

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
(VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) FIRST SCHOOL**

Rudyard

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124253

Headteacher: Mrs D Hood

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Boden
12301

Dates of inspection: 10th – 11th March 2003

Inspection number: 248574

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Type of school: | First |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 – 9 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Rudyard Nr Leek |
| Postcode: | ST13 8RU |
| Telephone number: | 01538 306278 |
| Fax number: | 01538 306157 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs H Stead |
| Date of previous inspection: | October 1997 |

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 12301 | Mrs J Boden | Registered inspector | Science Art and design Design and technology The Foundation Stage Special educational needs Educational inclusion | Characteristics of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action |
| 13723 | Mrs J Overend | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers |
| 30954 | Mr B Ashcroft | Team inspector | Mathematics Geography History | The quality and range of opportunities for learning |
| 30724 | Mrs D Hiscock | Team inspector | English Information and communication technology Music Physical education Religious education English as an additional language | |

The inspection contractor was:

Primary Associates Limited
Suite 13
West Lancashire Technology Management Centre
Moss Lane View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TN

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a much smaller than average primary school, with 57 pupils on roll. It is situated just outside the small rural village of Rudyard and provides a focal point for the community. The school is popular and draws its pupils from a wide area. There are more girls than boys, significantly so in Years 3 and 4, where the ratios are 7:4 and 7:3 respectively. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. All the pupils are white and they all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties but two have statements of special educational needs. Children start in the nursery in the September following their fourth birthday. From the September following their fifth birthday, they are taught with pupils from Years 1 and 2. Attainment on entry to the nursery varies from year-to-year, but overall it is above average, particularly in speaking and listening.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a satisfactory school with many significant strengths. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and most pupils achieve steadily. However, the teaching of English in both key stages is not helping higher attaining pupils to learn as effectively as they should. Attainment is above average on entry. Overall standards at the age of seven years are average. This is still the case at the age of nine years. Pupils achieve well in music and reach above average standards. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start in personal and social, language and mathematical development;
- Pupils achieve high standards in music;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and they make outstanding progress;
- The school nurtures pupils' personal development very well and prepares them well for the next stage of their education;
- The very good relationships between all members of the school community result in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and very good behaviour in lessons and around the school;
- The very good partnership with other schools and the local community has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing are not high enough for higher attaining pupils in Year 2 and boys in Year 4;
- The school does not have a sufficiently effective and detailed action plan for improvement;
- The length of the taught week is not long enough in Key Stage 2;
- The curriculum is not balanced, and there are not enough opportunities to develop pupils' writing and computer skills across subjects;
- The governing body is not sufficiently involved in running the school;
- Procedures for health and safety are not good enough.

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 improved at a satisfactory rate since it was inspected in 1997. Standards in mathematics are much higher now and the above average standards in music have been maintained. The average standards in most other subjects have also been maintained. The exception is design and technology. The school has not had a co-ordinator for this subject for several years and acknowledges that it is an area for development. Action to address this is identified in the school improvement plan.

Most of the key issues have been tackled successfully, particularly the one relating to provision for pupils with special educational needs, which is now excellent.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 | |
| reading | C | A | C | E | very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| writing | D | C | C | E | |
| mathematics | C | D | A* | A | |

Children start in the nursery with above average attainment. They achieve well as they progress through the Foundation Stage. By the end of their reception year they reach above average standards in personal development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. They reach the standards expected for their age in the other areas.

The table has to be interpreted with caution because the small numbers of pupils each year mean that each child represents about 10 per cent of the total. Since 1999, standards in reading and writing at the age of seven years have been consistently average, apart from in 2001, when standards in reading were well above average and in 2000, when writing dropped to below average. In the latest tests, standards in both were well below those in similar schools. Standards in mathematics have fluctuated over recent years. In the tests in 2002, they improved significantly from below average to being in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally and well above those in similar schools. Girls in Year 2 do better than boys in all three subjects. Pupils in the current Year 2 are on course to reach well above average standards in mathematics and average standards in reading and writing. Mental calculation skills are particularly well developed. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading and writing because the work is not challenging enough. In contrast, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the well-matched work coupled with close support. In the current Year 4, standards in English and mathematics are average. This represents good progress in mathematics since these pupils were in Year 2. However, there is scope for boys to achieve more in English. Pupils throughout the school have above average speaking skills.

The latest teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in science indicate that pupils reach average standards. Inspection evidence agrees with this. However, while most pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could because not enough is expected of them. By the age of nine, pupils of all abilities achieve well and make up a lot of ground. They have above average scientific knowledge and understanding and are learning to plan and carry out their own investigations. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls in science.

In religious education and all the other subjects of the National Curriculum, standards are average. The exception is music, where they are above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|-------------------------|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Pupils enjoy school. They listen well and work hard in lessons. Nursery and reception children work especially well for their age. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They get on well together and look after each other. |
|-------------------------------------|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils are polite and show respect to each other and to all adults. This is particularly noticeable in the dining room when the older pupils serve the younger ones in a family setting. |
| Attendance | Very good. Pupils arrive at school on time and unauthorised absence is very rare. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery and Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 4 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 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.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, particularly in language and mathematical development. This enables the children to achieve well and exceed the standards expected for them by the end of their reception year. Despite the fact that the lessons seen in the infant and junior classes were good or better, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time in English is only satisfactory, particularly for the higher attainers. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a good variety of activities that appeal to pupils and sustain their interest. However, they do not match work well enough to pupils' needs. The main reason that pupils do not achieve as well as they could in writing is that teachers do not demand enough of them. This is compounded by the overuse of very prescriptive worksheets in every subject. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing across the curriculum. The marking of written work is unsatisfactory. It does not indicate to pupils how they could improve their work.

The teaching of mathematics is better. Lessons are lively and the teachers put good emphasis on developing pupils' mental skills. Pupils of all abilities enjoy their lessons and generally achieve well. In the junior class, however, although progress is good overall, from when these pupils were in Year 2, higher attainers do not achieve as well as they could because they are not challenged enough.

