

INSPECTION REPORT

DARWEN ST PETER'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Darwen

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119458

Headteacher: Mrs R Bessant

Reporting inspector: Mr R Robinson
21024

Dates of inspection: 18 – 21 November 2002

Inspection number: 248020

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 5 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Turncroft Road
Darwen

Postcode: BB3 2BW

Telephone number: 01254 701299

Fax number: 01254 761873

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev K Arkell

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

	Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21024	Mr R Robinson Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Provision for children in the foundation stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements What should the school do to improve further?
8922	Mrs B McIntosh 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? How well is the school led and managed?
22380	Mrs P Parrish Team inspector	English Special educational needs English as an additional language	How well are the pupils taught?
19916	Mrs D Kerr Team inspector	Science Art and design Physical education Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
25431	Lesley Clark Team inspector	Design and technology Geography History Music	

The inspection contractor was:

Yorkshire Educational Services Ltd
16 Burn Hall
Darlington Road
Croxdale
DURHAM DH1 3SR

Tel/Fax: 0191 378 4031

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

10

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12

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

14

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

15

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

17

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

18

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

21

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

22

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

26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This average-sized primary school for boys and girls aged four to 11 years is situated in Darwen near Blackburn. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are about average. The school has 274 full-time pupils, 145 boys and 129 girls. A few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds though none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Forty-three pupils (15.7 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs, which is below average; of these, three pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is about average. Most of the pupils with learning difficulties have moderate or specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties or visual difficulties. Children's attainment on entry to reception varies from year to year though it is overall about average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about 10 per cent, which is below the national average. Since the last inspection, there have been very significant changes of staff, including changes in headteacher and deputy headteacher. An associate head was deployed to the school by the local education authority in October 2001 and was subsequently appointed headteacher in January 2002 at the same time as the appointment of the deputy headteacher. Few members of staff who were present at the last inspection remain at the school. The school has increased in size because 45 pupils are allowed to be in each age group rather than the previous figure of 35.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Darwen St Peters provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards are in line with the national average in English and mathematics but below average in science by the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning is satisfactory on balance, but varies throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour and personal development are satisfactory overall. Since their recent appointments, the good leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are moving the school forward effectively. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children achieve well in the reception classes because the teaching is good.
- The teaching of the deputy headteacher in Year 2 is of a high standard.
- The school has good links with parents resulting in effective parental involvement in their children's learning.
- The range of activities available for pupils outside lessons is good.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well.

What could be improved

- Standards are below average in the following:
 - ❖ writing and physical education by the end of Year 2;
 - ❖ art and design and science by the end of Year 6;
 - ❖ design and technology and music by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Members of staff have an inconsistent approach to the management of behaviour.
- The teaching is not good enough in the Year 1 and Year 1/2 classes.
- The checking and tracking of pupils' progress is insufficient.
- The roles of the subject co-ordinators are underdeveloped.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made barely satisfactory progress since the last inspection in February 1998

because of very significant staffing changes. Overall standards are not as high as at the last inspection; however, since the appointment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher in January 2002, standards have begun to improve from a low level. Curriculum co-ordinators are still not checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching sufficiently. Teachers have better guidance to help them plan lessons in art and design and in design and technology. Increased opportunities are available for pupils to develop their skills through practical and investigative work. Teachers now plan challenging work for higher attaining pupils. The quality of teaching and the curriculum for children in the reception classes have improved significantly.

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	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	B	D	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	E	D	D	
science	B	E	E	E	

- As can be seen in the above table, standards by the end of Year 6 plummeted in 2001 but improved in English and mathematics in 2002. Inspection judgements of the present group of pupils in Year 6 show that standards in English and mathematics are in line with the national average, but standards in science are below average. The improvements result from action taken by the headteacher and deputy headteacher to improve standards.
- The results of the national tests in 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. The performance of this year's group of pupils in Year 2 is average in reading and mathematics but remains below average in writing.
- Girls outperform boys in English, though the performances of boys and girls are similar in mathematics and science.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations in history, geography, and information and communication technology but below average in art and design, design and technology and music. In physical education, by the end of Year 2, standards are below average; however, in Years 3 to 5, pupils make good progress and in Year 6 are on course to be in line with the national expectations.
- Children in the reception class make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy, and are on course to reach above expected standards by the end of the reception year. The children are likely to achieve expected levels by the end of the reception year in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily, on balance, from entering the school in the reception classes to leaving at the end of Year 6. The school's targets for the proportion of pupils in English and mathematics who are likely to reach the levels expected nationally and above are demanding and are unlikely to be achieved, particularly at the higher level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning when the work is interesting and challenging and is accompanied by clear

	expectations for the standards expected of them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The school's behaviour policy is not yet consistently applied and this leads to unsatisfactory behaviour in a few classes. Behaviour in the playground or in assemblies is satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Where teaching is good, there are good relationships between staff and pupils. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is a lack of mutual respect between the teachers and pupils and also between the pupils themselves. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and contribute well to the decision making process in school through the school council. Pupils are friendly and polite towards visitors.
Attendance	Good. Attendance levels are consistently well above the national figures.

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 teaching in the reception classes is good and the children make good progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. The children show lively interest in their work and learn new skills and knowledge quickly.

The teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall; however, the quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The teaching in the Year 2 class is very good and in the Year 3 classes it is good. The planning of lessons is good and teachers share with pupils what they should learn during the lessons; however, these learning objectives are sometimes over complex and not understood by pupils. Discussions between teachers and pupils are a successful part of most lessons. Weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour in some lessons result in pupils not working as hard as they could and not learning at a fast enough rate.

The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is satisfactory overall. Pupils with learning difficulties are helped suitably by teachers and teaching assistants when working in small groups; however, teaching assistants are not used sufficiently to assist pupils' learning in whole class teaching. On balance, the teaching caters satisfactorily for the needs of all pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory. The school makes good use of visits and clubs to enrich and support learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Individual education plans are clear, detailed and helpful. The help teaching assistants provide is a significant factor in the satisfactory progress of these pupils. Pupils with statements of special educational need have a well-established system of support and generally make good progress in relation to previous attainment.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The pupils who speak English as an additional language make the same progress as most other pupils because none are at an early stage of learning English.

Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Specific times in the school day are used well to help pupils think about the impact of their actions on others and their responsibilities to the world around them. Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the multicultural richness of British society today are limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The procedures for checking and tracking what pupils know and understand are unsatisfactory and this leads to weaknesses in supporting their academic progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory, on balance. The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school focusing on raising standards. She receives excellent support from the deputy headteacher who takes a full part in the running of the school. The quality of education is improving. However, subject co-ordinators do not monitor the standards in their subjects sufficiently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are rapidly developing their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, although the plans for the future direction of the school are not clearly defined. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties but many policies do not reflect current practice.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The priorities in the school development plan are appropriate and effective in practice. Systems for checking and improving teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good. Newly qualified teachers receive good support. The governing body has a satisfactory understanding of ways to ensure finances are used to best effect.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The partnership with parents is effective and is a strength of the school.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy school and make good progress because the teaching is good. Children are expected to work hard and are given appropriate amounts of homework to assist their learning. The school works closely with parents, and they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents find the staff approachable. The school helps children to become more mature and responsible. The leadership and management of the school are good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of activities outside lessons is insufficient.

The inspectors agree with most of the positive views of parents; however, because of variations in

the teaching, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory rather than good. There is a better range of activities outside lessons than is usually seen.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Standards, by the end of Year 6, are average in English mathematics, information and communication technology, geography, history and physical education. Pupils' attainment in science, in art and design, design and technology and music are below average.

2 The inspection judgements for English, mathematics and science of the present group of pupils in Year 6 show that standards in English remain in line with the national average, that an improvement has taken place in mathematics to be in line with the national average, and that science is now below average rather than well below average. The improving situation of pupils' performance reflects the emphasis the headteacher and deputy headteacher have placed on improving standards, particularly in English and mathematics.

3 In the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002, standards in reading were above both the average nationally and that of pupils in similar schools, standards in writing were below both the national average and that of pupils in similar schools, and, in mathematics, standards were above the national average and well above the average of pupils in similar schools. Standards of the present group of pupils are average, except in writing, where standards are below average; however, most pupils are making very good progress in literacy and numeracy in the Year 2 class in response to a high standard of teaching. Standards in science are in line with the national average by the end of Year 2, but standards in physical education are below average because the teaching of the subject is unsatisfactory.

4 Since the last inspection, standards of pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have declined overall. In 1998, standards in English were well above the national average, and, in science, standards were in line with the national average. Standards improved in science until the tests in 2001 and, in English, standards were well above average in 1999 and above average in 2000. In mathematics, standards, by the end of Year 6 were below average in 1998, improved in 1999 to well above average and in 2000 were in line with the national average. In all three subjects, standards plummeted in the national tests in 2001 to be overall well below the national average. The serious underachievement of pupils in 2001 coincided with severe disruption of staffing, changes of teaching in Year 6 and the resignation of the headteacher. Since this time, following the appointment of the current headteacher and deputy headteacher, standards have risen in English and mathematics though insignificantly in science.

5 Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, relative to their prior attainment; however, pupils' achievements in science, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education are unsatisfactory. The reasons for the underachievement in these subjects can be attributed to lack of focus on raising standards in these subjects because of the recent urgent need to raise standards in English and mathematics. Contributory factors are that pupils are not building on their prior attainments sufficiently, the management of pupils' behaviour is sometimes unsatisfactory and the subject co-ordinators do not have a secure grasp of standards.

