and Good Behaviour Certificates are awarded each Friday. The school encourages pupils to speak to staff if they have problems.

27 Procedures to monitor and promote pupils' attendance are good. The school secretary checks registers on a daily basis and the head teacher and class teachers check pupils' attendance regularly. The Education Welfare Service is informed when the school has concerns about any pupil's absence and the school contacts families where there are concerns over pupils' punctuality. The school encourages good attendance by awarding a certificate to pupils with 100 per cent attendance.

28 Since the previous inspection procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' work in English, mathematics and science have improved. However, these procedures are less developed in other areas of the curriculum. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the use of the information obtained are satisfactory. When they enter the reception class, children are assessed during their first half term in school. This provides a useful baseline against which to judge their further progress. Checks on what children know and can do are continued throughout the foundation stage. In English and mathematics pupils' attainment is tested regularly, and the results of these tests are analysed accurately and appropriate targets set for pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests. These procedures mean that teachers generally have a good idea of where strengths and weaknesses are in these subjects. A computer program is used effectively to support the analysis of assessment data.

29 Pupils are set individual targets in English and mathematics and the links between assessment and target setting are reasonably strong. Nevertheless, because pupils are not sure what level they are working at and precisely what they need to do to move up to the next level they do not take as much responsibility as they could for their own progress and improvement.

30 In other subjects, pupils' attainment is not consistently monitored and there are few checks on their rate of progress. The work in pupils' books is not systematically analysed so subject leaders are not in a position to identify key variations in standards, for instance, whether the higher attaining pupils are doing as well as they could. Teachers' marking of pupils' work does not show exactly what they have achieved and set specific targets so that pupils know what skills they are going to develop in the next stage of their learning. Teachers keep examples of pupils' work in some subjects but this work is not assessed or checked against the attainment levels provided in the National Curriculum. Teachers of younger children assess performance on a regular, daily basis through informal observation. Sessions at the end of lessons are also used well for this purpose and move pupils on in their learning. Pupils are generally grouped in their lessons according to their ability and assessment is used for moving pupils between these groups and for the teachers' preparation of the next lesson so that assessment guides planning. There are good weekly planning records to identify targets met or not achieved and these are used by teachers to decide the work to be covered in the following week.

31 Assessment information is used appropriately to identify pupils who have special educational needs and these pupils' progress towards their individual learning targets is reviewed regularly and appropriate new targets are set for them.

32 Teacher assessments for all subjects are reported to parents in a written report at the end of each academic year. However, written reports are not consistent in informing parents of the standards their child attained or the progress they have made. Overall, good procedures are in place for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment, however, as some procedures are recent and, in some areas inconsistently implemented, they have yet to make a significant impact on raising pupils' attainment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33 Parents and carers views of the school are good and most are very happy with the standards that their children achieve. They feel that work in school is well matched to pupils' potential and that all abilities are catered for. Parents are also impressed with the responsibilities offered to pupils, for example, the 'Buddy' system where older pupils look after younger pupils and with the opportunities that their children have to go on residential trips. They are pleased that the school encourages their children to support charities such as the local hospice and to represent their school in the local area, for example, as members of the school choir. Overall, they feel comfortable that their children are being looked after well and that they are safe in school. Parents recognise that the school has to deal with a few pupils who do not behave well and are disruptive and aggressive to other children and staff, but they are confident that the school reacts promptly to these situations and lets pupils know the consequences of such behaviour.

34 Strong efforts are made to build effective links with parents. The school has a parental involvement co-ordinator who oversees different initiatives to make sure parents are aware of all the opportunities they have to help their children learn. Each term, targets and ideas for improving numeracy are sent out to all parents and recently each pupil took home a copy of "Learning Journey" to show parents a range of ideas for supporting all curriculum subjects. Parents' meetings are arranged for the families of pupils who are just starting school, about what is being done to prepare pupils for National Curriculum tests and to let parents know what is planned for a residential visit. Parents are asked to come into school to talk through any problems and they are encouraged to see themselves as part of the whole team educating their child. Parent helpers, although only few in number, are very welcome in school and valued for the important work that they do, for example, in the library. Staff and parents have the chance to meet when pupils go home at the end of the afternoon session and their teachers are out in the playground with them.

35 Parents wishing to discuss the progress of their child have an opportunity to talk to staff at the two Open Evenings a year, although a few parents expressed concern that they felt they were not encouraged to come to these Open Evenings if their child was doing well in school. Information contained in the annual written report is unsatisfactory because it does not give parents a clear indication of their child' individual attainment and progress, which explains the unease felt by many parents that the school was not informing them sufficiently on their child's progress.

36 The majority of parents have very little involvement in their children's learning. Most do little to help their children with their homework and many do not attend meetings arranged by the school. The home/school agreements sent out in previous years by the school had a very poor take up and the school is now refining its approach to focus purely on behavioural agreements with parents. However, parents are generous and willing to help raise funds to buy resources for the school and are pleased that the school listens to their concerns. For example, at the time of the last inspection, many parents asked for a formal opportunity to discuss their child's progress earlier in the school year and this now takes place.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37 The head teacher, deputy head teacher and key staff provide good leadership and management. Together they maintain a family atmosphere in the school, which has a positive effect on pupils' learning. The standards of leadership and management have been maintained since the last inspection. Governors make a good contribution to the effective running of the school and are committed to raising standards further. The observation of teaching and learning by the head teacher and key staff is regularly discussed with governors who are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has worked effectively to deal with the key issues from the previous report and is well placed to build on these. However, the changes in the characteristics in the area and the increased number of pupils who join the school at times other than normal entry dates is having a detrimental effect on standards. The school has recognised the fact that pupils' attainment needs to be raised further, especially in the core subjects, and so is targeting the presentation of work and pupils' literacy skills which is beginning to have a positive effect. For example, there were more pupils who achieved the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests in 2002. In addition, the efforts to raise standards in reading and writing by developing teachers' planning is leading to some improvements. The head teacher and key staff give a clear educational direction for the school which is slowly raising pupils' standards. For example, the school has used the analysis of pupils' results in National Curriculum tests to explain the latest results. This information is being used by staff to target writing because it is a weaker part of pupils' language skills. The information also shows clearly that pupils with special educational needs perform well when compared to their previous attainment and many reach the lower levels of national expectations by Year 6.