High quality teaching by visiting music specialist's means that all pupils, including those in the nursery, achieve well and reach standards above those expected. All the teachers are good at making sure that all pupils play a full part in lessons. Classroom assistants play a vital part, supporting those pupils who do not grasp ideas as quickly as the rest. This boosts the pupils' confidence because they can join in well. All teachers and support staff have good relationships with the pupils and this creates a good atmosphere for learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory overall, throughout the school. Some subjects are not taught in sufficient depth, so pupils do not learn as well as they could. Learning is enhanced by a good range of activities outside lessons. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Excellent. These pupils have very good support in lessons and their progress is monitored closely. As a result, they achieve very well. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | Very good. The school nurtures personal development very well and provides a wealth of opportunities to encourage pupils to reflect on different aspects of their own lives and those of others. They become well-rounded individuals who are well prepared for the next stage of their |

| | |
|--|------------|
| | education. |
|--|------------|

| | |
|--|--|
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school shows a high standard of care in many respects. However, while there are many good systems in place for making the pupils feel secure, there are serious omissions relating to health and safety. This is unsatisfactory. |
|--|--|

The school has a good partnership with parents, and this benefits pupils' learning. There are effective procedures in place for promoting racial harmony and eliminating oppressive behaviour.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. She has created a good team spirit, so that the staff take collective responsibility for improving standards. The size of the school means that the staff have responsibility for many aspects of school life. Their overall management of these is satisfactory, with some significant strengths. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors are committed to making the school better. However, although they are involved in discussions about how well the school is doing and making decisions about its future, they are too dependent on the headteacher for information. They do not question closely enough. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school identifies accurately where improvements are needed, but it has not developed a strong enough action plan to tackle the issues. |
| The strategic use of resources | Satisfactory. The school makes the best use it can of all its resources. Earmarked pupil funding is used particularly well to support pupils with special educational needs. |

The school has an adequate number of teachers and support staff to meet its needs, and there are enough resources to teach all the subjects of the curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. However, there is no secure outside area for children in the Foundation Stage, which limits the curriculum for outside learning. The school's procedures for checking that it is getting best value for money are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • The teaching is good; • The staff are approachable; • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like a consistent approach to homework; • They would like to share more information; • They would like more activities outside lessons. |

Inspectors agree with most of the positive responses. However, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time is satisfactory, rather than good. Homework is appropriate. Pupils have homework diaries when there is a need for more regular communication with parents. The information for parents is satisfactory overall, although pupils' reports do not contain all the information they should. There is a good range of activities outside lessons and these are well attended.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start in the nursery, their overall attainment is above average, compared to that of other children their age. As a result of good teaching they achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development and in their language and mathematical development. By the end of their reception year most children exceed the standards expected in these areas. While they reach average standards in the other areas of learning, there is scope for them to achieve more.
2. National Curriculum test results have to be treated with caution because of the small numbers of pupils involved. On average, each pupil represents at least 10 per cent of the total. This means that even one pupil not reaching the expected standard would significantly affect overall standards. Since 1999, national tests show that overall standards in reading and writing have, for the most part, been average. There was significant variation in reading in 2001, when standards were well above average. In 2002, standards in reading and writing were well below those attained by pupils in schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards in mathematics show a downward trend from 1999 to 2001. However, in 2002, standards improved significantly and were in the top 5 per cent in the country and well above those in similar schools. In reading, girls perform significantly better than girls nationally whereas boys perform significantly below boys nationally.
3. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to reach similar high standards in mathematics in the forthcoming tests. Their mental skills are particularly well developed through sharp teaching and well focused warm-up sessions at the start of lessons. Standards of reading and writing in the current Year 2 class are average. While pupils achieve at a generally satisfactory rate in reading, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could in writing. These pupils do not build effectively on their learning because the work is not challenging enough for them.
4. The standards of attainment of the pupils currently in Year 4 are average overall in English. Higher attaining pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate in reading while they are in the Key Stage 2 class. They read fluently and with a good level of understanding. Pupils of average and lower ability do not achieve as well as they could. They sometimes lose interest in reading because their books are too hard for them to read and this spoils their enjoyment. Standards in writing are average overall, by the end of Year 4. In common with the national picture, girls do better than boys. However, boys in Key Stage 2 have the potential to achieve more. The reason they do not achieve as well as they could is that not enough is expected of them in their written work. Too often, they are allowed to get away with unfinished and careless work. Although progress is steady, there is scope for pupils of all abilities to achieve more. They do not achieve as well as they should because they have too few opportunities to write at length. Recording in other subjects consists mainly of prescriptive worksheets. Standards in mathematics are average. This represents good progress from the overall standards that these pupils reached at the end of Year 2. However, there is scope for higher attaining pupils to achieve more.
5. Teacher assessments in science at the age of seven years indicate that most pupils reach the standards expected for their age, but no pupils reach the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence confirms this. As with writing, higher attaining pupils do not

achieve well enough because not enough is expected of them. All the work is pitched at the same level and lessons are over directed. It is a better picture in Key Stage 2 where pupils of all abilities make up a lot of ground. Knowledge and understanding of scientific facts is above the level expected for pupils this age. Pupils of all abilities achieve well because the teaching is firmly rooted in pupils' own investigations.

6. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average. However, pupils could achieve more if they had more opportunities to use computers to support their learning in other subjects. Standards in music are higher than those expected at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because of the very good teaching by visiting music specialists. In most other subjects, average standards have been maintained since the last inspection. No judgement can be made about standards in design and technology in Key Stage 2 because not enough work was available.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make very good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. This is because of the very effective and sensitive support they receive in lessons. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified specifically but those who are talented in music make very good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have good positive attitudes to the school, as at the time of the last inspection. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire and all who attended the meeting agreed that behaviour in the school was good and that their children like school. Their children are always eager to talk about their work. This enjoyment of school stems from the very good relationships that exist between the children and staff and the value placed on each individual. Pupils enter the nursery with good attitudes to the school and the support they receive enables them very quickly to become confident learners. Pupils maintain these good attitudes and try hard to please their teachers and the other adults who work with them. They work hard, with good levels of concentration and persevere even when tasks do not challenge or fully interest them. Their enthusiasm for learning often shines through in lessons as seen in a health education lesson in Key Stage 2 where the children were discussing health issues, which will directly affect them. Their enthusiasm helped all the children to be fully involved in the lesson.
9. Pupils' behaviour is very good and supports their learning very well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the playground the children are careful of others' space and they interact very well with both their peers and children of different ages. The school is a very orderly and caring community where the children readily show respect for conventions and are polite to visitors and to each other. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions because pupils' behaviour as they eat their lunch is exemplary. The older children serve the lunches with meticulous fairness and the younger ones trust their servers to look after them. There have been no exclusions in the last 12 months.
10. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The same very good rapport exists between pupils and between all adults and pupils. Pupils clearly enjoy working cooperatively in the friendly atmosphere the school presents. Very amicable and productive work occurs in pairs and in groups, for example, when working on the computers and in music lessons. All groups of children are very well integrated into these relationships and parents speak highly of the support and friendships that exist with the pupils from the nearby special school.