6 A recent improvement is the good progress of children in the reception classes. The headteacher recognised that the curriculum and teaching were not good enough and worked with the staff and advisers from the local education authority to effect improvements. The staff responded well to the help they received and this has resulted in better teaching and achievement of the children. The children are likely, by the end of the reception year, to exceed the expected levels in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. In all the other areas of learning, the children are on course to meet the expected standards. Children in the reception classes receive a good start to their education at the school and this has the potential to have a positive impact on standards.

7 In the Year 1 and Year 1/2 classes, pupils do not build on their prior attainment well enough and are not making sufficient progress because of weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour. This underachievement is redressed by the very good progress pupils make in the Year 2 class and in the Year 3 classes. In Years 4 to 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily following recent changes of staffing.

8 No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The pupils who speak English as an additional language make the same progress as most other pupils. The school's general provision for the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing meets their needs; however, the school does not isolate and analyse the results of these pupils to check their progress.

9 In English, girls have outperformed boys consistently in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, whereas in mathematics and science, the attainment of boys and girls has been similar. The behaviour of boys and their attitudes to work are not as good as girls'; this impacts on boys' progress. The tracking of the progress of girls and boys is not established.

10 Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress towards the targets set within their individual education plans and those with Statements of Special Educational Needs generally make good progress in relation to previous attainment. Enough teaching assistants are available to ensure that pupils are given any additional help that they need in lessons in literacy and numeracy and that the pupils with severe learning difficulties have adult help available whenever necessary.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are satisfactory rather than being good, as they were at the time of the last inspection, because there is a significant minority of pupils that demonstrates disrespectful behaviour. This is almost always associated with unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the school and their teachers and clearly like coming to school.

12 Children in the reception classes are well behaved and their personal and social development is good. At the start of the day, they enter the classrooms happily and settle quickly into the routines of the day. They learn to share and take turns and develop good listening skills. During role-play, the children show high levels of interest and imagination as they pretend to be doctors and nurses at St Peter's Clinic, looking after those who feel ill and bandaging each other's arms and legs. The children showed good self-discipline when joining in the rhyming and action songs. Although clearly excited by the activity, they sat and waited patiently and happily until it was time to join in. The broad smiles on their faces summed up how much they enjoy being in school. The children sing confidently in front of the whole class and show appreciation for each other's performances with their spontaneous applause.

13 Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory. In lessons, behaviour is usually good where teachers have a good relationship with their pupils and manage them well through praise and encouragement. Problems occur when teachers do not have the skills they need to manage the poor behaviour of a significant minority in the class. Disruptive pupils have little respect for their teachers and take little notice of threats and sanctions. There is a sense of unfairness for those pupils who behave well and try hard to concentrate on their work.

14 In the Year 1 and Year 1/2 classes, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are often unsatisfactory. There are significant numbers of pupils who find it hard to concentrate on their work; for example, a Year 1 literacy lesson was dominated by poor behaviour and restlessness, which limited concentration and learning. The noise level in these classes becomes excessive and is counter-productive, often distracting the pupils in the Year 2 class.

15 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are best when they are given demanding and challenging work accompanied by clear expectations for the standards expected of them; for example, in numeracy lessons, the pupils in Year 4 showed a high level of motivation during the mental sessions and were confident in using a range of methods to explain their answers. In a literacy lesson, pupils in Year 3 showed high levels of concentration and behaved extremely well as they read their text together to try to identify the hidden punctuation marks.

16 Pupils behave and listen well in assembly. The headteacher sets a good lead for positive behaviour and attitudes in these situations. Pupils, generally, move around school in an orderly way. They stand back willingly and open doors for staff, visitors and each other. The organisation at lunchtime leads to pupils queuing for too long to collect their lunch and this results in minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour and excessive noise levels. Outside play on the play areas for the older pupils is boisterous and energetic and those pupils wishing to play quietly can find it difficult to get away from football games. The younger pupils play well together at lunchtime, especially when the play leaders and welfare assistants organise games for them.

17 The pupils' personal development is satisfactory. In many lessons, the good relationships that pupils have with each other and their teachers create a very positive working environment. Pupils say that they feel confident to answer questions in lessons because the teachers react in a helpful way if they get something wrong. Pupils participate in the decision making process in school through the class and school councils. They carry out their school and class tasks sensibly and older pupils take their responsibilities for the younger children very seriously. Pupils are open and friendly and enjoy chatting to adults about themselves, their work and their school. Pupils from the different ethnic groups are fully integrated into the life of the school. In some lessons, pupils are confident to discuss their work in groups or pairs. In a science lesson, pupils in Year 5 confirmed that they are used to group discussion and planned their experiments successfully. Pupils in Year 6 do not display better than satisfactory levels of independence and they tend to follow the teacher round to check that what they are doing is right. Occasionally, pupils do not always stop to think how their actions can affect others and sometimes their reactions can be very inappropriate.

18 The level of pupils' attendance is consistently good and well above the national figures. Most pupils like school and say that learning is fun. The unauthorised absences are due mainly to family holidays which exceed ten school days. Most parents are helpful and ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but varies across the classes between very good and unsatisfactory. Teaching is very good overall in the Year 2 class and good in Years 3 and 4 classes overall. In the reception, teaching is good, with particular strengths existing in the teaching of personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory overall, with strengths in English. There are significant weaknesses in the management of the pupils' behaviour in both the Year 1 class and the Year 1/2 class, and teaching and learning there are unsatisfactory overall. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is similar to that reported in the last inspection but weaknesses in the teaching are now linked to behaviour management rather than inefficiencies in both the use of time and insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils; in both of these areas, the school has moved forward. Standards in teaching and learning fell during a period of uncertainty in the school but the school has now turned around and the quality of teaching is rising. Behaviour management is a concern where teaching is weak, such as in the Year 1 and Year 1/2 classes. At the upper end of the school, a minority of pupils has developed low self-expectations and teachers are finding it difficult in some lessons to focus them successfully on their work.

20 The main strength of the teaching is the careful planning that underpins the lessons,

generally building useful and well thought out units of work that help pupils to learn at a suitable pace and to enjoy their work. Teachers are generally very clear from the outset about what they want to achieve in the lesson and the learning objectives are shared with pupils. This enables pupils to focus their attention and make suitable gains in learning. Where teaching is good or better, the teacher returns to the objectives at useful points in the lesson to reaffirm the class targets and this adds to the quality of the pupils' learning. In Year 3, the teacher has a system that encourages pupils to grade how well they think they have done and this helps the teacher to make future plans. Occasionally, the objectives given to the pupils are phrased in complicated language that is difficult to understand and this weakens an otherwise useful system. Where teaching is weak, the objectives are largely forgotten after the beginning of the lesson and, consequently, are not always achieved. Except in English and mathematics, planning sometimes fails to set tasks of greater or lesser difficulty to meet the differing needs of pupils and this reduces opportunities to allow all pupils to achieve well. Weaknesses identified in the last inspection in the school's provision for higher attaining pupils have been largely resolved in English and mathematics; in other subjects, there is still more work to be done. Lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties are generally given suitable extra adult help when necessary. Occasionally, for pupils with visual impairment, more support from adults is given than is necessary and opportunities for the development of confidence and independence are missed. Lesson plans do not specifically detail opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

21 Where teaching is of at least good quality, relationships in the class are good and the dialogue between the teacher and the pupils is very productive. Teachers are good at introducing lessons, setting the learning into the context of previous lessons and explaining tasks to pupils. Good questions are asked to set the pupils thinking and this leads to good discussions; in Year 4, for example, pupils used all the resources available to them to find out the different viewpoints on the life of Queen Boudicca to add to the class discussion on her significance in the Roman Invasion of Ancient Britain. Useful feedback is given to pupils on their achievements to help them to evaluate their work and to set future targets. Technical language is taught well and frequent opportunities for discussion as a class or in small groups mean that pupils become confident in expressing their views and exploring ideas; in Year 5, for example, pupils worked in groups in science to plan investigations into the growth of mould on bread. In the Year 1/2 class, pupils profitably discussed a story in pairs in preparation for writing about it. Class discussions, such as when pupils sit in a circle to present their ideas in turn, or where a pupil takes the 'hot seat' to answer questions from the class, are useful in extending pupils' communication skills.

22 Where teaching is weak, the pupils' contributions are not managed well and the class becomes too noisy for purposeful discussion or concentrated effort. This was evident in many of the lessons in the Year 1 and Year 1/2 classes. Sometimes, in Years 5 and 6, the noise of pupils talking becomes intrusive, both to their own learning and to that of the rest of the class. The school has devised strategies to regain the pupils' attention, such as clapping in rhythm, but when these are used too frequently, they add to the disturbance of the lesson.

23 In most classes, the quality of teaching is good in literacy. The school has prioritised the subject for improvement and the deputy headteacher is taking effective action, alongside the English co-ordinator, to improve the teaching and learning. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced, belatedly when compared with most schools, but its requirements are now firmly in place. Teachers are accomplished in the use of suggested methods, such as guiding the teaching of reading in small groups, and pupils are now making rapid progress. In the reception classes, the good balance achieved between direct teaching and arrangements for children to learn independently through interesting activities is proving particularly successful in helping the children to develop their personal, social, language and literacy skills. This shows good improvement since the last inspection when the teaching in the reception year was largely unsuitable for the children's age and out of line with national guidance.