38 The governing body has a good committee structure that works effectively to support the school. For example, the governors receive reports on how the school development plan is progressing and they check on the progress of curriculum initiatives undertaken by the school. The roles and responsibilities of all staff have been under review and evaluation because of the implementation of the "performance management" initiative. The roles of the subject co-ordinators are clearly defined and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have opportunities to observe and evaluate teaching and learning in their subjects. The school has plans for the training of other co-ordinators so that this observation of teaching and learning will be further developed. Subject co-ordinators are well placed to implement changes in their subjects because of regular audits to check teachers' planning and they lead meetings to evaluate the success in teaching the curriculum to all pupils. The co-ordinator for special educational needs gives good support to staff. The co-ordinator also plays an important part in assessing pupils' difficulties when they are first identified as needing additional help. The school policy is detailed and reflects the school's current practice taking into account the new national guidance for pupils with special educational needs.

39 The head teacher and governors work together closely and are managing recent changes well. For example, the school used the available grant and money from previous years' contingency funds to provide a computer suite that is used effectively to improve pupils' learning in information and communication technology. In addition, the Chair of Governors regularly works with classes in the suite and so has first hand knowledge of how pupils are using information and communication technology. There is clear direction for the work of the school, ensuring that strategic decisions determine the financial and educational development. The head teacher and governors work together to ensure that all decisions relating to the budget are closely linked to the development plan, are manageable and that the principles of "best value for money" are applied rigorously. The staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss curriculum matters and to evaluate the progress being made in all aspects of school life.

40 The head teacher, staff and governors are all involved in preparing the school development plan. This working document is fully discussed before being adopted as the action plan for future years. It is an effective document, which clearly identifies the priorities and targets to be tackled and

guides the work of the school. It takes into account the changing nature of the school population and educational priorities are closely linked to financial planning. For example, the school is successfully developing links with other local schools and the community. The school knows its strengths and areas for development and has a good grasp on how to improve. All staff work hard to improve their own performance and the educational opportunities presented to pupils. There are clear targets for improvements. For example, the school is aware that further resources are required for information and communication technology to match the national targets to provide extra computers for pupils and has good plans in place to reach the new targets.

41 The school has sufficient teaching staff and they are well deployed. Support staff play an important role in the life of the school and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. However, the school is aware that many pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, require more adult support than is available at present. There is a designated senior management team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. For example, all curriculum subjects have a co-ordinator. Procedures for the induction and support of new teachers are good. Teachers new to the school are well supported by all members of staff. Staff training is linked to priorities in the school plans for the future, which has focused recently on the development of literacy and numeracy. Arrangements for performance management are in place and meet statutory requirements. The school administrative staff make a valuable contribution to the efficient running of the school.

42 The school's accommodation is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the curriculum. There is a dedicated computer suite as well as individual computers in classrooms and this is making a good contribution to pupils' information and communication skills. The school is prey to extensive vandalism, despite outside fences, but the vigilant caretaking and high quality cleaning service in the school, ensures that this does not have a detrimental impact on pupils' health and safety. The school benefits from a small library and the two halls are of a reasonable size for physical education lessons and one is just large enough to accommodate the whole school for assemblies and other collective gatherings. There is good disabled access into and throughout the school and good disabled toilet provision.

43 Resources in the school are satisfactory. The school makes good use of the limited storage opportunities offered to it in an old building. The school library has had its supply of non-fiction books depleted by a downpour through the vandalised roof, which took place at the beginning of the school term. However, a parent/governor is cataloguing and repairing the books and setting out the area to create an attractive and very useful resource. There is a good range of resources for religious education, information and communication technology and art and design. Money is spent wisely and is linked to the school's priorities for development. The head teacher and governors apply the principles of "best value" well. There is good leadership and management and good relationships in school. Expenditure is about the same as the national average and the quality of education provided in classes means that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44 In order to further improve the quality of education, standards and progress in the school, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

A. Raise standards in English by:

- ensuring that teachers' marking of pupils' work shows exactly what they have achieved and sets specific targets so that pupils know what skills they are going to develop in the next stage of their learning;
- developing pupils' use of correct punctuation and spelling in their written work;
- improving pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work;
- developing more opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure.
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 12, 29, 30, 37, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 87)

B. Raise standards in mathematics by:

- ensuring that teachers' marking of pupils' work shows exactly what they have achieved and sets specific targets so that pupils know what skills they are going to develop in the next stage of their learning;
- improving pupils' presentation of their work.
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 12, 29, 30, 37, 70, 72, 75, 77, 78)

C. Raise standards in science by:

- further developing the analysis of pupils' attainment and use the information to set achievable individual targets;
- improving the presentation and accuracy of pupils' written accounts of their experiments.
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 12, 30, 37, 80, 81, 82, 85, 87)

D. Raise standards in design and technology by:

- ensuring that the subject is taught separately from art and design;
- improving the design and evaluation elements of the subject.
(Paragraphs 4, 92, 93, 94)

E. Improve staffing levels to provide more support for pupils, especially those with challenging behaviour.
(Paragraphs 5, 9, 41)

45 In addition to the key issues above, governors should include the following minor issue as part of the action plan:

- improve the quality of information to parents on pupils' attainment and progress, in all subjects of the National Curriculum, in the annual reports.
(Paragraphs 32, 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	24	27	0	0	0
Percentage	0	10	41	47	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)		260
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		92

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		62

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	46
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.5
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
	2001	17	19	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	17
	Girls	16	14	17
	Total	32	29	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89% (78%)	81% (76%)	94% (89%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	17
	Girls	14	16	17
	Total	30	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83% (76%)	92% (87%)	94% (80%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	22	29
	Girls	18	18	28
	Total	38	40	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63% (53%)	67% (73%)	95% (100%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	27	29
	Girls	17	24	28
	Total	33	51	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55% (50%)	85% (63%)	95% (75%)
	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	251	16	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	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	3	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)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	648,548
Total expenditure	653,039
Expenditure per pupil	2,094
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,980
Balance carried forward to next year	17,489

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	260
Number of questionnaires returned	70

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	40	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	46	7	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	49	7	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	61	10	1	11
The teaching is good.	43	53	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	56	13	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	46	6	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	47	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	56	16	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	30	56	7	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	60	7	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	41	19	6	21

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

46 Children are admitted into the reception class in the September after their fourth birthday and attend full time, after an initial part time settling in period. The overall attainment of children on entry to the reception class is well below that generally found nationally, but varies from child to child. Children make good progress through the reception year in all areas of learning and, by the age of five, they are below the level of attainment expected for children of their age. Children with special educational needs are formally identified using the assessment programme and those who have difficulty are well supported and make progress.