11. Pupils show a very high level of personal responsibility when volunteering for tasks around school. This is particularly evident at lunchtime, both in school and in the playground, where they are very careful not to drop litter. Nursery children happily change their own reading books and older children are confident to extend their own study using the library and Internet. The children respond very well when given the opportunity to meet the needs of the local and wider community such as the way they welcome pupils from the local special school who join them for some lessons. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that this prepared the pupils well for life.
12. Attendance is very good and the children arrive punctually. The attendance rate last year was well above the national picture. Unauthorised absence is rare. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reinforces the view of the parents that their children like school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. Although most of the teaching seen in lessons during the inspection was good or better, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time in most subjects is satisfactory overall. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. While the quality of teaching enables most pupils to achieve at a satisfactory rate in most subjects, this is not the case for the higher attainers, particularly in English in Key Stages 1 and 2, in science in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics in Key Stage 2. The best and most consistently good teaching occurs in language and mathematical development in the nursery, in mathematics in Key Stage 1, and in music throughout the school.
14. In the nursery, children learn at a good pace because the work is planned very effectively to build on what they already understand and can do. Work for the reception age children in the Key Stage 1 class is also matched well to their needs in language and mathematical development. This boosts their confidence and they also achieve well. They enjoy the challenge of working with older pupils.
15. Teaching of English is satisfactory overall. Teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to discuss what they have learned. This promotes their speaking and listening skills well and pupils throughout the school are confident and articulate. The teaching of reading is better in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. This is largely because of the very effective partnership with parents of the younger pupils. The ongoing dialogue between home and school as these parents listen to their children reading helps the pupils to make better progress. In the Key Stage 1 class, the teacher has good strategies for helping pupils to spell correctly and recognise punctuation. For example, in the lesson seen, pupils were asked to visualise the word 'wish'. 'How did you spell it in your head?' she asked. As a result, the pupils thought carefully about their spellings and made good progress. 'I want some full stop spotters today', she said to the Year 1 pupils. This kept them on their toes because they had to clap each time she reached a full stop. Through this they not only learned to recognise full stops, but also their purpose. The impact of the good teaching in literacy lessons is diminished because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to develop the skills they have learned in other areas of the curriculum. Their marking of written work is not effective enough. It consists mainly of ticks and positive comments that do not indicate to pupils how they could improve their work. Teachers do not use the results of marking to plan further work. Pupils, therefore, do not see the connection between set English exercises and other written work. This undermines progress, particularly for the higher attainers.

16. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall. It is sharper in Key Stage 1 and enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. In Key Stage 2, although the teaching enables most pupils to achieve well, it does not fully stretch the higher attaining pupils. The main difference between the two key stages is the pace and challenge of lessons. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 1, for example, the pupils were all actively engaged in the mental warm-up session. They responded very positively to the teacher's instructions such as, 'Everyone jump on the tens, wave on 20.' Practical activities such as these help the pupils to build up their knowledge of number facts. In Key Stage 2, however, higher attaining pupils were marking time while the rest of the class sometimes struggled to explain their answers. In both key stages pupils are encouraged to explain how they arrive at answers and they soon realise that there are many valid ways of solving problems.
17. The teaching of music is very good throughout the school and is enabling pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Visiting instrumental specialists, funded by the school, use their expertise well and have a very beneficial effect on pupils' learning.
18. In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers rely too heavily on very prescriptive worksheets. These often contain a lot of information and the pupils are limited to answering set questions, thus denying them the opportunity to express themselves individually. This is alleviated to some degree in Key Stage 2 because teaching ensures that the pupils have very good opportunities to discuss their work. Discussion with pupils shows that they know a lot more than their written work would suggest, particularly in science, history and geography.
19. While most lessons are planned and organised well so teaching time is not lost, there are occasions when this is not the case. In Key Stage 2, for example, the time spent on a spelling and handwriting lesson was not used effectively. There was no evidence that the lesson had been thoughtfully planned and the task was too simple and inappropriate. As a result, these pupils did not make any progress during the lesson.
20. Some good features of teaching are present in most lessons. Teachers generally adopt a lively approach that captures pupils' interest from the start. Most teachers are good at using questions to draw out pupils' ideas and develop their understanding further. In a Key Stage 2 science lesson, for example, pupils made good progress in planning and carrying out a fair test because the teacher posed appropriate questions to remind them to think about what they had to change and what they had to keep the same.
21. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good in both key stages. Teachers make good use of classroom assistants to support pupils in the classroom, helping them to concentrate and join in class discussions. Teachers take good account of the targets in pupils' individual learning plans and present work that takes learning forward in small steps. This boosts the pupils' confidence and they achieve very well.
22. All the teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. This creates a good atmosphere for learning because the pupils feel valued. They are confident to try to answer questions even though they may not be sure of the answers. The pupils' very good behaviour in lessons is a reflection of the good examples that their teachers set for them in treating everybody with respect.