24 The National Numeracy Strategy is in place and the daily mathematics lessons reflect national guidance. The planning of lessons is good; it is particularly strong in Years 4 and 5, as it provides step-by-step guidance to teachers who are new to the school. The best teaching of

numeracy is in the Year 2 and 3 classes where teachers create a brisk pace of learning and pupils work enthusiastically and productively.

25 The work of the teaching assistants adds significantly to the quality of teaching and provides a suitable help, especially for the pupils with learning difficulties. However, for the most part, their work has been redefined over the past year, to make sure that as much time as possible is spent helping pupils to learn; this means that support systems are not always well established and productive. For example, during the whole class teaching section of lessons, teaching assistants are not actively involved in enhancing teaching by working with pupils on the questions asked of the class or by making notes on pupils' contributions for the teacher to build on in future plans. For the pupils with special educational needs, individual education plans provide a clear focus for teaching and learning, and, usefully, include the teaching methods which might achieve learning best. The special educational needs co-ordinator is available to provide help in lessons but her time is shared evenly across the classes rather than being focused on the specific needs of individual pupils. Her help is not always used to best advantage during times when the teacher is working with the whole class and this means that sometimes half of her allocated time with pupils is not used efficiently. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are helped in similar ways to other pupils as none are at an early stage of learning English.

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

26 Teachers have worked very hard over the past year to put into place a broad and relevant curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils and fulfils national requirements. This has resulted in several improvements. A notable one is that teachers now use national guidelines as a basis for planning each subject and, for the most part, the planning ensures that, as pupils move through the school, their learning builds systematically on previous work. The national programmes for teaching literacy and numeracy have been introduced and are contributing to rising standards in English and mathematics.

27 The teachers in the reception classes provide a rich and practical curriculum that covers all the nationally recommended areas of learning. Teaching links these areas of learning together well, so that children experience interesting indoor and outdoor activities that enable them to learn through carefully planned work and play.

28 The requirements of the latest national guidance for pupils with special educational needs are in place and suitably detailed individual education plans provide clear guidance for teachers and teaching assistants. The pupils with specific learning difficulties follow the same programme of study as other pupils, generally with suitable adaptations and adult help to enable them to make satisfactory progress. Occasionally, insufficient attention is given to the suitability of materials and assistance and this limits learning opportunities; for example, the school's colour coded system for allocating reading books for individual practice in school and at home is not always the best provision for pupils with specific difficulties with reading, and more suitable arrangements are not always set up.

29 Teachers, teaching assistants and lunch time supervisors provide a wide range of additional activities and experiences such as clubs, visits out of school and visitors into school to enrich the curriculum. These include visits to museums, theatres and places of interest. Visitors from the local churches make a strong contribution to assemblies. All these activities enrich pupils' learning and broaden their understanding of the world around them. The extra-curricular clubs enable pupils in Years 4 to 6 to experience a wide selection of activities, which include sports, crafts and performing arts. A programme of work for pupils' personal, social and health education is being developed successfully and this includes preparation for a smooth transfer to the local secondary schools.

30 There are some weaknesses in the school's curricular provision that restrict what pupils can achieve. There are still some shortcomings in the planning for Years 3 to 6. In subjects, such as science, art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music, there is one set of plans to cover two year groups and there is not enough guidance to show how the work should be made harder for the older year group in each case. In science, not enough is done to challenge the higher attaining pupils in Year 6 to enable them to reach the higher levels of attainment.

31 The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. School assemblies and acts of worship support the spiritual development of pupils; for example, the theme of 'special places' was used well in school assemblies to encourage pupils to reflect on places that were special to them and the warm feelings and memories that they generated. A specific time in the school day is set aside to encourage groups of pupils to reflect on their feelings, to consider their place in the world, and to respond to what they learn about the values and beliefs of others.

32 Teachers are working hard to promote pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are taught from the start that their actions have consequences as the very good behaviour of the children in the reception classes demonstrates. However, all adults do not always use the positive behaviour management systems in place consistently so that pupils in some classes are not very clear about the kind of behaviour expected and the sanctions that poor behaviour will incur. Moral issues are explored within assemblies, class lessons and personal, social and health education sessions. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are working hard with staff to develop an ethos of respect, care and consideration.

33 The school is making sound provision for developing pupils' social skills to ensure that they quickly learn to become useful members of society. Older pupils, in particular, contribute to the smooth running of the school by helping out in assemblies, in the dining room at lunchtimes and by carrying out tasks around the school. Trained play leaders from Year 6 have recently begun to help younger children at lunchtimes. Representatives from each class contribute to the school council, which works to improve the learning environment. Pupils' ideas are valued. In some lessons, teachers plan paired and group activities to encourage collaboration. A sense of community is promoted through pupils' involvement in the community; for example, the choir sings at a senior citizens' residence and in the local cathedral at Christmas.

34 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their local heritage and culture through the wide variety of visits each term to local museums, buildings and heritage sites. The schemes of work now in place make provision for teachers to develop pupils' awareness of cultural diversity within art, music and literature; for example, pupils in Year 4, studying a unit of work on dances from other cultures, learnt about a dance popular at Indian weddings and had clearly enjoyed developing and performing their own dances. In general, more could be done in the school to promote a good understanding of the values and traditions of other cultures and faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35 The school is a welcoming, friendly place and takes good steps to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils say they are able to talk to staff about any worries or problems that they may have. They are confident that, if they have an accident in school, an adult will look after them. Parents feel that the teaching assistants contribute positively in school and in lessons by helping individual pupils.

36 The procedures for health and safety are good. Risk assessments and actions taken are meticulously recorded. In physical education lessons, the teachers pay good attention to reminding pupils about the importance of aspects of personal safety. If pupils are ill or accidentally fall during play, swift action makes sure that any distress is minimised. The school records accidents to pupils and informs parents about injuries to their children. The arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher makes sure that teachers know what to do if concerns arise about the

children in their care. The school has clear guidance to make sure that the pupils understand the safe use of the Internet.

37 The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The headteacher is changing the ways in which staff deal with challenging and inappropriate behaviour. There is an emphasis on promoting positive behaviour and managing behaviour through being a 'no put down' school and raising pupils' self-esteem. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents felt that, whilst most pupils respond well to these new methods, a minority in each class does not. There has been much discussion to ensure that there is a shared understanding by all members of staff about how to promote consistently the guidance given in the school's policy statement on behaviour. The lack of this shared understanding about managing behaviour is resulting in incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour during lessons and throughout the school. There is more emphasis on individual teachers deciding on rewards and sanctions for their own class rather than promoting whole school systems. The distribution and value of the rewards is inconsistent among teachers and pupils. In some lessons, teachers do not always have a good enough range of strategies to deal with incidents of disruptive behaviour and this affects the pupils' learning. The school has not excluded any pupils during the past year.

38 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The school actively encourages attendance by ensuring that pupils enjoy coming to school. Registers are checked regularly and any unexplained absences are pursued well. Absences are only authorised when a suitable valid explanation is given. The school takes very prompt action and makes first-day contact with those parents of pupils who are absent and may be at risk.

39 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. A programme of personal, social and health education is taught within lessons and pupils have good opportunities to talk about themselves and share their feelings and concerns with others. The school recognises and rewards individual achievements and successes and these are celebrated through a weekly assembly. The older pupils feel that the school is preparing them well for their next stage of learning. The school takes good care of the children in the reception class. Before starting school, they visit the classroom with their parents, meet the staff and become familiar with the building. This helps provide a secure introduction to school life.

40 There are weaknesses in the checking and recording of pupils' progress. When the headteacher was appointed, there was information from end of year tests in English and mathematics but it was not collated concisely enough to give a clear picture of standards or to make regular checks on pupils' progress. The information has been recorded recently in a better format to enable senior managers to check the progress pupils make in each class. The data is also used to predict pupils' results at the end of Year 6 and to inform the school of general trends, as well as to help identify pupils who need additional intensive help. No systems are in place to check the progress of different groups of pupils, such as, for example, by gender or ethnicity.

41 Procedures for checking what pupils know and understand in subjects, other than English and mathematics, are weak. They are informal and dependent upon individual teachers. Members of staff, other than the headteacher and deputy headteacher, do not identify the academic needs of pupils with sufficient accuracy. Looking at levels of attainment of the National Curriculum for individual children is a new process for most of the staff, and they have limited understanding of ways to help children move from one level to another. This means that teachers do not gather information consistently about how pupils' skills are developing and, as a result, they do not have enough information to help them to plan future lessons specifically related to pupils' prior attainment.

42 The individual education plans for the pupils with learning difficulties provide very clear guidance for teaching and learning; reviews are regular and take account of information on progress from staff and parents. The school seeks the advice of specialists when necessary. The teacher who co-ordinates the provision for these pupils has no class teaching responsibility and is available to check and support the progress of these pupils in class. Although this opportunity has proved

useful in drawing up individual education plans and for reviewing pupils' progress, the practice of sharing her time evenly between classes does not necessarily focus her work where it is needed most.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43 The partnership with parents is effective and is a strength of the school.