47 The quality of teaching for children in the foundation stage is good and often very good. The teacher has a very thorough understanding of these young children's needs and the curriculum they need. Well focused, teacher led activities are provided, as well as opportunities for children to learn from structured, purposeful play. The classroom assistant contributes effectively and is instrumental in supporting the achievements made by the children.

48 Assessment is good, when children enter the reception class, a detailed, ongoing record of their progress against the targets set by the foundation stage curriculum is completed. The local authority's assessment system is used effectively, recording individual progress in the different aspects of learning and development. Well documented planning supports the delivery of the curriculum and has a positive impact on children's attainment and progress.

49 Liaison with parents is good, with staff and parents having positive open attitudes which benefit the parent/school partnership. When they are ready, children in the reception class take home reading books to share with their parents. Accommodation for the foundation stage is good overall, having two large well resourced rooms, as well as outdoor provision of a large tarmac area for riding bicycles, scooters and other large equipment. The classrooms are attractive, well organised, and make the best use of space in order to allow for a variety of different types of teaching and activity. Due regard is given to health and safety. Resources are good and support the curriculum well.

Personal, social and emotional development

50 Provision for children's personal and social development is good. They make good progress in this important area of learning but, by the time they reach the end of the foundation stage, they are still below national expectations for their age. The well-organised classrooms provide a stimulating, exciting environment with a wide range of learning experiences that are accessible to all children and encourage independence. Children learn to tidy up after themselves, supported by the efficient systems that are in place, such as clear labelling and "tidy up" music. They use coloured bands when playing in the home corner so that the number of children playing there is regulated. The daily classroom routines help children to develop a sense of order. They listen, take turns and share well. There is planned provision to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children. "Circle time" is used for children to talk to each other and to have respect for each others' contributions. Children's concentration skills are developed and they persevere until tasks are completed. There are good relationships between staff and children. Children work alongside one another well and often co-operate with each other in their play. They show appropriate self respect and some have good self confidence, demonstrating independence in selecting activities and equipment. They take turns in being responsible for taking the register back to the office. Behaviour is very good.

Communication, language and literacy

51 There is good progress in language and literacy development. Children enter the reception class with very underdeveloped speaking and listening skills. By the time children reach the end of the foundation stage their attainment is below national expectations for children of this age.

52 Children have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. The teacher is skilled at encouraging children to express their ideas by thoughtful, but persistent questioning, which enables children to extend their vocabulary and communicate more effectively. Imaginative and role play areas are used well. Adults provide good support as they interact with the children, often becoming part of the children's play. A good example of this was when the teaching assistant was a customer in the café. She read the menu and ordered food. She effectively extended the children's vocabulary by giving information and asking appropriate questions.

53 Children make a good start with reading. They benefit from a good range of suitable, attractive books and comfortable reading areas in which to enjoy them. The children enjoy looking at books. They listen with rapt attention when the teacher reads the story about Teddy and are amazed when he is found in the wood. They generally handle books carefully and tell the story from the pictures. Some children talk about the book cover and predict what the story might be about. The teacher uses very effective strategies to teach letter recognition. A small group of children identify some letter shapes and say the sound they make. They follow simple sentences with the teacher when sharing a story from a big book. Children make good progress because of the very good teaching. Some children identify and read their own names.

54 Children develop their writing skills in both formal and informal situations. There is a writing area where children can practise their writing skills, copying letter shapes or doing "pretend writing". Children practise the correct formation of letters in small groups with the teacher and a small number of children form letters correctly and write their forename.

Mathematical development

55 Children make good progress in mathematics because of the very good teaching, although they are below the levels expected for their age by the end of the reception year. They enjoy number rhymes and the teacher uses a range of strategies to extend the children's concept of numbers. They thread plastic beads and identify the colours and some children count accurately to ten. They particularly enjoy "Joey the Giraffe", a glove puppet that the teacher uses to help with number recognition and counting. Joey always "gets it wrong" and the children are very quick to correct his mistakes. They recognise some simple shapes such as circle, triangle, oblong and square, and make shape pictures with gummed paper shapes. Children learn to use mathematical language to describe position and size, quantity and time. Most children join in and say the days of the week with the teacher and decide which day was yesterday and what day it will be tomorrow. Children develop their mathematical knowledge in imaginative play situations such as being the shopkeeper, counting the money and setting the table in the café.

Creative development

56 Children make good progress with their creative and aesthetic skills because of good teaching. A wide range of activities including art, craft, music, movement and imaginative play are well planned by the teacher. Children produce colourful, explorative paintings, enjoy singing nursery rhymes and songs and using simple instruments. They particularly enjoyed identifying the sound from a simple percussion instrument and took turns in hiding behind the screen to play the instrument while the other children listened and identified it. They easily identified the sound from a tambour, bells,

maracas and claves. Good provision is made for creative development. As a result, children make good progress and many are likely to achieve the level expected for their age in this area by the time they are ready to leave the reception class.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57 Children in the reception class develop their knowledge and understanding of the world well. They engage in a range of activities and particularly enjoy experimental play in the sand and water. They experience changes by filling and emptying containers and noticing when things are wet or dry. The children's skills in information and communication technology develop and they have access to a computer and appropriate software. They enjoy using a program to dress the teddy using the mouse to "click and drag" the correct clothes in sequence.

58 There are many opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Each day they talk about the weather and take turns to record this on a weather chart. They look at the classroom displays and talk about them. For example, some children identified the polar bears and wolves that were part of one display and talked about cold places. Although attainment remains below expected levels, the good teaching enables children to make good progress in the foundation stage, often building upon limited knowledge and experience of the world when they first join the reception class.

Physical development

59 Many opportunities are provided for children to develop their fine manipulative skills by using scissors, pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. Most children use scissors, brushes and writing tools effectively. Although attainment remains below expected levels, progress is good because of the good teaching. Children assemble construction toys and complete simple jigsaws. Water play and sand play provide further opportunities to develop their physical skills.

60 There is a range of outdoor equipment such as bicycles, scooters, trolleys, large balls and bats. The easy access to the outdoor provision enables children to use skills such as running, pushing, pulling and catching as well as developing balance. They develop their skills of physical control, mobility, co-ordination, and awareness of space and most children's attainment meets expectations for children of this age. Children tend to play on their own or alongside each other and boys are more physically active in their outdoor play. The classroom assistant supervises the activities and encourages children by joining in ball throwing games but often misses opportunities to encourage interactive play.

61 The foundation stage is well resourced and co-ordinated. The curriculum is broad, balanced, and well planned and delivered. The six areas of learning are appropriately covered and effectively linked to the National Curriculum when appropriate.