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

23. The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory overall. It is planned appropriately according to the requirements for children in their early years of school. The provision for personal development and language and mathematical development is good and children achieve well in these areas. However, the provision in the other areas is not as good because the children do not have enough opportunities to work independently in furthering their creative development or their knowledge and understanding of the world. Outdoor learning is restricted by the lack of a secure outside area. As a result, the children do not achieve as well as they might in these areas of learning.
24. In the rest of the school the curriculum is also satisfactory overall. All the required subjects are taught but some are not allocated sufficient time. As at the time of the last inspection, the allocation of time for science is too low, for example. The time spent on physical education (PE) is twice the amount spent on science. This is because all the children have weekly swimming lessons throughout the year, in addition to their PE lessons. Although parents appreciate the swimming lessons because the school is situated near a lake, it means that other subjects do not get the time they should. This is compounded by the fact that the length of the taught week in Key Stage 2 is one and a quarter hours below the recommended minimum.
25. The school has adopted nationally recommended schemes of work in most subjects and adapted them to meet the needs of the school. This ensures that aspects of subjects are taught in a logical sequence and gives teachers good guidance on what is to be taught each term and how this may be done. There are schemes now in place for history and geography that were missing at the last inspection.
26. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is unsatisfactory, particularly in respect of writing. Even though writing has been identified as an area for development pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills in other subjects. This means that some pupils, particularly the higher attainers do not achieve as well as they might.
27. The strategy for teaching numeracy is good. The school has adapted the national guidance skilfully to meet the needs of all its pupils. This has helped to raise standards. Basic number skills have improved, as a result of the greater emphasis the school puts on mental sessions at the start of lessons.
28. All the pupils are included fully in all aspects of the curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. Their work is planned very well to take their learning forward in small manageable steps. As a result, they achieve very well. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, are encouraged to be involved in all types of activities. A good example of this is the extra musical tuition provided by the school. Apart from enhancing pupils' learning in music, this promotes pupils' social development very well. In particular, it boosts the confidence and self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs when they play instruments in assemblies.
29. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched in a number of ways. The children enjoy a good range of visits, visitors and first hand experiences. For example, the residential trip to Hartington was used to reinforce their environmental and geographical skills as well as to support their personal development. There is a good range of after school clubs for such a small school. These help the children to widen their interests and further develop their skills, whether it be in the chess, netball, German or gardening clubs. Members of the school staff and some parents give generously of their time to

lead these. The use of outside experts, as for the German club, also ensures high quality experiences for the children.

30. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is also good. Overseen by the co-ordinator, it ensures that pupils are helped to gain an increasing awareness of themselves and to acquire skills progressively as they move through the school. The ethos of the school and the very good links forged with the community and local schools contribute positively to the children's citizenship education, as well as providing many different social settings in which to become confident. Pupils learn about safety at appropriate points in the curriculum. They discuss long-term health issues that will affect them and the dangers of drug abuse. A weakness here is that children do not keep written records of what they have done. The good community links support both the children's attainment and personal development. A good example of this is the pupils' involvement with a local pottery firm. This involved setting out a business plan and bidding for funding to set up a small business making plant pots. Activities such as this also contribute well to pupils' learning in mathematics while introducing them to the world of business. The links are also two-way, in that the school gives back to the community by providing services and performances and also enthusiastically supporting charitable initiatives.
31. The links and liaison with partner institutions are very good and are helping the school to improve children's attainment and progress. Working with the cluster schools is providing good value training opportunities for staff and providing a practical solution to providing co-ordination of subjects for these small schools. Curriculum evenings for parents have been provided by one of the cluster schools. More trips and experiences such as the cluster carol service are provided by working with the cluster. Links with the local middle school are also very close and well organised to help pupils make the transition as easily as possible. The link to a local special school ensures there is benefit for all pupils at both schools.
32. There is very good overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Spiritual development is nurtured well through well planned assemblies and through the use of prayers at lunchtime. Times to reflect on their values and beliefs are planned for and displays around the school are designed to encourage reflection. The school has started to involve the children in understanding and setting their own targets so that they better understand themselves and their progress. Valuing and celebrating children's abilities, for example, in music, helps raise their self-esteem and teaches them they are valued. During the inspection a moment of sheer joy in achievement was shared as the children in a Year 3 / 4 dance lesson completed the complex and taxing movements of a traditional dance and burst into delighted laughter. Other lessons are planned to contain moments of awe and wonder such as when the children studied the book 'The Snowman'. This particular lesson coincided with a fall of snow. Photographs show the children catching snowflakes and watching them melt, just like the snowman.
33. Pupils receive plenty of guidance on knowing right from wrong and the provision for moral development is very good. Many opportunities are provided to discuss moral issues and to learn to be mutually supportive such as in PSHCE lessons. In its work towards becoming an Eco-school, the school has given pupils good opportunities to consider personal responsibility for the environment. Throughout the year, the children are also involved in many charitable initiatives to support people at home and abroad, so they understand and can respond to the needs of others.

34. The provision for social development is also very good. The children help each other by being reading partners and they have many chances to work together productively. The many links with the community and other local schools help the children understand their wider society and give them many settings in which to relate to others and become confident. The wide range of activities outside lesson times, the educational visits and the responsibilities given to pupils also support and extend pupils' social education.
35. The provision for cultural development is good. Traditional stories are used well in literacy lessons and the children learn traditional dances and games. The children visit Macclesfield silk museum and Newcastle museum and the Spode Potteries so they become aware of some of their historical heritage. All children who wish to learn are taught a musical instrument, and the children have taken part in a regional recorder festival. Visitors have included a local artist and music groups. With the help of a parent the school has celebrated Burns Night, there has been a 'Tudor' evening and pupils learn Irish dances. The children are prepared well for life in a multicultural society. In religious education they study Islam and Judaism and have visited a mosque and a synagogue in Stoke-on-Trent. In PE lessons they enjoy learning dance from other cultures and in music they play instruments and listen to music from a variety of cultures. In geography, children learn of the traditions of other countries through the travels of Barnaby Bear.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Some aspects of caring for pupils have improved since the last inspection. In particular, there have been improvements in assessment and in the promotion of good behaviour and attendance. The support provided for children with special educational needs is excellent and provision for children in the Foundation Stage is now satisfactory. Most parents are happy with the care and support their children receive. They believe the school helps their children become well-rounded individuals who know their own minds and can discuss issues maturely and confidently. The school cares deeply for its pupils. However, as noted in the last inspection, there are significant gaps in the required systems to ensure pupil welfare. In this respect the governors' statutory duties are not being met.
37. At the time of the last inspection, the child protection co-ordinator had not received training and this omission has been rectified.
38. The school helps children to keep safe by teaching such aspects as water safety as part of swimming lessons and providing a cycling proficiency course in the summer term. There has also been recent staff training on first aid and asthma management. However, as at the time of the last inspection, the school does not have an up-to-date health and safety policy. In addition, a risk assessment policy and risk assessments, which are legal requirements, are not available on site. Procedures mentioned in the last report, such as not locking chemicals away in an appropriate place and the children stacking chairs and tables too high after lunch, have not been corrected. This is unsatisfactory.
39. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance and thus there has been no need to utilise the educational welfare service. Good behaviour is actively promoted by all staff working to develop pupils' self-esteem and through the use of popular rewards, such as stickers, for good behaviour. The children are helped to understand what is acceptable and considerate behaviour. Parents report that when incidents of unacceptable behaviour arise, they are dealt with quickly and effectively, with parents contacted when necessary. The school has improved the range of

activities available at playtime and children make good use of the quiet seating areas as well as the new adventure playground.