44 Although there have been changes in the leadership and a large turnover of staff since the last inspection, the school has maintained effective links with parents. Parents expressed very positive views about the school through the questionnaire and raised no areas of concern except a few parents considered the range of extra-curricular activities were limited. A number of these parents were unaware that the school provides a good range of interesting activities outside school but they are for pupils in Year 3 and upwards only. Parents, clearly, value and support the work of the school. Parents at the meeting considered that the school had been in a state of turmoil but things are now improving and moving forward under the direction of the current headteacher. They feel that problems have been tackled well and in the right order and there are clear signs that the standards of children's work are improving. Parents are appreciative of how hard the headteacher and staff have worked for the school and their children.

45 Parents are given a good range of information about the school and what their children are learning. The prospectus is interesting and very well presented and is a useful document for marketing the school in the wider community. Parents value the monthly newsletters that contain a wealth of information about school life and aspects of learning; for example, reading, spelling and behaviour. The 'Big Picture' gives parents a useful summary of the work that their children will be covering throughout the term which enables them to assist their child's learning at home. Parents are provided with their child's targets for future learning and these focus discussion at the formal meetings with teachers when they discuss how well their child is getting on. The consultation forms provide a useful way of collecting parents' views or concerns that they may have about their children's learning. Meetings, which provide information about subjects and tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, are extremely well attended because parents are interested in their child's education. The year begins with an open meeting for every year group so that parents can get to know the new teacher and find out about daily routines and what subjects are to be taught. Pupils' annual progress reports give a satisfactory picture of attainment and progress but the individual targets for development are not clear enough to inform parents as to how they can contribute to their children's future learning.

46 The parents of children with learning difficulties are involved in the arrangements the school makes to meet special educational needs and are consulted from the earliest stages. Parents are properly invited to review meetings for their children, and methods of linking the school's learning programme with support at home are discussed. The regular coffee morning meetings arranged to enable parents to discuss their concerns are much appreciated by parents and provide useful support and access to advice from specialists; for example, during the inspection, parents met with a representative of the local education authority to consider the support available locally to help meet the needs of pupils with specific difficulties with learning.

47 The school enjoys the active support of many parents. They have a keen interest in the school and want their children to do well. Parental involvement has a good impact on the pupils' learning and the work of the school. A good number of parents help in class regularly. Parents support the school very well through the parent and teachers' association and raise substantial amounts of money for school funds. Many parents listen to their child read at home regularly and use the reading diaries well to record their children's progress. Parents value the weekly sessions held in the reception classes when they can work alongside their children. They say it gives them good ideas for assisting their children's learning at home. The teachers are available to discuss any concerns parents may have about their children and this helps establish good relationships.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48 The leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are good. The school has started to benefit from the good leadership of the headteacher who provides a firm steer for the school's work in raising standards and ensuring that improvements are brought about in teaching and learning. She took over the school when it was at a very low ebb due to immense pressures caused by significant changes in the leadership and teaching staff which impacted on the quality of education. Her commitment and determination to improve the quality of education that the school provides have been significant factors in halting the decline in academic standards. The headteacher has an excellent working relationship with the deputy headteacher, who supports her extremely well both in the running of the school and the provision of pastoral support to the staff and pupils. Overall, however, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory because subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in checking standards within their areas of responsibilities, despite the strengths of leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

49 There is evidence that, under the current leadership, the school has started to take actions to improve standards, and there are early signs that these are having an effect in the areas prioritised for action. Whilst it is recognised that a lot more work needs to be done in all aspects of the school, standards are beginning to rise, particularly in writing. The improvements in teaching throughout the school and the good progress children make in reception can be directly traced back to the leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

50 The Christian values and aims of the school's Mission Statement are reflected satisfactorily in the day-to-day activities of the school, both in the classrooms and elsewhere. There is mainly a shared commitment to raising standards but the inconsistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour throughout the whole school does not promote strong mutual respect or better than satisfactory relationships within the school community. The headteacher has a total commitment to promoting inclusion and has taken steps to introduce positive initiatives to bring this about. The staff and governors have agreed both an appropriate race equality policy and new procedures for promoting positive behaviour.

51 The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements satisfactorily. Relationships between the governing body and the headteacher are positive. The role of the governing body is developing rapidly and its work is much more focused than at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about the work of the school through her very detailed reports to meetings of the governing body. There are governors assigned to various aspects, such as literacy, special educational needs and child protection. The school has made barely satisfactory progress since the last inspection but this can be accounted for partly by the immense changes and associated difficulties that have taken place over this period of time. The governors have not ensured that school policies have been reviewed regularly and many policies are out of date. The governing body now has the scope to be more involved in monitoring the quality of education provided to ensure that they have a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses to inform the decisions that they make regarding its future developments.

52 On her appointment, the headteacher made a good evaluation of the school's position and what needed to be done to improve standards and the quality of education it provides. The school development plan is very appropriate, although it covers a one-year period only to take account of the urgent priorities that emerged from the rigorous review of the school. The governing body has not prepared a longer-term plan for the future direction of the school. A great deal of time has had to be spent on improving the teachers' knowledge and teaching of the literacy and numeracy strategies. This has been tackled well because some members of staff are resistant to change. The headteacher and deputy headteacher recognise that, although some effective monitoring of teaching has taken place, particularly in literacy lessons, this needs to be extended to other subjects and into all aspects of class teaching to provide a clear picture of the education the school is providing. The deputy headteacher sets high standards in teaching and learning and, effectively, models very good practice to other members of staff. As a result of monitoring, the school has

identified areas for further improvement to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent throughout school. Very good use has been made of school improvement officers and the numeracy consultant from the local education authority for training, support and advice. There are firm plans for this to continue through an intensive programme of literacy and numeracy support.

53 A careful analysis of the most recent national tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science shows an overall improvement in pupils' performance. Nevertheless, the headteacher and deputy headteacher are clearly focused on the need to raise standards further in the school and the staff and governing body share this commitment to improved success. There is now a re-emerging confidence and a developing sense of pride in the school being brought about by the headteacher and the recent stability in staffing. Parents rightly agree that the school is led and managed well.

54 The significant turnover in staffing has led to many changes in the leadership of the various subjects. As a result, there are weaknesses in the leadership and management of most subjects, with the exception of English, where the deputy headteacher has played a significant part in its development. The subject managers have begun to monitor and review their subjects and make plans for improvement but the main weaknesses are in their knowledge and monitoring of teaching and standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are at the early stages of training other members of staff for inclusion on the senior management team. The roles and responsibilities of all staff have been defined. Job descriptions have been reviewed and the range of additional responsibilities allocated to all teachers and senior management positions have been discussed and agreed. There has been good encouragement at all levels for staff to contribute their strengths and expertise for the benefit of the school; for example, under the guidance of the headteacher, a nursery nurse is providing effective support for art and design and the reception class teachers are ably improving the curriculum for the younger children.

55 Leadership by the co-ordinator for the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Although a part-time member of staff, she has no other responsibilities and the system is managed well overall. A recently up-dated draft policy sets out clearly the school's provision in accordance with the most recent national Code of Practice. The extra teacher employed by the school provides good help for the pupils with severe specific learning difficulties and for those who need more help than the school can provide. Her expertise supplements the work of the school well. A comfortable and attractive room is available when withdrawal from class is considered to be the best option for teaching and learning or for checking pupils' progress. There are generally enough teaching assistants to support the work of teachers with these pupils and the co-ordinator meets with them fortnightly to assist and direct their work.

56 Procedures for staff development are appropriately linked to performance management and to the school's priorities for improvement. Performance management is helping the class teachers in self-reviewing and in questioning their own work. Procedures to monitor and support the work of newly qualified teachers are good. The deputy headteacher, who is the mentor, provides useful, effective ongoing help and support that has led to an improvement in the confidence and the quality of teaching. Teaching assistants confirm that they now have a greater focus and sense of purpose to their work. They value the opportunities to develop their skills through the appropriate training courses which enable them to make a good contribution to the teaching and learning.

57 The headteacher manages the budget well and has linked spending securely to the improvements that are needed and to the priorities of the school development plan. She ensures that governors receive clear budget reports and encourages them to question and discuss spending proposals. The governing body has a satisfactory understanding of ways to ensure finances are used to best effect. Financial planning is good and ensures that there are sufficient funds to sustain developments. The governing body has identified the surplus carried forward from last year for further improvements to the school building, although it does not have a financial plan for future years linked to expected numbers of pupils and financial allocations.

58 The day-to day financial management of the school is carried out efficiently by one of the

administrative assistants. Computerised systems are well established for financial transactions and school records. The timing of the school's most recent audit report coincided with the appointment of the headteacher and provided a good opportunity to develop procedures within the school. Several areas of financial and control features had not been addressed since the previous audit but these issues have now been resolved fully by the headteacher and governors.

59 The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory and are used soundly to assist pupils' learning; a particular strength is the good provision of computers, both in the computer suite and in classrooms.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60 The headteacher, staff and governors should take the following action.