ENGLISH

62 By the age of 11, pupils' attainment in English is well below the level expected, by the age of seven, pupils' attainment is below the level expected. This is mainly due to a larger than normal proportion of lower attaining pupils, a higher number who have special educational needs and the high turnover of pupils, particularly in the present Year 6. As a result of sound and sometimes good teaching, many pupils do as well as they can and make steady progress. Nevertheless, standards have fallen since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, learn as well as others.

63 The school's leadership and management give clear direction to move the subject forward. An analysis of data provides teachers with priorities to aim for in each year group with the joint aim of improving pupils' writing skills. This gives coherence to teachers' planning and contributes to a shared commitment to succeed. The school's focus on writing skills ensures all pupils practise writing extensively for a wide range of audiences, particularly in Years 5 and 6. At this early stage of the

year its effectiveness is patchy. For instance, in Year 6 the priorities are to improve the range of sentence structures pupils use, to write in paragraphs and to use more varied vocabulary. However, even higher attaining pupils do not yet show an understanding of writing in paragraphs and most of these pupils do not use the level of vocabulary expected for their age. Far fewer pupils than in most schools attain high levels of writing. Some do, though, use vocabulary in an interesting way to create effect, such as, “He was scared because the playground was roaring with noise”. The school has not moved ahead quickly enough since the previous inspection in the way teachers use assessment information to help them plan lessons. While teachers do set targets for individual pupils, they are not precise enough for teachers to focus on exactly what needs to be taught and for pupils to know exactly what they need to learn.

64 By the age of seven and 11, pupils’ attainment in speaking and listening is below the level expected for their age, although many have made good progress during their time in school. A minority of pupils express themselves confidently and clearly, or use a comprehensive range of vocabulary. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting so pupils are keen to listen and learn. Most listen attentively to their teachers and to others, but many do not contribute willingly and spontaneously in group and class discussions. In lessons, they listen attentively to stories, poems, non-fiction texts and the teachers’ comments. Many particularly enjoy contributing orally to practical lessons such as science and in the computer suite.

65 By the age of seven, pupils’ standards of reading are below the level expected for their age. Few demonstrate a good degree of technical skill and understanding or read with well developed fluency and expression. This is because there is a much smaller proportion of higher attaining pupils than in most schools. When reading, most pupils use picture clues suitably. A significant number find using contextual clues difficult, because of their poor comprehension skills. A few build a comprehensive sight vocabulary and use their good understanding of letter sounds to attempt new words. Pupils progress steadily as they get older, though this means that in Year 6 standards for most remain below expectations for their age. Pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Most enjoy reading, but a significant number do not know the names of popular children’s authors or discuss aspects of books such as character and plot meaningfully. The range of books in use is reasonable, but the school is still in the process of restocking after flooding destroyed many books. A significant factor affecting pupils’ reading is the level of parental help. A large proportion of pupils do not receive regular parental help and those pupils tend to attain lower than other pupils. The school is not doing enough to compensate for this. The progress of many pupils is restricted by the limited time allocated to reading. The level of pupils’ reading skills affects how well they learn, for instance, when researching history books. In an English lesson in a Year 3/4 class many pupils were unable to skim the text of a story quickly when the teacher asked them to find clues to a character’s motives and feelings.

66 Attainment in writing is below the level expected for seven year olds and well below for 11 year olds. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils show good ideas in their stories. They write in simple sentences using suitable punctuation and joined handwriting. Many others, however, show little imagination, do not use capital letters or full stops and have a limited vocabulary. They enjoy lessons, such as when the teacher compared the story of “Little Red Riding Hood” with their own experiences to teach them how to write instructions such as, “Don’t go with strangers”. In Years 3 and 4, many pupils do not punctuate well enough for their age and do not have a satisfactory understanding of simple spelling rules, such as for changing “hope” to “hoping”. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils write for an increasingly wide audience. They plan and redraft written work, including stories, drama scripts, instructions, narrative, poetry and letters. For instance, pupils in Year 5 wrote letters to a park superintendent to persuade him to permit cycling, but only a minority were persuasive with good, reasoned argument. In Year 6, pupils develop a wider range of styles and pay due attention to similes, metaphor, alliteration, personification and onomatopoeia. Many find these features of writing difficult.

Pupils' punctuation in Year 6 remains below average and many do not use joined-up handwriting consistently.

67 The quality of teaching is sound and sometimes good. Teachers have a good grasp of the National Literacy Strategy and teach with confidence. As a result, pupils enjoy what they learn and make steady progress. Teachers link literacy suitably with other subjects. For instance, in Years 3 and 4 pupils produce interesting writing when they use computers to word process instructions on how to make a "mummy". Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs get the attention they need to enable them to learn at the same rate as others. A strength of the teaching is the way teachers hold pupils' attention and raise their interest with skilful questioning. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and so many pupils participate willingly in discussions, while teachers try to draw in those with less developed speaking skills. Teachers have good management skills. They control pupils with behavioural problems in a way that promotes a good learning atmosphere. There is a good balance between class, group and individual work in lessons. However, teachers do not consistently set tasks which present a suitable challenge for pupils and this limits the progress they make. Although teachers promote writing skills they do not all pay enough attention to insisting on suitable levels of punctuation and handwriting. Consequently, even some higher attaining pupils in Year 6 do not punctuate sentences well and do not join up handwriting correctly. Teaching was good in three lessons. As a result, pupils learnt quickly in a keen atmosphere. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils compared an extract from Shakespeare's "Macbeth" in print and on video. The pace, flow and interest of the lesson motivated pupils highly and led to good productivity.

68 The subject co-ordinator provides sound leadership and has established clear priorities for its development. There are formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This gives the school the capacity to improve standards.

MATHEMATICS

69 By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the level expected for their age. However, the majority of pupils learn well and are achieving at a good rate. This is mainly the result of good teaching throughout the school. Despite the increase in numbers of pupils with special educational needs, the recent developments in the teaching of mathematics have enabled the school to keep up with the national rate of improvement, since the last inspection.

70 The majority of pupils in the Year 1 and Year 2 classes are attaining standards below those expected for their age. However, from their very low starting point on entry to school, this represents good achievement. Most Year 2 pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of numbers to 20 and count on and back from any small number. They understand more and less, say the number that is one more or one less than a given number and identify the larger number when given two numbers. They develop strategies, such as doubling, to help their calculations. They are less confident at adding 10 to a given number in their heads; even the higher attaining pupils find this quite hard and some resort to using their fingers to help their calculations. The work in pupils' books is often untidy and there is a reliance on published worksheets in some aspects of the subject.