40. The school undertakes work to prevent harassment and bullying, as for example, in 'Circle Time', when the children can talk about their feelings as well as issues affecting them. The children have also attended anti-bullying workshops.
41. The procedures for promoting pupils' personal development are very good and the monitoring of personal development has improved as it is now assessed through the PSHCE programme. The children are becoming involved in setting their own targets, including personal development, so they understand better how they can make progress.
42. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school now meets statutory requirements in assessing pupils' attainment on entry to the school and at the end of Key Stage 1.
43. In mathematics, results of tests are analysed carefully and this is leading to an improvement in standards. Pupils with special educational needs make rapid progress, because targets are set and monitored carefully by the special educational needs co-ordinator. However, the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning in English is unsatisfactory.
44. Teachers know the pupils well and keep individual records of their progress. However, in marking pupils' work teachers do not indicate how the pupils could develop their work further.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents view the school as a good school, which is helping their children become mature and responsible. They like the small school atmosphere and believe their children are valued as individuals. This ensures that their partnership with the school is effective as trusting relationships are established between the home and school. Questionnaires show parents are not all happy with the range of activities outside lesson time but the inspection judges the provision of these activities to be good.
46. Information for parents is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses. For example, a significant minority of parents are not happy with the information they receive on their child's progress. In the last inspection, the written reports to parents on children's progress were judged to be unsatisfactory, as they did not contain all the information required. This is still the case. The school provides termly newsletters for parents but these are written retrospectively. However, parents do like the termly topic sheets, which also contain the children's targets. This enables them to keep a check on their children's progress and give support where it is necessary. Information provided for parents of children with special educational needs is very good. There has also been a curriculum evening for parents to enable them to help their children to spell. Parental involvement in children's homework is satisfactory. Where the school considers there is a need for more regular communication with parents a home-school diary is used.

47. Parental involvement in the life of the school is good. Parent's help with transport to swimming lessons and this help is well organised and effective. They also help with work in classrooms, such as hearing pupils read, and they give general help with gardening and the buildings. The Parent Teacher Association is very active and successfully raises funds to help the school. The school has consulted parents informally about raising boys' achievement but the outcome of this has not yet been effective.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. No judgement was made in the last report about the quality of leadership and management, although important weaknesses were highlighted. The headteacher now provides satisfactory leadership and management overall. However, although standards in most subjects have been maintained since the last inspection and there has been a significant improvement in mathematics, there is some underachievement in writing at both key stages that has not been tackled effectively.
49. The school links this underachievement to the performance of boys who do not perform as well as girls nationally, but inspectors do not agree. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is above average, but by the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards are average. This is because higher attaining pupils do not make the progress they should. The main reason that pupils in both key stages do not make enough progress in English is that they do not have enough opportunities to practise the skills they learn in literacy lessons. Written work in all subjects consists of completing very prescriptive worksheets, often with one-word answers or a simple sentence. While the school has identified underachievement of boys in writing, they have not picked up on the underachievement of higher attaining girls in Key Stage 1. The action plan to improve standards in writing is not precise enough, and there is a lack of guidance for staff about what needs doing to address the weaknesses. The headteacher has a very heavy teaching commitment. She makes the best use of the time she has available to monitor teaching and learning. However, although lessons are observed, there is not enough evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, particularly in literacy lessons.
50. The school development plan is not effective enough. It does not focus enough on raising standards and does not extend beyond the current year.
51. The school works closely with the local cluster to share coordinator responsibilities for subjects and aspects. This works well and makes the most efficient use of the staff available. The school also benefits from specialist knowledge in some aspects, notably ICT, music and special educational needs provision. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the headteacher had responsibility for all subjects, which made unreasonable demands. The headteacher has motivated the coordinators to take more responsibility. They work very hard and manage their subjects to the best of their abilities.
52. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The coordinator has a very good understanding of how very young children learn. She has a clear idea of the actions needed to bring about improvement.
53. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection. There are very precise and rigorous procedures for monitoring progress, and clear guidelines for referring pupils for additional support and monitoring. The targets in individual learning programmes

are very specific. They are focused very closely on what pupils need to do next in order to improve.

54. The school has a good policy of inclusion and all pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. A significant feature is that the school pays for all the specialist music tuition for any child wishing to play an instrument. This is one reason why standards are so high and why pupils are so confident in this subject.
55. The governors are not involved enough in running the school. They are very supportive and keen for the school to move forward. However, they do not hold the school to account strongly enough for the standards it achieves, or seek out vigorously enough the reasons for any underachievement. Concerns about children's safety that were identified in the last report have not been addressed.
56. Management of the school's budget is satisfactory. The governing body's finance committee keeps an efficient check on spending. The school is aware that they will not have as many pupils in future years. In order to ensure adequate staffing needs, an appropriate amount of money is held in reserve. Specific grants are used appropriately and there are enough resources to teach all subjects of the curriculum. Although the accommodation is satisfactory overall, the lack of a secure outside area for children in the Foundation Stage limits the children's outdoor learning experiences. The administrative assistant gives good support in the day-to-day running of the school and satisfactory use is made of ICT for this purpose.
57. Strategic use of the school's resources is satisfactory overall. Most resources are used to best advantage in improving the quality of pupils' learning. However, the impact of actions is not analysed in sufficient depth to determine whether it is paying off in better achievement or raised standards. This is particularly noticeable in the actions taken to address boys' underachievement. There are occasions during the week when time is not used well, for example, the handwriting sessions in Key Stage 2. Too much time is spent completing exercises that merely fill in the time rather than advancing the learning. All pupils could achieve more if the time was used in a more meaningful way.
58. Although the school's procedures for checking that it is getting best value for money are satisfactory overall, more could be done to find out why the school is not doing as well in some areas as similar schools.
59. There are enough teachers and support assistants, and the school has satisfactory procedures for supporting new staff. Support staff make a significant contribution to the work of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to improve the quality of education for all pupils the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- a) Raise standards in writing, particularly for the higher attainers at the end of Key Stage 1, and for boys at the end of Year 4 by:
- devising and implementing an effective strategy for teaching writing throughout the school, including a more rigorous approach to marking that indicates clearly to pupils how they can improve their work and raising teachers' expectations of work presentation;
 - pinpointing accurately what pupils already know and can do;
 - using this information to plan for the next stages of their learning;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes;
 - tracking the achievement of pupils as they move through the school.