- Standards should be improved in the following areas:
 - writing and physical education by the end of Year 2;
 - science and art and design by the end of Year 6;
 - design and technology and music by the end of Years 2 and 6.*(Paragraphs 1-2, 5, 20, 86, 91-93, 97-99, 114)*
- A consistent approach to the management of behaviour by all members of staff both in lessons and at other times of the school day should be ensured.
(Paragraphs 5, 7, 11, 13-14, 19-20, 22, 32, 37, 50, 84, 115)
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning should be monitored rigorously and appropriate action taken to eliminate less than satisfactory teaching.
(Paragraphs 3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 19, 22, 112, 115)
- Systems to check and track pupils' progress should be developed and used to assist pupils' future learning*.
(Paragraphs 5, 8, 40-41, 92, 111)
- The roles of the subject co-ordinators need enhancing to give a clearer focus to their work on raising pupils' performance*.
(Paragraphs 5, 48, 54, 86, 92, 96, 110-111)

61 The following less important areas for development should be included in the action plan:

- The planning of lessons in Years 3 to 6, in subjects other than English and mathematics, should be reviewed to ensure that pupils' skills are developed according to their level of attainment.
(Paragraphs 20, 90, 95-96, 99-102)
- Pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of British society should be improved by planning more opportunities for increased understanding within lessons.
(Paragraphs 20, 34, 52)
- The governing body should gain a greater understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, in order to plan more effectively the future direction of the school.
(Paragraphs 51, 57)

*Staff and governors have identified these already as areas for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	21	21	5	0	0
Percentage	0	16	38	37	9	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

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	274
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	43
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	21	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	24
	Girls	18	18	20
	Total	39	39	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (91)	87 (89)	98 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	24	23
	Girls	17	20	20
	Total	37	44	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (80)	98 (83)	96 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	16
	Girls	15	12	14
	Total	27	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (76)	71 (55)	86 (70)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	29	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (53)	77 (76)	83 (62)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
259	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
8	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	27.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	568,101
Total expenditure	564,342
Expenditure per pupil	2,171
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,144
Balance carried forward to next year	59,903

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.5

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

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	274
Number of questionnaires returned	122

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	31	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	43	8	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	45	6	1	2
The teaching is good.	55	41	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	43	6	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	25	0	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	27	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	48	47	2	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	41	52	2	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	37	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	35	11	3	25

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

62 The learning opportunities for children in the reception classes have improved significantly since the last inspection. The curriculum is now based firmly on national recommendations; this was not previously the case. Learning in outdoor environments is now a strength following improvements to the building. The headteacher highlighted, whilst an associate headteacher at the school, the need to enhance the teaching and learning in the reception class, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. The actions taken have been successful as attainments in these areas of learning are on course to be above the expected level by the end of the reception year. Overall, the quality of teaching in the reception classes is good. The reception classes are well placed to continue to improve standards in all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

63 The personal, social and emotional development of children is likely to be above expected levels by the end of the reception year because the quality of teaching is good. Children achieve well. Children are welcomed into the reception classes by staff and independently hang up their coats and select their names from a board to indicate their attendance. The organisation of lessons provides the children with good opportunities to select an activity for independent work whilst the teachers are instructing small groups. The children behave well whether working with teachers or in small independent groups. They co-operate well with one another. Teachers' warm relationships develop children's confidence. Teachers provide opportunities for the children to develop awareness of their own needs, views and feelings through specific times when the whole class sit in a circle and discuss matters important to them. In one lesson, the teacher encouraged the children to consider when they feel happy and when they feel sad. The children passed a soft toy around and clearly understood the rule that 'you can talk when you have the toy'. The teacher encouraged reluctant speakers sensitively and consequently the children expressed a wide range of responses. The teacher linked the discussion about care well to the school's 'Golden Rules'. The activity was then repeated but this time children considered 'What makes me happy'. The children enjoy their lessons and have very good relationships with one another and their teachers. Most children concentrate well and have good attitudes to learning.

Communication, language and literacy

64 The children make good progress and they are likely to exceed the expected levels by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good. The children make best progress when the teaching is accurately targeted to children's needs and the teacher creates a very positive and exciting atmosphere for learning. The children are proud of their new skills and want to improve them. They chatter happily about their work and have a strong interest in reading and writing. Imaginative and captivating topics encourage the children to talk, to read and to write; for example, the children suggest possible messages for a letter to 'Incey Wincey Spider' to remind him not to climb the drainpipe in wet weather, or to Bo-Peep to warn her of the spider. Higher-attaining children are fluent speakers, share their ideas willingly and answer questions thoughtfully. Lower attaining children need more questions to help them to express their views and use shorter statements but are, nevertheless, fully involved in the work of the class and their learning is making good gains.

65 The children enjoy sharing books, stories and rhymes. All are well aware that print carries meaning and early reading skills are developing well. In one class, the teacher takes every opportunity to help the children to recognise and write words. Opportunities are sometimes missed in the other class; for example, when the children made books about 'Humpty Dumpty', useful discussion around the story helped them to extend their vocabulary but even the higher attaining

children were not asked to attempt to write Humpty's name or to work to identify the words in the simple sentence at the start of the rhyme. Puppets add interest to the teaching in both classes and children thoroughly enjoyed correcting the puppet's mistakes in identifying letter sounds. A new system has recently been adopted for teaching letter sounds and teachers and parents agree that the children are learning letter sounds much more quickly now. Some of the parents of older pupils wish they had had the benefit of the new system, which links letter sounds to actions and captures the children's interest well. Letter formation skills are developing suitably for most children but for those who require more practice, few specifically targeted activities are provided.

66 Lessons are well structured and well paced to match the children's attention span, balancing direct teaching with activities for practice or play. The small size of the classes, with additional adult help, enables frequent discussion and practice of skills. The children take home their books listing letter sounds, a selection of words on cards and a reading book in order to practise their skills at home. This builds well on learning achieved in school and accelerates its progress.

Mathematical development

67 Sound teaching in this area ensures that, by the end of the reception year, nearly all children have reached the expected levels and some are working in the early stages of the National Curriculum. Teachers use mathematics in everyday activities and children practise their counting and use mathematical language each day in both indoor and outdoor activities. Children have no difficulty in working out how many are in the class by counting around the circle and higher attaining children can count to 20 and beyond. Lower attaining children can work with numbers up to five and are beginning to use their counting in practical activities like board games and when counting hoops in the playground.

68 Some very good teaching takes place when the teacher works with individuals and small groups to help children master a new concept or learn new mathematical language; for example, one teacher used water play to help children learn the language of comparison when playing with different sized containers. She made the activity attractive by using coloured, glittery water, a good variety of containers and plastic fish. The teacher guided their play skilfully with pertinent questions and encouraged them to think about whether the container was really empty after they had poured out all the water if the fish was still there in the bottom. The children responded with high levels of interest and involvement, and their discussions enabled the teacher to assess and record what each child had learnt from the activity. For children who are not in the focused teaching group, the pace of learning is slower than it should be. They play sensibly and for extended periods at other activities with a mathematical focus but not enough is done to ensure that these play activities extend children's learning or provide extra challenge for the higher attaining children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69 Children reach expected levels by the end of the reception year in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Strengths include the provision of imaginative activities through which children find out about their world. They relished experiencing the texture of a sticky substance, dribbling it through their fingers as they uncovered plastic spiders, commenting, 'Gloop is squidgy-squodgy.' The outside area is used well to help the children to find out about living things, as, for instance, when they use magnifiers to identify what they have unearthed. They have a good understanding of possible habitats for small creatures and search keenly under bushes and alongside paving flags. The teaching does not make good use, though, of incidental opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding through extending their vocabulary. Daily routines to establish the day of the week, the month, the season and the weather are sometimes neglected. Opportunities are not always taken to repeat words new to children which would help lower attainers to learn more readily; for example, when feeling different objects in a bag, lower attainers confused 'hard' with 'soft' and found it difficult to describe the outside of an egg when they knew the inside was 'squashy' though they knew it was likely to

break 'like Humpty Dumpty' if it was dropped.

Physical development

70 Children are on course to achieve the expected standards by the end of the reception year in physical development. The teaching is satisfactory and the children make sound progress. Teachers spend time productively helping children to dress and undress for physical education activities. Most children make a good attempt though many need help with buttoning clothing. In physical education lessons, members of staff are very organised and ensure children understand safety rules. The children run around the hall excitedly whilst being aware of the space of others. They respond quickly to teachers' requests with little fuss. Teachers model actions well for the children; for example, the teacher led children well to develop coordination skills which involved touching body parts and clapping in response to music. Occasionally the pace of lessons slows when too much time is taken watching a small group of children perform a simple routine. The children enjoy physical education lessons, as when they moved around the hall 'like an elephant' or jumped and moved with two feet together. Their behaviour is good. Members of staff use the outdoor area well to develop children's learning. Children are skilled at riding and steering large-wheeled tricycles. Lessons are used well to enhance physical development as well as other areas of learning; for example, the children played hopscotch and became more proficient at hopping and jumping into a target area as well as developing their counting skills. They threw a ball at a number board and were keen to achieve a high score. All children play well together and benefit from the good opportunities to discuss their learning with adults. The planning of activities enables the children to use a variety of tools and materials; for example, children cut and stuck textile materials to make a collage of 'Humpty Dumpty'. The children gained experience in using scientific equipment such as a magnifier when they searched for spiders around the school. They developed skills in using information and communication technology to assist their learning; for example, children drew pictures of a spider on a computer and enhanced their understanding of symmetrical shapes using a mathematical program.