71 Standards in Year 2 at present are not as high as the 2001 National Curriculum tests would suggest. However, this is due to differences in the number of pupils with special educational needs between the year groups and not the quality of teaching.

72 Some pupils in Year 6 are working at least at an average standard for their age in most aspects of the subject, for example, using and applying mathematics, number and algebra, shape, space and measures and data handling. In these aspects of mathematics they are likely to achieve the level expected for their age by the end of the year and a small number are set to attain a higher level. However, most pupils are working below what is expected nationally for pupils of this age.

73 The average and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of numbers and of how the number system works. They understand square numbers and the higher attaining pupils define a square number accurately as “a number multiplied by itself”. Pupils also understand the relationship between a square number and a square root. Their work on fractions and decimals is at the right level for their age. They convert decimals to fractions and identify equivalent fractions. They understand the terms “numerator” and “denominator”. Less able pupils’ work is planned so that they are completing similar work but in smaller steps. They are less confident about their ability.

74 In other aspects of mathematics a small number of higher attaining pupils are working at the level expected for their age. They know the properties of many three dimensional shapes, they read a 24 hour clock accurately and they suggest suitable units to estimate or measure length or capacity. In data handling, most of the Year 6 pupils interpret simple graphs correctly. Pupils work at levels appropriate to their ability and have made good progress so far in their first term in Year 6. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to develop and support pupils’ mathematical learning and pupils use calculators to check their answers to difficult calculations.

75 The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. Overall teaching is good. Throughout the school, teachers manage the pupils’ behaviour well. As a result, pupils are largely well behaved and teachers concentrate on the work in hand. Some older pupils have behaviour difficulties and as they are often unsupported they do not always focus on their work effectively. However, pupils are generally managed well and they concentrate very hard and make great efforts to achieve.

76 Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They are successful at helping pupils understand how the number system works and they use simple, but effective resources to help pupils understand. Pupils understand mathematical vocabulary because teachers use the correct words precisely and in context and they expect pupils to use the vocabulary they are taught. Pupils are clear about what they need to learn and older pupils have appropriate learning targets inside their books. They are then responsible for highlighting the objective achieved when their learning is secure. Teachers explain these “learning objectives” and the tasks to be completed to pupils at the beginning of the lesson and use the sessions at the end of lessons to check how well pupils have grasped new work and to move their learning forward.

77 Teachers match work closely to pupils’ different levels of attainment so that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. For example, a teacher did not move on to work that was originally planned because pupils had not grasped the new work in the first two days. Overall, pupils’ work is poorly presented and could be improved. Marking of pupils’ work is inconsistent across classes and teachers do not relate their comments closely to each lesson’s learning objectives. There is a need to let pupils know exactly how well they are doing and give them useful pointers to help them improve.

78 The leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator supports staff well and has a sound view of what is going on throughout the school. The co-ordinator has ensured that the National Numeracy Strategy is implemented so that pupils have a daily numeracy lesson and there are plenty of resources to support teaching and learning. There are clearly identified priorities for future development and pupils’ test results are now being analysed more thoroughly so that general weaknesses can be identified and action taken to overcome them. Time is allocated so that pupils’ learning and the teaching of the subject is regularly observed but other useful strategies, such as scrutiny of pupils’ books, are not yet used effectively.

79 This improved use of monitoring and assessment has the potential to provide further focus for development. For example, to ascertain in which aspects of the subject teaching is most and least effective and also to aid the tracking of each pupil’s progress as they move through the school.

SCIENCE

80 By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in science is below the level expected for their age. The main factor affecting this is the standard of pupils' recording and all other aspects of their written work, including their spelling of scientific words. Their level of understanding about the principles of science is much better. They enjoy the subject, particularly the practical side, and try hard. However, since the last inspection, standards in science have fallen because of pupils' weak writing skills.

81 By the age of seven, pupils enjoy science and achieve success in spite of their weaker skills in all aspects of literacy. The school tries to focus on a practical approach to science, which allows all pupils to take part in lessons. However, pupils of all prior attainment do not plan or write conclusions to their investigations to the necessary standard. In Year 2, pupils have an understanding of food categories and an awareness of healthy eating. They work in small groups to sort foods into those that give "quick energy", "vitamins" and "carbohydrates". Teachers are careful to stress how healthy eating is linked to self esteem; this is a good example of the way the school develops cross-curricular themes in pupils' personal, health and social education programme.

82 By the age of 11, pupils' attainment is below the level expected for their age. Most pupils have sufficient understanding of science and explain themselves orally but when it comes to recording their work they experience many difficulties. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs presents teachers with challenges. Pupils enjoy their science work when it is practical but many have great difficulty in reading and writing, becoming restless when asked to write anything down. In Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of different habitats, and the meaning of key scientific words such as "producer", "consumer" and "decomposer". However, few can spell these words or write full sentences explaining what they mean. Few are able to work independently.

83 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in the practical aspects of science but recording is weak and written work produced by pupils of all levels of prior attainment is usually poorly presented and untidy. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and their planning and assessment are appropriate. In one lesson on teeth, progress slowed because the teacher was not confident in the detail of the subject matter, but in lessons on how the earth rotates and the different phases of the moon, the teachers showed very good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm rubbed off on the pupils. Teachers usually achieve the objectives for the lesson but sometimes their expectations are too low, for example, when using too many worksheets in a lesson on habitats. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support their work. For example, the older pupils use the Internet to research the NASA site in connection with their work on space.

84 Lesson planning takes into account the different needs of the mixed ages in some classes but is not sufficiently focused for the higher, lower and average attaining pupils. When teachers give pupils purposeful, clear and interesting tasks they respond very well. Planning for investigative work is a strong feature throughout the school, because the teachers know how much the pupils like this aspect of the subject, for example, pupils' examination of their own teeth with mirrors was a sight to behold!

85 Teachers' expectations are generally appropriate, though undemanding for the higher attaining pupils when it comes to rigorous recording and reporting of their work. Teachers' marking informs pupils of what they need to do to improve and teachers show respect for pupils' efforts. However, the setting of small achievable targets is not well used and teachers need to ensure that all pupils act on their comments and finish all their work. Homework is set when it is appropriate. Organisation of classrooms and the provision of resources is good, allowing pupils to work

collaboratively when necessary.

86 Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. Most of the lessons observed were characterised by an atmosphere of activity because the pupils try hard to please their teachers. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the pupils were very keen to show what they had done and to be praised by the teacher.