(paragraphs 4,15, 26, 49, 80, 85, 87)

- b) Establish clear direction for the work of the school by:
- establishing a comprehensive development plan that sets out clearly the school's targets for improving standards;
 - identifying clearly what it will do to achieve those targets;
 - setting out how it will measure the effectiveness of the actions taken.

(paragraph 51)

- c) Improve the quality and range of the curriculum by:
- making sure that suitable opportunities are planned across the curriculum for pupils to develop their writing and ICT skills;
 - increasing the amount of teaching time in Key Stage 2 so that pupils can have worthwhile experiences in all subjects;

(paragraphs 24, 26, 85, 98, 101, 106, 112, 113)

- d) Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
- ensuring that the governing body undertakes its responsibilities for running the school through systematic monitoring, so that it bases its decision making on a clear knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

(paragraphs 36, 55, 57)

- e) Improve procedures for health and safety by:
- making sure that rigorous risk assessments are carried out and that an up-to-date risk assessment policy is in place;
 - making sure that all chemicals are locked away in appropriate place;
 - not allowing children to stack dining chairs and tables too high.

(paragraph 38)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 15 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 16 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 0 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 27 | 47 | 20 | 0 | 7 | 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 seven percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 6 | 51 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 5 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0 | 5 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 2 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 0 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.7 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.2 |
| 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)

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2002 | 4 | 7 | 11 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | 9 | 9 | 11 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 82 (80) | 82 (90) | 100 (90) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | 9 | 10 | 10 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 82 (80) | 91 (80) | 91 (100) |
| | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89) | 89 (89) |

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

Results are only published where there are 10 or more pupils who took National Curriculum tests. In the 2002 Year groups there were fewer than 10 boys or girls, but more than 10 pupils in total.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| 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 of pupils on roll |
|----------------------|
| 51 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |
| 0 |

| Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |

| |
|--------------------------|
| No ethnic group recorded |
|--------------------------|

| |
|---|
| 0 |
|---|

| |
|---|
| 0 |
|---|

| |
|---|
| 0 |
|---|

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 2.3 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24.7 |
| Average class size | 25.5 |

Education support staff: YR – Y4

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 65.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | n/a |
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 32.5 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 6 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 0 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 0 |

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001/2002 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 184,710 |
| Total expenditure | 172,447 |
| Expenditure per pupil | |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 35,120 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 44,800 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 57 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 42 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 62 | 36 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 60 | 33 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 60 | 33 | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 43 | 40 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| The teaching is good. | 64 | 29 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 55 | 24 | 19 | 2 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 71 | 24 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 55 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 48 | 36 | 12 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 50 | 38 | 7 | 5 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 57 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 43 | 31 | 14 | 5 | 7 |

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

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

61. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. The children now follow an appropriately planned curriculum based on the early learning goals for children in nursery and reception. The key issue relating to this has been tackled successfully.
62. Children are admitted to the nursery in the September following their fourth birthday and are taught by a nursery nurse on a full-time basis. They transfer to the infant class the following September, when they are taught alongside pupils from Years 1 and 2. Because of the small numbers of children, attainment on entry to the nursery varies from year-to-year, but overall, it is above average. By the end of their reception year, almost all the children exceed the standards expected for their age in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The six children currently in the nursery have already exceeded the standards expected for their age and half of them have reached the early learning goal in reading and exceeded it in personal, social and emotional development.
63. The curriculum meets the needs of the children well in most aspects. The Key Stage 1 teacher plans the work for the children in the nursery well. There is a good range of challenging language and mathematical activities that build effectively on what the children already know and can do. There is a good balance between allowing children to choose their own activities and learn through experimentation and exploration on the one hand and more focused teaching by an adult on the other. She meets regularly with the nursery nurse to discuss and evaluate each child's progress. In the infant class, she matches work well to the needs of the reception children. They benefit from joining in many activities, such as literacy and numeracy with the older pupils. There are currently no pupils with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage. A relative weakness in the curriculum is that, because there is no secure outside area, children do not have enough opportunities for outside learning such as developing their large body movements through the use of large wheeled toys and climbing equipment. The school compensates to some extent by providing two additional playtimes each week and also by providing swimming lessons.
64. The quality of teaching is good in personal development, communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. It is not as strong in the other areas, but it is satisfactory. In physical development it is constrained by the lack of resources. The teacher and support staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how very young children learn. The work is pitched at the right level for each child and this enables them to achieve well.
65. There is a very good relationship between the staff and parents. Parents are very happy with the school and what it does for their children. They appreciate the fact that prior to their starting in the nursery they have regular familiarisation visits. This gives the children confidence and helps them to settle in well.
66. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The teacher with responsibility keeps a careful check on the quality of teaching and learning. In conjunction with the headteacher, she has identified areas for development. These include re-organisation, so that all the children in the Foundation Stage are taught together and the provision of a secure outside area.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Children in the nursery achieve very well in this area due to the very good teaching that helps them to feel secure. The children currently in the nursery have already exceeded the early learning goal in this area. They settle in quickly and soon understand school routines. All the adults have very positive relationships with the children and this develops high levels of confidence. The staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and the children learn to understand what is acceptable and what is not. They behave very well. An example of this was seen during a whole-school assembly when the children in the nursery behaved impeccably even though they could not follow the discussion for much of the time.
68. A strength of the teaching in the nursery is the way staff encourage the children to become independent and use their initiative. Good examples of this are seen constantly as children choose their own activities. Particularly impressive is the responsible way they look after their reading books and their home-reading diaries. When they finish a book they select a new one from the relevant section and make sure that the title is recorded in their diary. They are very confident talking to visitors about books they have read and do not hesitate in approaching visitors to chat about what they are doing. All the children are responsible for specific jobs in the classroom and they perform these well. The emphasis on independence and initiative is not as strong in the Key Stage 1 class. For most of the time the reception children are closely directed in their work with less opportunity to develop their own ideas.