Creative development

71 Children attain the level expected of their age by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are considerable strengths in the imaginatively planned activities and there is ample scope for children to play and learn independently. This is apparent when children create realistic scenes at 'St Peter's Clinic' and the 'receptionist' directs a 'doctor' to bandage the 'patient's arm', explaining that 'she feels a little bit ill.' The children know a number of songs and rhymes which they sing sweetly. Higher attainers invent their own versions of 'Humpty Dumpty' such as 'Humpty Dumpty went to the shop'. They thoroughly enjoy creating pictures by gluing scraps of material on to paper, sometimes adding paint for artistic effect; however, there is not enough talking to the children to move their learning on while they undertake such activities. Materials are carefully prepared but teachers do not give opportunities to children to cut out their own shapes and materials, or to be inventive in what they choose when making a picture. This limits the potential for higher attainers to be creative.

ENGLISH

72 For pupils in Year 6, standards are broadly average and for pupils in Year 2, standards are average in reading but below average in writing. In speaking and listening, attainment is average throughout the school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, including that of those with special educational needs. The group of pupils for whom English is an additional language learn at the same rate as other pupils; all are proficient in English and none is at an early stage.

73 Standards have fallen since the last inspection, when attainment was above average throughout the school. Uncertainties in the staffing and management of the school have had a negative impact on pupils' learning and there has been a delay in the introduction of the National

Literacy Strategy, which has meant that the school has fallen behind national improvements. The national strategy is now largely in place and standards are rising. Teaching is now good in Years 2 to 6 and sometimes very good, an improvement on the last inspection largely because of the impact of the National Literacy Strategy. Recent improvements are good but, overall, since the last inspection, improvements have been unsatisfactory.

74 The pupils' speaking and listening skills are maintained at an average level throughout the school, helped by the teachers and teaching assistants giving pupils at least adequate opportunities for discussion. Where teaching is good or better, plans are set for more practice in speaking and listening, such as in Year 2, where a pupil pretended to be a character in a story and sat in the 'hot seat' to answer questions from the class. In Year 4, pupils extended the class discussion on poetry into groups, arriving at a consensus of opinion on their favourite poet. These arrangements mean that most pupils learn to discuss their work well, to express their opinions and to understand the questions and views expressed by others.

75 Pupils are learning to recognise and use the sounds of letters more quickly since the introduction of a new method for teaching. Reading skills have been slow to develop for a significant group of lower attaining pupils in Year 1 and a high proportion of pupils start Year 2 with lower than average reading skills. Good teaching in the Year 2 class means that most pupils learn well and their achievement improves. In the mixed Year 1 and 2 class, teaching is satisfactory overall, and supplemented well by the work of teaching assistants. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress, helped by the school's focus on improving reading through teaching pupils in small groups, as advocated by the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 show a greater interest in reading than younger pupils, in part because they are able to choose their own books for individual practice from a colour-coded range, graded according to their needs. Teachers choose the books for pupils in Years 1 and 2 from a narrower range and this is limiting their interest and involvement in their reading. In addition, the school's library has been out of action because of building works, limiting the pupils' choice of reading further. Suitable books are selected for pupils with learning difficulties for when they work in small groups with the teacher but individual choice does not work so well for these pupils; some struggle too much to recognise words and become disheartened. Parents provide valuable extra practice for their children by reading with them at home and teachers recognise this as a significant element in the success of most pupils.

76 Writing has been rightly identified by the school as in need of improvement, and staff training has focused on the matching of pupils' work to levels of the National Curriculum and methods of moving learning forward more quickly. Plans for lessons are being checked by both the English co-ordinator and the headteacher to ensure that writing is taught at least as often as reading. A suitable range of purposes is found for writing, such as story, letter writing and writing instructions, and teaching methods advocated nationally have been introduced. The school has devised ways of linking reading and writing tasks and this is proving successful; for example, the teacher in Year 6 has read excerpts of suspense stories with the class, identifying key features, before embarking on her own made-up story presented in daily instalments. Features of the writing of 'today's' episode are discussed purposefully before pupils continue to build on their own stories in serial form. The teacher's work interests and inspires the pupils and gives valuable opportunities for developing pupils' skills as the story proceeds. An extra lesson has been allocated each week to improve writing although, as yet, this does not always build on writing in progress within the daily literacy lesson. Spelling and handwriting develop satisfactorily overall but vary between pupils and between classes; when marking pupils' work, for example, teachers do not always correct spelling mistakes sufficiently and, despite the good model for handwriting used by teachers in most classes, specific lessons are not arranged to improve handwriting for pupils in the older classes. Teaching assistants are trained in the 'catch-up' literacy programmes advocated nationally in order to help pupils move forward in their spelling. Pupils with learning difficulties receive suitable support in literacy lessons and make satisfactory progress. Those with severe learning difficulties are closely monitored and helped, where necessary, in lessons and make good progress.

77 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, the teaching and learning is of varying quality but good overall for the Year 2 class and for Years 3 to 6, with a significant proportion of very good teaching. In the Year 1 class, teaching fails to build sufficiently on the sound standards

achieved by the end of the reception year. In most lessons pupils are making good progress. The good teaching is well planned to meet the learning needs of the full range of pupils in the class. Relationships between the pupils and the teacher are positive and productive; pupils want to do well and, usually, try to achieve their best. The learning objectives set for the lesson are clear but sometimes given to pupils in more complicated language than is necessary and this reduces the pupils' understanding of the purpose of the lesson. The teaching of very good quality is characterised by good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher, which informs and inspires pupils. The style of teaching is crisp, helping pupils to maintain attention for quite long periods. Teaching time is used well, leading to significant gains in learning within each lesson. The pupils' learning progresses at an unsatisfactory rate because class management is weak, the class is often noisy and pupils often cannot concentrate well enough to achieve their best. Whole class teaching is interrupted, frequently, as the teacher seeks to catch the attention of all pupils; teaching and learning within small groups is generally hindered because the noise level in the class is too high to enable focused concentration by either the teacher or the pupils.

78 The teaching of literacy skills within other subjects is satisfactory; history, for example, is sometimes the focus of written work in English lessons. Pupils in Year 6 wrote newspaper reports on the outbreak of the World War Two. Pupils from Year 2 onwards are able to use information books to research and pupils search for information within lessons in history and geography. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily.

79 The co-ordinator and the deputy headteacher are currently working in partnership to lead the subject in order to drive standards forward. A comprehensive programme for improvement is in place and, over the past year, the school's monitoring procedures show clear signs of rising standards in teaching and learning. Staff have benefited from training courses on techniques recommended nationally and have worked to establish agreed levels of attainment for each year group. Useful procedures for checking pupils' progress and support programmes are now in place but these new systems have yet to have much impact on standards.

MATHEMATICS

80 Standards of the present groups of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national average. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory overall. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' performance by the end of Year 6 in the national tests was below the national average, as was the case in the national tests in 2002. This year's improvements in pupils' attainment in Year 6 are the result of the determined efforts of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and class teacher.

81 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; teaching is very good in Year 2, good in Year 3, satisfactory in Years 4 to 6 but unsatisfactory in Year 1 and in Year 1/2. The main weakness in teaching in some classes is in the management of pupils' behaviour.

82 Where teaching is of a high standard, pupils make very good progress in their learning. Pupils are organised very well and are given very good opportunities to discuss their work with the teachers and other pupils. Learning is fun; for example, in Year 2, a large soft dice was thrown to pupils to challenge individual pupils to answer questions suited to their level of attainment. This kept pupils alert, as they did not know when it would be their turn to catch the dice and to answer a question. Pupils work very well together, as when they recorded answers on a shared whiteboard. In most classes, the teachers successfully use a variety of strategies to maintain good management of pupils' behaviour such as a fast pace of questioning, setting time targets, counting, silence and gentle but assertive reminders to individuals. Teachers explain carefully; for instance, in Year 2, the teacher settled the pupils down very well before highlighting the important aspects relating to the construction of a graph. By the end of the lesson, higher attainers could construct a graph independently to show the number of each colour of counters in a pile. Lower attainers, with

the effective help of a teaching assistant, sorted fruit or vehicles into sets of similar types using a computer program. At the end of the lesson, the teacher extended all pupils' learning very well through discussion of the results of the investigations.

83 Where teaching is good, teachers settle pupils very well before discussing new learning. Pupils are very interested and behave very well. The marking of pupils' work is good and provides details for pupils of how well they have done and how they can improve. Teaching assistants help pupils well when working with groups but are not used sufficiently during whole class discussions to assist pupils' learning.

84 Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers struggle to maintain pupils' attention and behaviour, the pace of lessons is too slow and too long is spent instructing the pupils as a whole class with few opportunities for pupils to practise new learning. Teachers tend to talk over the noise of pupils rather than insisting on quiet before setting tasks, so that some pupils do not know what they have to do and, therefore, making little progress in their learning.

85 Lesson plans are clear and provide detailed help to teachers; for example, in Year 5, the teaching was helped by detailed planning linked to the national numeracy strategy; the planning was extended to take account of the different levels of pupils' attainments in the class. Pupils with learning difficulties split two-digit number into tens and units whilst higher attainers used multiple methods of subtracting hundred, tens and units and checking their answers. Lower attainers took tens and units away correctly from hundreds, tens and units. Most pupils gained a better understanding of subtraction at their level of attainment.

86 The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has limited understanding of standards in the subject and is very reliant on the headteacher and deputy headteacher checking the quality of teaching, pupils' work and lesson plans. The headteacher has rightly arranged help for the co-ordinator to fulfil the role more effectively. The recent initiative of grouping pupils in Year 3 into classes according to similar levels of attainment is effective, as pupils are making good progress in their learning in both classes.