87 The leadership and management of the subject are sound. There is a secure curriculum framework which ought to enable higher standards to be achieved, although this needs to be reviewed in the Year 5/6 class so that the Year 6 pupils cover the same curriculum as the others in their year group. Pupils are not achieving higher standards because their written work is letting them down, including spelling, grammar and punctuation. In order to develop the subject further the school should focus its attention on ensuring that pupils overcome their reluctance to independently commit their thoughts and ideas to paper, are rigorous in finishing all aspects of the reports of their experiments and more accurate when using and writing scientific words.

ART AND DESIGN

88 It was not possible to observe the teaching of art and design during the inspection. However, sufficient evidence was available through the analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning, an evaluation of classroom displays and discussions with pupils and teachers. By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in art and design is at the level expected for their age. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection report. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.

89 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 mix a range of primary colours and draw and paint well from direct observation. They use a range of media to represent their ideas and observations and pay good attention to detail in their presentations, for example, when pupils in Year 1 painted self portraits. Year 2 pupils explore shape, texture and colour using fruit and vegetables to create interesting human figures. In a good link to a history topic, pupils in Year 3/4 created good designs in the style of Celtic jewellery. This type of design work is developed well in Years 5 and 6 with portraits created by splitting the face into four parts to ensure the features are accurately placed. The tapestry of faces created by Year 6 pupils is to be entered in a local art competition. During the inspection three pupils received their prizes from the mayor for winning a local competition which shows the value placed by the school on developing pupils' art and design skills.

90 There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, the implication from the standard of work seen and discussions with pupils is that teachers have a consistent approach to planning the work that pupils do. Guidelines for the subject are now based on national guidelines which help to ensure that pupils' skills and understanding build progressively as they move through the school which is reflected in teachers' planning. The work that pupils do shows that teachers give them many opportunities to develop their skills in a wide variety of media, both in two and three dimensions. This was demonstrated in work using the digital camera and computers, when pupils used photographs from around the school and, using an art program, designed their own improvements to the grounds. Pupils use sketch books to record their ideas and this is beginning to have a positive impact on their skills, especially to explore visual images through direct observation. Resources are good and easily accessible. There is a very good range of books and pictures showing the work of famous artists and pupils use these effectively, for example, when painting portraits in the style of Picasso. The school uses links with the local comprehensive well, for example, last term Year 6 pupils produced clay tiles on their visits and the finished products are very well displayed in the entrance lobby of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91 Judgements about design and technology are based on a small number of observations supplemented with an analysis of pupils' work on display and discussions with teachers and pupils.

92 The quality of provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory. Standards are below that expected for seven and 11 year olds. This is a decline in standards since the last inspection. Standards in the making aspect of the subject remain in line with pupils' ages. However, pupils do not

design, evaluate or present their written work to an appropriate standard.

93 In Years 1 and 2, pupils make very simple drawings of their plans for their designs. Pupils know that there are a variety of means of joining materials such as glue, sellotape, stapling and paper fasteners. They decorate puppets, but do not cut, stick or glue accurately, lacking the confidence to work independently. From Year 3 upwards pupils make products with a variety of tools, including puppets and moving toys. However, their sketches are often of a poor standard. They are not modified in the light of problems and pupils do not know how to evaluate and improve their work or make informed choices.

94 Teaching and learning is sound overall but insufficient attention is given to the systematic development of pupils' design skills as they move through the school. Planning, resources and materials are used to stimulate pupils' interest in individual lessons but the written aspects of the subject are not afforded enough attention, especially for Years 1 and 2.

95 Pupils enjoy creative and investigative work and develop good collaborative skills, working and sharing resources sensibly. As a result pupils' attitudes to their work are good and pupils show commitment when making things. Pupils in Year 6, for example, responded very positively to the annual visit from the "Neighbourhood Engineers". They produced a good standard when making greenhouse structures by the end of the afternoon, with the girls especially producing some fine work. There are good guidelines for the subject, up dated by the co-ordinator to take account of national guidance, resources are good and easily accessible.

GEOGRAPHY

96 It was possible to observe only one lesson of geography during the inspection. Additional evidence was obtained from scrutiny of pupils' previous work, including that on display around the school and in photographic records, examination of teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils. By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in geography is in line with the level expected for their age and they generally achieve well. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

97 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 talk knowledgeably about the locality, expressing views on its environmental features, types of housing and detailing resources such as shops and community facilities. Some pupils know their own address and describe their route to school. Pupils develop an awareness of localities beyond their own and know that the globe is a map of the world showing other countries. They have an understanding of the effect of climate. Most pupils talk enthusiastically about "Barnaby Bear" and can say the places he has visited and the things he has seen. All classrooms have interesting Barnaby Bear displays which pupils enjoy talking about.

98 Pupils in Year 6 correctly use geographical terminology to describe previous work they have completed on the environment and climate. Most pupils name some capital cities and have knowledge of continents such as Africa, Europe and America. They discuss how people cause damage to the environment and what actions could be taken to improve both the local environment and those environments which are further afield.

99 Teachers use national guidelines to guide their own planning, which helps them to ensure that pupils' knowledge is built upon progressively. However, there is an over reliance on published worksheets and work is not always matched appropriately to pupils' ability. Pupils' written work is of a poor quality and presentation could be improved. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support teaching and learning in geography and most pupils are quick to suggest its use in order to gain information.

100 Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and clear plans for further development are in place, these include identifying skills

progression, developing cross-curricular links and further training for staff. A well-written policy is in place which also details all available resources. As the focus for observing teaching and learning has been on core subjects, the subject leader has not yet had the opportunity to put all the plans into action. However, teachers' planning is checked by the co-ordinator and assessment and record keeping procedures are developing appropriately.

HISTORY

101 Judgements about history are based on a small number of lessons for older pupils, supplemented with the scrutiny of pupils' previous work, including that on display around the school and in photographic records, examination of teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils. By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in history is in line with the level expected for their age. By the age of 11, most pupils are confident in their historical knowledge and understanding. These standards represent good achievement and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. There are particular strengths in history, for example, the school's good use of its own history and the local area; the enrichment of the curriculum with a good range of educational visits; the use of information and communication technology to support the curriculum and encourage pupils' research skills and good teaching in the classes for older pupils.

102 In Year 2, pupils know that history is about events and people from the past. They talk about the seaside and what it used to be like a long time ago. They discuss the bathing suits that people wore and what people did on a seaside holiday. They showed good recall of a school visit to the seaside and described how they used computers and the Internet to find old photographs of the places they had visited so that they could compare them to what they had seen. Pupils develop their understanding of chronology. For example, they described toys the teacher had brought to school and how they could tell which were the old toys and which were the more recent toys. Pupils have good ideas about how they can find out about the past and make suggestions such as visits to a museum, looking at books, photographs and using the computer.