Communication, language and literacy

69. The good teaching in both classes enables the children to achieve well and build effectively on their above average skills. Adults put good emphasis on constantly engaging the children in conversation as they work at various activities. They take care to frame questions that require extended answers, thus promoting language development well. This is extended in the Key Stage 1 class so that by the end of their reception year the children have above average speaking and listening skills.
70. Children make good progress in reading and writing because staff have good subject knowledge and use a good range of interesting resources that appeal to the children and make learning fun. In a guided session in the nursery, for example, the children enjoyed playing Lotto. This was challenging for them because they not only had to match words with pictures, but also match words with other words. This sort of activity focuses their attention well on word patterns and they learn to recognise a lot of words that they will come across later in their books. This means that they enjoy books because they can read them. All the children in the nursery have already exceeded the standard expected for their age, and two of the six are on course to reach the early learning goal in reading by the end of the year. This good progress is sustained in the Key Stage 1 class. By the end of their reception year, children have above average reading skills.
71. Children in the nursery have plenty of opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Apart from writing their news, they come to a good understanding of the relevance of writing through making labels for displays, including the prices of goods in the 'shop'. In the Key Stage 1 class, the reception children continue to make good progress because they benefit from being taught alongside the older pupils in literacy sessions.

Mathematical development

72. Children achieve well in this area because of the good teaching. By the end of their reception year, they exceed the standards expected for their age. They get off to a good start in the nursery because they enjoy a wealth of challenging activities. There is a good balance between children discovering for themselves through activities such as sand and water play and board games, and guided activities that enable staff to make informed assessments of children's learning. Computer games are also used effectively to reinforce learning about shape and number.
73. In both classes adults pay good attention to developing children's mathematical language. The children's good speaking skills are translated into their work in this area. In a session in the nursery, for example, when a temporary nursery nurse was checking on their understanding of bigger and smaller, one little girl extended her answer by adding, 'This one's massive but this is only tiny.' Good use is made of songs, rhymes and role play to reinforce mathematical learning. For example, in the nursery children playing in the 'shop' get good practice in adding small numbers as they work out the cost of their shopping. In the Key Stage 1 class, the reception children continue to make good progress as they join in the brisk mental warm-up sessions with the older pupils. The learning support assistant intervenes appropriately to make sure that they can keep up. They are given well-matched tasks during the main part of numeracy lessons. This boosts their confidence and increases their enjoyment of learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children's general knowledge and their understanding of the world are average on entry to the nursery. They achieve at a satisfactory rate and are on course to reach the expected standards for their age in this area by the end of their reception year. Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher uses well focused questions to make sure that children realise what is happening in activities such as sand and water play. However, the children do not have enough opportunities to investigate and explore objects and materials for themselves. Although they have suitable opportunities to make models using different methods of joining, such as with glue or split pins, this work is over directed and they do not have the chance to choose their own materials or methods. They do not have ready access to simple equipment such as magnifiers and magnets that would arouse their curiosity and stimulate independent enquiry. The lack of an outdoor learning area also limits learning opportunities from exploring their environment.
75. Children in the nursery have above average computer skills for their age. They work independently selecting, loading and closing down programs for themselves. This good Foundation is continued by children of reception age. In the Key Stage 1 class the reception children continue to make satisfactory progress. They make good gains in learning about the wider world and about life in the past because they are taught alongside the older pupils. Again, the learning support assistant is on hand to support them well. However, as in the nursery class, the children do not have enough opportunities for learning from their own exploration and investigation.

Physical development

76. An overall judgement on physical development cannot be made because there were no opportunities during the inspection to observe children performing large movements during taught time. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but it is constrained by the lack of provision in some areas. As there is no secure outside area the children do not have enough access to toys and equipment to extend their large scale movements such as climbing, swinging and balancing. The school compensates partially for this by arranging two additional playtimes, when children in the nursery use large equipment. However, this is not enough, and furthermore, reception age children do not have any access to the large equipment. A good feature of the provision is the weekly swimming lessons that all the children have. Parents are particularly pleased about this because of the school's close proximity to Rudyard Lake. They report that their children are confident in the water and well on the way to swimming. In the classrooms the children use a good range of tools such as pencils, paint brushes, scissors and hole punches and this helps to develop their hand-eye co-ordination and their manipulative skills. This can be seen in the good progress that the children make in handwriting.

Creative development

77. All the children are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of their reception year. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and children achieve at a satisfactory rate. However, there is scope for children to achieve more in some aspects. Although children in both classes have suitable opportunities to paint and experiment with different colours and tools, the activities are largely teacher directed. There is no provision currently for pupils to choose to paint a picture or make a model during free activity time. The models that children make are very similar and consist of the same materials.
78. Children in the nursery class show good imagination as they work together. Following on from a mathematical activity, for example, when the children had made plasticine balls to match the spots on a dinosaur, a little girl decided to make a tree for her dinosaur. Before long a boy and another girl had joined in. After a short time, they produced an island for the dinosaur complete with a tree and plants. The boy extended this further by making a 'massive' spider to frighten people away.
79. In both classes, the good teaching by a music specialist enables the children to make good progress in music. All the children can follow a tune and perform suitable actions. Children in the nursery can copy a pattern on chime bars because they concentrate very well as the teacher demonstrates. Girls tend to be better than the boys at remembering patterns. The children's enjoyment of singing is illustrated well by the way they join in so enthusiastically in singing in assemblies.

ENGLISH

80. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection. Standards in Year 2 and for pupils in Year 4 are average when compared with those seen nationally. Achievement in reading is broadly satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, even though in some year groups there are small numbers of pupils, there is some evidence of underachievement by higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1, and by boys in Key Stage 2. Most of the pupils have positive attitudes to literacy. Although pupils in Year 2 are interested in their work and show an above average use of language in their discussions, this level of attainment does not flow readily into their writing. Although standards are average overall, the subject leader has started to examine

the factors that are limiting pupils' attainment. This is because, when compared with similar schools, standards are well below average.