SCIENCE

87 Standards in science are in line with national levels at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. The school's performance in national tests has dropped significantly since 1999 when results were better than average. In 2002, results at the end of Year 6 were well below average both when compared with the results in all schools nationally and when compared with the results in similar schools; however, there are signs of an improvement now that steps have been taken to improve the science curriculum. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 to 4 with evidence of good achievement in Year 2. There is still some underachievement in Years 5 and 6 where not enough is done to challenge and extend the higher attaining pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, and this becomes good progress when they receive extra help from a classroom assistant or from the teacher.

88 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. Teaching is very good in Year 2 where the teacher works hard to plan interesting practical activities that develop pupils' scientific skills very effectively. In a lesson on the five senses, for example, pupils worked in five groups to explore and identify objects and sounds using each of the senses in turn. This effectively developed their observational skills and encouraged co-operation within the groups. A particular focus of the lesson was to encourage pupils to find their own ways of recording their findings, which they did very successfully. All were able to make a good attempt at drawing and writing their results and higher attainers devised simple charts to show their work clearly. Lower attainers received good help from parent helpers and students and were able to take a full part in the lesson. Work in pupils' books shows that in Year 2 they have frequent opportunities for practical work and higher attainers are regularly given harder work to extend their learning;

however, this level of planning is not evident in other classes, where similar work is set for pupils of all levels of ability.

89 Teachers have acted on some criticisms raised at the last inspection and improved the opportunities for practical and investigative work in science across all three main areas of the science curriculum. Pupils are taught to devise and plan a fair test and by the time they reach Year 6 they have a clear understanding of the need to alter variables systematically and make accurate measurements of results. A particular strength of the teaching is that pupils are taught from an early age how to record their work in tables, charts and graphs and present it neatly, so that they can readily see emerging patterns and begin to draw conclusions from their investigations. Pupils have positive attitudes to their practical work and pupils in Year 6 can recall and describe enthusiastically experiments they have carried out over the past year with electrical circuits, sound, plants and growth, gravity and friction, and the effect of exercise on the body; these practical activities make a good contribution to their personal and social development.

90 Weaknesses in teaching are mainly due to unsatisfactory planning and checking of pupils' progress, and to the management of pupils. The curriculum plans for science are based on a two-year cycle so that pupils in each two-year block cover the same work. This works well in Years 1 and 2, where teachers adapt the planning to ensure that pupils in Year 2 are given harder work than pupils in Year 1, and higher attaining pupils are given additional work to enable them to achieve their best. It is not, however, done as effectively in Years 3 to 6 so, for example, all pupils in Years 5 and 6 were studying work on microbes at the same level. Previous work in their books demonstrated that little had been done in Year 6 to develop skills to a higher level or ensure that higher attaining pupils had harder work. In lessons seen in Years 5 and 6, both classes were working in groups to find out about conditions required for storing food safely to minimise the production of bacteria. Good teaching in Year 5 ensured that pupils made best use of the time available and good, targeted questioning to individuals challenged and extended the higher attainers. In Year 6, all pupils had the same task and not enough was done to make the challenge more difficult for the more able pupils. In Year 6 also there are occasional weaknesses in pupil management; as a result, the pace of the lesson slows because the teacher has to work so hard to maintain control of the class.

91 In Years 2 and 3, pupils' work is recorded well. Pupils explain their work in detail and use scientific terms. In Year 3, pupils make very good use of information and communication technology to produce charts and graphs. In Years 5 and 6, not enough time is given to recording work in the depth and detail expected for pupils of their age.

92 The leadership and management have not focused sufficiently on checking pupils' progress and levels of attainment. Analysis of pupils' work has led to a reduction in the use of work sheets but more needs to be done to ensure that pupils are taught to the standards expected for their age and ability in Year 6.

ART AND DESIGN

93 There has been insufficient improvement in this subject since the last inspection. Teachers have only recently put into place a curriculum which addresses some of the weaknesses noted at the last inspection. The improvements have not yet made an impact on standards in Year 6 which are below average because pupils have not had enough opportunities to practise the full range of art and design skills. In the one topic taught recently on human movement, the quality of the sketching, drawing and pastel colouring was below the levels expected for pupils of this age.

94 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are working to the required standard. Pupils use a variety of materials and techniques in their art, and are familiar with the work of some well-known artists. Their drawings and paintings inspired by the work of Paul Klee are colourful and striking. Pupils in Year 1 mix pastel colours accurately and reflect the artist's use of distinctive shapes in their own

work. Pupils in Year 2 extend their colour mixing skills by working with watercolours on a similar task. In Year 2, pupils use a good range of colouring and shading techniques when creating portraits, including shading, smudging and sponging colour for effect.

95 It is not possible to make a firm judgement on teaching from the small amount of work and the one lesson seen. The school recognises that the art and design curriculum now in place requires some modification before it can effectively assist teachers to plan lessons; for example, teachers in Years 3 and 4 had worked hard to carry out the unit of work planned on 'Dream Settings' but found that there was not enough time to complete it and the art content was limited. Work in pupils' sketchbooks throughout the school shows that appropriate time is given to the planning and design elements of the topics taught. In the lesson seen, good planning and organisation ensured that pupils were productive. They worked hard at their portraits, taking care to depict all the detail they could see in their models, and were reluctant to stop at the end of the lesson.

96 Art and design has not been a school priority for some time and the co-ordinators recognise the areas for development in the subject, which include assessment, the systematic teaching of skills and improvement of opportunities for three-dimensional work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97 Standards are below average by the end of Year 6, being similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. In recent months, there has been some improvement in terms of curricular provision which makes clear when each topic is taught. At present, however, the curriculum does not explicitly plan for pupils to develop skills which they then build upon when they undertake new projects. This means that, although standards for an individual project may be broadly in line with expected standards, pupils have gaps in their overall knowledge and do not learn to apply what they know, learning through experience. This limits their overall achievement which is unsatisfactory at present. Only one lesson was seen and so no judgement on teaching can be made. The co-ordination of the subject, undertaken by the headteacher at present, has concentrated on putting a basic curriculum in place rather than on raising standards.

98 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 designed and made wind up models to depict the children's rhyme 'Incy Wincy Spider'. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 produced well-labelled diagrams that included technical terms such as 'axle', 'load' and 'base'. Their evaluations of the finished product were sensible; one explained, for example: 'I could have made it better if I had a smaller handle'. All pupils, regardless of age or ability, however, filled in the same design specification sheets. These were inappropriate for lower and average attaining pupils in Year 1 and lower attainers in Year 2 who have very limited skills in reading and recording. The finished products were carefully constructed out of card and used different ways of fastening to produce a sturdy structure. Both higher and lower attainers incorporated all the main features in their design, such as a drainpipe, sun, cloud and a spider.

99 In Years 5 and 6, the teaching leads pupils step by step to consider the best type of frame and suitable materials to use when constructing a shelter. Higher attainers, in their initial designs, gave precise measurements and, already, at this early stage, indicated the different types of materials they needed. Pupils are clearly enthusiastic about the topic and work very well in groups. With minimal direction, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, proved capable of presenting their findings, using visual aids without being asked. Higher attainers in Year 6 pre-empted the next lesson in the series by pointing out that they need to look at how windproof and durable the fabrics are. Lower attainers showed much practical knowledge, pointing out that 'nylon is waterproof and light and that's probably one of the best'. Pupils' structures, however, some of which are reinforced, are all constructed out of the same materials using only two simple ways of fastening. There is no building on previous knowledge in evidence. The planning does not differentiate between pupils of different ages and abilities. Some pupils could clearly work at a

higher level and at a faster rate with more scope for individual choice. This would then raise overall standards. The quality of marking is very variable with teachers' handwriting being too difficult for younger pupils to read and the marking of older pupils' work not being sufficiently evaluative.

GEOGRAPHY

100 Standards are broadly in line with those expected of pupils by the end of Year 6. This reflects the interest of the co-ordinator in this subject, the good provision of resources for each topic and the ideas employed for teaching. The fact that standards are no higher reflects the changes the school has undergone throughout an unsettled period of leadership. The monitoring of standards has been carried out on an informal basis, for example, with some pupils' work scrutinised at one time and then not at another. The co-ordinator identified that too many worksheets were being used and that teachers' expectations were too low and consequently planned a more practical curriculum supported by educational visits to places nearby. Pupils have a sound knowledge base but the development of geographical skills in each year group is not as precisely worked out as it should be so as to enable pupils to attain more highly. Achievement is satisfactory at the present time.

101 No lessons were seen and so no judgement on teaching can be made. From examining pupils' written work, it is clear that, by the end of Year 2, pupils have begun to understand how to map out the layout of the school and draw a map of their route to and from home. Higher attainers provide an appropriately labelled diagram of their house whereas lower attainers successfully label parts of a pre-drawn house. Pupils followed the travels of a toy bear to Dublin and compared the similarities between Dublin and their home town of Darwen. Links with history are exploited where possible and so, for instance, when examining different forms of transport, pupils considered those in the past as well as at the present time. In Year 4, pupils considered different types of settlement and examined the communication systems in contrasting localities. This work considered future use, as well as those of present and past, and produced some interesting ideas on developments according to changing needs. By the end of Year 6, pupils work together in groups to produce detailed work on a country they have chosen, linked with a sporting event, such as the Commonwealth Games. The best work shows evidence of personal research from a variety of sources, examining the country's position in the world, the currency, language, population, predominant religion and its capital city whereas others have downloaded information from the Internet but not presented it so thoughtfully. With two year groups doing similar work, the skills being taught to different age and ability groups have not been precisely worked out so as to ensure better progress than at a satisfactory level.