103 In Year 5/6, pupils demonstrate factual knowledge and understanding of the Tudor period which they are currently studying. The higher attaining pupils talk knowledgeably about a range of historical topics they have studied, using appropriate historical vocabulary to identify differences and give characteristics and features of specific periods. For example, they differentiate between those people who had an advantaged life style and those who were poor; included in this study was information about the type of food they would eat and the clothes they would wear. They offer reasons as to why Henry VIII wanted a divorce and why it was important to him to have a son. Pupils particularly enjoyed out of school visits and demonstrated good recall of the places they had visited to support their learning.

104 The quality of teaching is good. In their lessons, pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit from teachers' good questioning skills. This is effective in helping them to build on their understanding of how to find out information from a variety of sources. Pupils find out what Boudicca may have looked like by reading a description that was written about her at that time. Teachers use the session at the end of lessons to challenge pupils' thinking and to help them appreciate the limitations of historical sources. Older pupils learn about Henry VIII and the Reformation. Effective teacher questioning gives pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge from previous lessons and further consider how some historical events affected England as a whole, and whether the effects were good or bad. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and often good progress, during their lessons. Teachers plan together and use available artefacts effectively to help pupils understand what life may have been like in past times. However, there is a limited range of artefacts to extend pupils' learning. Teachers plan work to follow the nationally recommended guidelines; this helps to ensure that pupils' knowledge is built upon progressively. Older pupils are encouraged to use their literacy skills, for instance, writing letters in a persuasive style.

105 Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and, with staff, has identified clear plans for further development of the subject including improving the range of artefacts and resources to support learning and training for staff. Teachers' planning is regularly checked by the co-ordinator, however, there is currently no formal assessment of pupils' attainment in this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

106 By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with the levels expected for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well in lessons. This is largely due to the consistently good teaching and the good quality resources, including the new computer suite. The school has done well to maintain the standards found in the last inspection because of the change to more modern computers, problems with reliability and the networking needed for all computers in the school. This has now been completed and the employment of a part time technician shows the commitment to improve further. Older pupils understand the use of sensors, for example, in burglar alarms and the control of traffic lights, they know how to program a screen icon to create shapes or move through a maze. Information and communication technology is valued as an essential part of the curriculum. For example, pupils are using information and communication technology to enhance other subjects and to consolidate their computing skills by using classroom based computers to complete research on the Internet, using the digital camera and using spreadsheets to find the cost of items on a menu.

107 By the age of seven, pupils use computers to write poems and short paragraphs on a range of subjects. They use an art program well to create a map of Red Riding Hood's journey to support their work in English. Pupils use the facilities of the program to create paths of different widths, plan the route of a river and, by clicking on to a bridge and dragging the image, they create fascinating routes through the woods. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 "log on" to the school's network, have improving keyboard skills and are confident in using the computer for simple word processing. Pupils learn the basic skills of how to move the mouse, select the correct arrow key and choose options on the screen. For example, in a lesson with Year 1 pupils, some used the click technique to build a house and others negotiated a maze. They explained how to print and save their work and showed great enthusiasm when working in the computer suite. Many pupils know that computers are used to control devices such as cookers and video equipment.

108 By the age of 11, pupils make sound gains in skills and knowledge and continue to achieve well in lessons. They know how to set up and use simple databases and to interrogate these for information. Teachers use the computer suite well to introduce pupils to spreadsheets to organise and analyse different forms of data. Year 6 pupils understand the use of sensor devices to measure the temperature in a house and turn on the heating when it is cold but they have limited practical experience of using them in school. There are good plans in place to use the limited sensing equipment in the near future and to extend the resources needed for pupils to undertake more sophisticated experiments. Discussions with and demonstrations by Year 6 pupils show they understand the use of more advanced control technology, and they confidently explain how to give the instructions to create different mathematical shapes on the screen. Pupils understand the importance and scope of the Internet and have used it to locate information on the Aztecs and life in Tudor times. In Year 6, they use the Internet to support their studies in geography by finding information about mountainous regions. Pupils of all ages enjoy using the computers and treat them with respect. In many lessons, pupils offer assistance to other pupils and are uninhibited when asking for advice from the teacher.

109 The quality of teaching in the computer suite is good. Teachers use their knowledge well to give clear instructions and to test pupils' understanding with skilful questioning. For example, in a

lesson for pupils in Year 3/4, the teacher checked pupils' understanding of previous work on altering text by highlighting it and set the challenging task of changing a series of words using different sizes, colours and shapes of letters. Teachers' good management of behaviour allows most pupils, including those with special educational needs, to work independently and gain confidence. In many lessons, teachers use opportunities to consolidate pupils' spelling and reading skills by linking questions to text that has been read on the screen or created by pupils. Teachers are particularly skilful in managing the behaviour of pupils, particularly in the confined space of the computer suite. This means pupils remain focused and persevere with their tasks. Some use of computers was observed in English, mathematics and science, for example, a Year 5 class accessed the Internet to find information about phases of the moon in their scientific studies.

110 The information and communication technology curriculum is well managed. The very knowledgeable co-ordinator has produced a very good set of guidelines, good skills recording sheets for pupils and provided all staff with lists of most suitable programs to support different aspects of the curriculum. There are also very good plans to extend the resources in information and communication technology to further complement the good resources already in the school. As a result, the school is well placed to continue the recent good development of the subject.

MUSIC

111 Standards have been maintained in music since the previous inspection. By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in music is in line with the level expected for their age. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress.

112 The school benefits considerably from the music co-ordinator's high level of expertise. For instance, the choir sings well and the two recorder groups are popular. In assemblies, pupils sing tunefully and with confidence because of good teaching in hymn practices. Occasionally, pupils give good musical performances for special assemblies, including choir, recorders, tuned and untuned percussion and violinists taught by a peripatetic teacher. Pupils in the choir also develop their social skills and confidence when they perform out of school, for instance at Christmas. The co-ordinator is a skilled teacher in the subject but there are limited opportunities for this expertise to benefit other classes. All teachers follow the school's planning for music lessons but the effectiveness is patchy, depending on individual teachers' confidence. In addition, teachers do not create enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to listen to a wide range of music.