HISTORY

102 Standards are average at the end of Year 6, similar to those reported in the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in their understanding of history within lessons in response to good teaching. Standards are no higher because the curriculum does not plan for development of skills from one age group to the next and the work is not sufficiently well planned to take the needs of the higher, average and lower attainers within a class into account. Pupils study history for half of each year and there is a long gap between each unit of work which slows progress and results in average attainment overall. The new co-ordinator has only just begun an audit of resources and monitoring of teachers' plans. As yet, there are no formal means of assessing standards, progress or pupils' work in order to work out how to raise standards further.

103 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, pupils show an understanding of the past at an expected level for their age. Higher attainers depict an old train running on coal and predict that, in the future, trains 'will run on a computer remote'. Lower attainers accurately put pictures in order to show the development from baby to child to adulthood. In one instance, although the objective of the lesson was clear, the teacher's planning and preparation did not

consider how to make the task of distinguishing old bears from new accessible to lower and higher attainers. As a consequence, some were confused by the task and pointed out differences of detail such as wearing a ribbon.

104 Pupils clearly enjoy history and take part in lessons with lively interest. Teachers communicate their enthusiasm and many of the activities they plan are practical and investigative, requiring pupils to work co-operatively and to find out information for themselves. In a good lesson in Year 3, pupils learned a great deal about the Romans from the imaginatively conceived activities. These ranged from constructing Roman soldiers from dolly pegs and clay pots similar to those depicted in history books to uncovering layers of history (in reality layers of newspaper and packaging in a large plastic box) to reveal different objects from different ages, ending with a Roman coin at the bottom. The activities were relevant and pitched at the right level to ensure that pupils learned through exploration and questioning. A similar approach was undertaken in Year 6 when pupils in groups learnt about rationing in World War 2 through calculating the coupons they would have needed to purchase school clothes. The very good resources for learning gave pupils ample scope to work out for themselves what could be done if they needed more clothes than their allocated amount.

105 In the ways outlined above, learning is made purposeful and fun. Satisfactory opportunities are taken to develop pupils' skills in literacy and some of the older pupils' imaginary extracts from the diary of an evacuee are poignant as in this higher attainer's writing: 'I miss my home and the things around me I used to have.' Links with information and communication technology and mathematics are less well developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

106 Pupils' attainments by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national expectations, as at the last inspection. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the hardware in classrooms, set up a computer suite and developed the expertise of staff. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are making sound progress in their learning.

107 Teachers ensure good development of pupils' skills through teaching that links closely to national guidance. Members of staff teach new work to whole class groups and the teaching is followed up by teaching assistants consolidating the learning with small groups of pupils in the computer suite. This organisation is generally successful; however, on occasions, when teachers' management of pupils is insecure, limited learning takes place in the whole class demonstrations.

108 Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to assist learning in other subjects. Younger pupils have a good understanding of parts of the computer. They have opportunities to use digital cameras; for example, they photographed signs and labels around the school before designing their own signs. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in accessing the computer and loading and saving their work to either floppy or hard disc. They use computer programs appropriately to help their learning in numeracy and literacy; for example, they recorded a survey of the colour of pupils' hair in the form of a pictogram. Older pupils build on their previous learning satisfactorily; for example, they used sensing equipment linked to a computer to show a graph of how a pot of tea cools down over time. In Year 4, pupils program a computer to draw lines of different lengths and to change the direction of the line; these activities deepen pupils' understanding of angles. In Year 6, pupils search for information using a 'search engine' and the teaching enables them to understand the need to narrow down the search; for example, pupils searched for information about World War Two and found over four million entries on the Internet which made them realise quickly the need for more detailed requests for information.

109 In the best teaching, teachers use the interactive whiteboard very well to show pupils new learning; for example, pupils were shown how to insert selections from the computer's picture gallery graphics within a border in order to produce a Christmas card. The teacher explained very

well and linked the learning effectively to developing literacy skills as pupils suggested captions for the cards. The teachers ensured very good levels of pupils' concentration through friendly reminders when individuals' interest lapsed. The pupils were very well prepared for small group work in the computer suite. Unsatisfactory aspects of otherwise satisfactory teaching occur when teachers' explanations are too complicated; this results in pupils losing interest, particularly when the period of instruction is too long and pupils have had few opportunities to practise their learning.

110 The co-ordinator works hard to ensure members of staff are trained sufficiently to fulfil the requirements of the subject guidance. She helps staff with technical problems and maintains the computers in good working order. The school does not have a clear view of pupils' progress, as there are no systems in place for checking pupils' learning and progress from year to year. The policy for the subject is out-of-date and does not reflect current practice. The accommodation and resources are good and support learning well. The school is well placed to improve further in the subject.

MUSIC

111 Standards are below average by the end of Year 6. This partly reflects the disruption in curricular provision since the last inspection when standards were reported as being above average. The quality of teaching, however, though satisfactory overall, is variable and so pupils do not learn enough to enable them to attain more highly. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and is introducing a scheme of work to supplement a nationally recommended scheme; however, support in terms of planning lessons is hampered by the co-ordinator's lack of skills in planning for effective teaching and learning. Satisfactory support is given to colleagues in terms of ideas and resources. The checking of pupils' progress to ensure that they learn and build up skills progressively is a weakness.

112 By the end of Year 2, pupils learn to compose music based on the weather, using simple pictures graphically to show the sequence of different instruments. They sing simple songs and learn to clap, click or tap a steady beat. They enjoy such activities but lose concentration quickly, becoming restless and rather silly if they are not kept busy all the time. In an unsatisfactory lesson, the teaching did not make allowances for pupils in the Year 1/2 class to learn at a level appropriate to their different ages and abilities. Not enough was planned for the half hour lesson and so pupils became inattentive and restless and the pace of learning slowed as time was spent on controlling pupils' behaviour rather than teaching them new skills. Teaching in the older junior classes is satisfactory with strengths in engaging pupils' interest and enabling them to learn to sing a simple song in two and three parts with some pupils singing a repetitive phrase throughout. Pupils, however, do not know or understand as many musical terms as most pupils of their age and their level of performance reflects the comparative newness to them of this type of work. The best teaching was seen in Year 3 where standards and expectations are in fact higher than those in Year 6. In response to good teaching and good subject knowledge, pupils were able to improve a musical score they had written to illustrate a poem. They understood how to change the tempo and dynamics and higher attainers layered sounds rather than performing them sequentially. The good teaching ensured that pupils worked productively and co-operatively and that pupils used their knowledge of different instruments well. Pupils commented constructively on each other's performances, recognising what they had learnt, saying for example, that they liked the way 'they had talked about it first and shared out the parts'.

113 Good provision is made for extra-curricular music and the choir, which sings well, performs regularly at seasonal and festive times. Visiting musicians teach woodwind and brass.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114 Standards of attainment are below those expected for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 experience a wide range of activities, which they enjoy, including team games, dance, gymnastics and swimming, and achievement is good. Pupils with learning difficulties are helped well in lessons and they are encouraged to take a full part both by adults and other pupils. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory because of the weaknesses in Years 1 and 2.

115 Younger pupils take part in music and dance lessons involving exploring movement ideas and putting together a sequence of movements. Most enjoy their work and are beginning to reproduce and explore simple actions showing basic bodily control and co-ordination. In a Year 2 dance lesson, higher attaining pupils could produce good sequences of controlled movements in time to music. Too many, however, move round in an uncontrolled way and, in one unsatisfactory lesson observed in Year 1, the unruly behaviour was not managed firmly enough by the teacher. Teaching and learning in the Year 1/2 class are unsatisfactory because the teacher struggles to maintain discipline in lessons. This leads to a slow pace as teachers continually interrupt the lesson to deal with poor behaviour. This restricts learning for the rest of the class and reduces the amount of physical exercise pupils have in the time available.

116 Older pupils produce work of a better quality because the teaching is good. Teachers have good class control and lessons move at a brisk pace. All lessons start with very effective warm up routines. Pupils understand the need to exercise key muscles and the importance of aerobic exercise in keeping healthy. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and some have specialist skills and training which enable them to teach key skills and coach pupils to improve the quality of their movement. In a very good gymnastics lesson in Year 3, the teacher's high expectations and targeted support to individuals ensured that all pupils made very good progress. Pupils could link together a sequence of controlled movements on large apparatus, incorporating balances on different parts of the body and controlled forward rolls. Pupils enjoy their work and take great pride in it because lessons are purposeful and productive.

117 Teachers provide a wide range of after school clubs and activities that contribute to the standards achieved. This was particularly evident in a lesson on ball skills in Year 5, in which the pupils who attended the after-school netball club demonstrated skill and accuracy in the four main passes in netball. The school enjoys regular success in local sports tournaments and competitions, such as the inter-schools cross country competition and the swimming gala. The school has adequate outdoor playing areas but the hall is small and restricts what pupils in the large classes in Year 5 and 6 can achieve.