113 In a good lesson in Year 1 the teacher's high level of expertise gained a good response from pupils as they learned vocabulary such as "guiro" and to handle musical instruments with care. The teacher's imaginative use of musical games caught pupils' interest and attention so they were keen and receptive. Teaching in a Year 2 lesson was satisfactory, the teacher's expertise in the subject was not always used to best effect, for example, to provide more opportunities for pupils to improve their performance in singing and playing percussion. Their singing was over enthusiastic throughout the lesson, which affected its tunefulness and pupils were not given enough use of instruments. Pupils in a Year 3/4 class composed and performed music in small groups for tuned and untuned percussion using a pentatonic scale. Many showed imagination and a few showed good attainment. In Years 5 and 6 pupils listen to music to develop musical ideas. For instance, they compose music for the voice using graphic symbols after listening to Mongolian mouth music. School planning for music lessons provides opportunities for teachers to use computers for musical purposes, which makes a positive contribution to the subject.

114 Given the co-ordinator's good expertise and the sound leadership and management of the subject, the school is in a good position to raise standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115 Standards in physical education have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 2 attain satisfactory standards. They progress quickly in Years 3 to 6 to reach good standards by the age of 11. This is mainly because of good teaching and the strong contribution and expertise of the co-ordinator for the subject.

116 The school's good use of the co-ordinator's specialist expertise promotes high standards. The adjustment of timetabling to enable the expertise to be used in two classes results in pupils in both classes making very good progress. The coaching of less confident swimmers contributes to the high standards reached in swimming. All pupils in Year 6 learn to swim the statutory distance of 25 metres and many reach a far higher standard. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra curricular sporting activities. These are very popular and many pupils, boys and girls, benefit from the co-ordinator's coaching and from outside professional coaching. This makes a valuable contribution to the success of school teams in local competitions. The school provides an opportunity for all pupils in Year 6 to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities. This contributes well to their social development.

117 Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and often very good. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons, remain highly interested and motivated and learn quickly. Teachers show good knowledge of the subject. In the best lesson seen, in Year 5, pupils' determination to do well sprang from the teacher's emphasis on concentration, co-operation and safe practice. As a result, pupils' very high levels of commitment led to very fast learning in developing the hockey skills of stopping the ball, dribbling, tapping and passing. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what happens to their bodies during exercise. Consequently, pupils take warming-up and cooling-down activities seriously and sustain energetic activity safely. The good use of demonstrations, both by teachers and pupils, followed up by targeted demonstrations of good practice, gives pupils a knowledge of what to aim for. Teachers manage pupils well and this helps lessons move at a fast rate. In a Year 3/4 lesson the teacher's no-nonsense approach to discipline ensured that all pupils paid close attention and so their skills improved quickly in chest passing a ball and moving into space. However, not all teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to discuss and refine their learning.

118 In Years 1 and 2 teaching is satisfactory and this enables pupils to make steady progress. Teachers manage pupils well in controlled situations such as when giving instructions, so pupils know what is expected of them. However, during activities some teachers do not insist on a suitable quiet working atmosphere for pupils to concentrate on improving their performance. This limits the effectiveness of the support teachers give and the progress pupils make. The influence of the co-ordinator for the subject is not felt as positively in Years 1 and 2 physical education as it is in Years 3 to 6. For instance, the use of demonstrations by teachers and pupils was seen in only one lesson, when pupils in Year 2 showed satisfactory skills in throwing and catching balls and bean bags. The level of teachers' expertise in the subject in Years 1 and 2 is reflected in pupils' progress, attitudes and behaviour, which are satisfactory. On the other hand, many pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good or very good progress and show good or very good attitudes and behaviour. This is mainly because of good teaching and the strong contribution and expertise of the co-ordinator for the subject.

119 The school does not have satisfactory systems in place for observing the quality of teaching and learning or for assessing what pupils know and can do. This limits how well the co-ordinator understands strengths to build on and weaknesses to remedy. However, the strength of the leadership and management of the subject puts the school in a good position to improve standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120 By the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with those prescribed by the locally Agreed Syllabus and are in line with those expected for pupils' ages. The quality of the provision has been maintained since the last inspection and this allows pupils to progress steadily and securely through the interesting learning opportunities planned for them. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Under the good direction of the co-ordinator, guidelines have been rewritten to take account of the recently revised Agreed Syllabus which are used well in teachers' planning of lessons. The curriculum is broad and covers all requirements well. As a result, the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

121 Teachers use good teaching methods in their lessons. They make good use of good quality artefacts and videos either to introduce new learning or to check on pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson the teacher discussed with pupils the ideas of the Sikh religion after telling the story of Guru Gobind. Pupils remembered that the religion was founded by Guru Nanak and good questions by the teacher ensured that all pupils understood the different artefacts that are important to followers of the Sikh religion. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils shared their knowledge and understanding of the significance of the story of Moses and the ten plagues that God sent to persuade the Egyptians to free the Jews. In this lesson, the teacher followed up the story and explained the meaning of Passover. The various foods eaten at this time and their significance to the Jewish people were covered well. By the end of the lesson pupils understood that the Jewish name for Passover is Seder and that it is a very special celebration for them. Teachers plan lessons well. They link the subject well to other subjects to help pupils' understanding and generate discussion. In Year 2, pupils discussed their thoughts on the Harvest Festival celebration by Christians by expressing their belief that everyone should have a share. They study the life and times of Jesus and understand the importance of Christmas and Easter in the Christian calendar.

122 Teachers work together well. They plan lessons so that all pupils have the same experiences. A strength of the subject lies in the way that teachers use the personal, social and health education programme to extend learning in religious education. Pupils discuss friendship, responsibility and care for others which links meaningfully to discussions based on the beliefs of Jesus. Teachers share the targets with pupils at the beginning of the lesson and check at the end of the lesson to make sure that targets have been met. In this way pupils are involved in their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for through more simplified activities and with good help either from the teacher or the support staff.

123 Discussions with Year 6 pupils show that there are good links with other subjects, for example, in history when they study the Gods worshipped by the Egyptians and Romans. Good use is made of visits to places of interest such as Durham Cathedral. In most classes, pupils' good knowledge and understanding is not reflected in their written work, it is often superficial and does not extend pupils' learning sufficiently well. All work is marked regularly and teachers give praise and encouragement to pupils. Opportunities are often missed to suggest how work could be improved. Assessment is not used sufficiently well to inform planning so that those pupils who are capable of higher attainment do not have the opportunity to work at a more challenging level. However, the knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator has prepared assessment sheets linked to the attainment targets in the new syllabus and, once these are in place, standards are likely to rise. There are good resources for religious education and these are used well by teachers to enliven the subject.