81. Standards in speaking and listening are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils make steady progress. In most lessons, many pupils speak with clear diction and use a comprehensive vocabulary. Teachers extend this by using technical language in the subjects pupils learn about. Although pupils' listening skills are good, they are better when lessons capture their attention and provoke real thought, such as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were evaluating their dance lesson. Pupils are courteous towards each other and listen carefully to the views of others.
82. Overall, reading standards are average throughout the school. Significantly, many of the pupils make really interesting and probing observations when they talk about characters and events in the stories they encounter. Most of the pupils know how to find information in a range of non-fiction books and understand the contents and index pages. Older pupils can use a glossary. Those pupils with above average reading skills read aloud with exceptional qualities of expression, demonstrating a natural flair for language. They use and can explain the effects of simple punctuation as they read. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 take books home and parents provide good support. This is seen in their reading diaries and there is a great benefit to pupils in the early stages of reading. Surprisingly, the school does not continue this partnership consistently for those pupils in Years 3 and 4, who might continue to gain from it. Where teachers read with pupils, these sessions are good and some are better than this because they provide a higher level of challenge. However, pupils in Years 3 and 4 with average and lower attainment in their reading skills often struggle to use the full range of reading clues. Sometimes, the books they read on a day-to-day basis are too difficult and this limits the pleasure to be gained. Most of these pupils are boys. Although the school has introduced more books to interest the boys, everyday reading books need to be matched more accurately to ability.
83. Additional catch up activities in Years 3 and 4 provide a sound range of phonic experiences for a small number of pupils. However, evidence of pupils' work indicates that there are not enough opportunities for these pupils to make the connections between reading and writing for themselves. For example, too few of them use the strategies they have learned and the knowledge gained to tackle unfamiliar words they encounter when they read or use them in their written work.
84. Writing standards are average throughout the school, but could be significantly higher than they are. Many of the pupils write with a sensitive use of language that relates very well to the kind of writing expected. They bring these natural qualities to their lessons. For example, a Year 3 pupil wrote in diary format, 'my friend started to cry, so I suggested we should play I spy because it was quite light.'
85. The very good organisation and management in Years 1 and 2 boosts the early skills of Year 1 pupils and is a prime example of well planned activities within the recommended 'literacy hour' format. In fact, the teaching in this mixed-aged class is well focused on the purpose and content of writing and many of the pupils achieve the learning intentions in lessons. Conversely, teaching plans are not focused sufficiently enough on the conventions of writing such as punctuation and handwriting. The limited importance the school attaches to the quality of handwriting results in unsatisfactory standards. One of the reasons for this is that not enough thought has been put into the impact of the resources pupils use as they write. Often, average and lower achieving pupils struggle to form their words on the narrow lines of their books. This has an adverse affect on other subjects of the curriculum and is compounded by the over reliance on worksheets for pupils who can write for

themselves. This is the case in science, for example. These key factors delays pupils' achievement. Tackling these important features of writing is the key to improved performance and also to the raising of self-esteem of those pupils (often boys) who struggle to write with a semblance of good presentation. There are no common expectations of how work should be set out and these need to be established.

86. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and overall, planning is good. Relationships are very good and literacy sessions demonstrate that pupils feel that this is their school family. This is seen in the ways that pupils make a special effort to support each other in activities and the pleasure they show towards younger pupils' success. Teachers devise appealing activities and make efforts to ensure that most pupils enjoy their work. This is seen in the games used to teach spelling in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 1 also make good use of computer programs to reinforce learning. Classroom assistants form an important building block in lesson organisation. They know how each child learns best and use it well to assure the next step in learning. Those pupils with additional or different learning needs are well supported by adults who use their individual learning plans and a close working relationship to build confidence and greater understanding.
87. However, this positive picture, in which teachers and adults strive to delve deeply into discussion with pupils as they work, is hampered by the lack of a unified approach to the teaching of basic early literacy skills such as handwriting. For this element of literacy, expectations are not high enough. In addition, the quality of marking is uneven. Where it is good, it provides pupils with a clear insight into their progress and refers to the intentions of the lesson. Often, however, marking is only used as a means of encouragement rather than a tool to revisit and promote progress. Too often, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are let off the hook when their work is unacceptable or incomplete. Most of these pupils are boys. A substantial amount of work is unmarked. When it is marked, the marking consists of cursory ticks and mistakes are not picked up. Overall, marking in both key stages does not indicate clearly to pupils how they might improve their work.
88. Leadership of the subject is sound. The school has developed a good range of information about the progress of all its pupils and has set targets to be attained since the previous inspection. However, this information is not used rigorously to set expectations high enough, given the above average speaking and listening skills that pupils demonstrate and the higher use of oral language than usually seen. There is no special provision for pupils who are gifted or talented. The school has identified the underachievement of many of the boys, but the plan to tackle this is not detailed enough.

MATHEMATICS

89. Standards have improved since the last inspection. In the most recent tests, standards at the end of Year 2 were very high when compared to schools nationally and well above those of similar schools. The pupils leaving the school this year are achieving standards that are in line with the national average. These children have made good progress since taking the tests in Key Stage 1, when their standards were below average. Inspection evidence indicates that the high standards achieved in Year 2 last year are likely to be maintained. Over a three-year period, boys' performance was broadly in line with that of boys nationally, whereas girls have exceeded the average for girls of the same age. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in Key Stage 2.

90. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and teachers and support staff are knowledgeable about the recommendations. This, together with new appointments to the staff, has had a positive effect on the teaching and learning in the school. Results of tests are analysed to see where pupils could achieve better. For example, the school has identified that the pupils' knowledge of capacity and problem solving are areas for development and these are now reflected in the planning for lessons. The coordinator is effective and has worked hard to improve standards. For example, she has monitored the teaching to see where improvements could be made. In the junior class published resources are used to supplement the national guidance. There are formal assessments at the end of each half term or at the end of topics. These initiatives are beginning to bear fruit in terms of raising standards.
91. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have developed a good knowledge of basic number. Their skills at addition and subtraction to 20 are secure. They recognise number sequences and count accurately in 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's and 10's. They apply their number skills to money problems, can recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and find fractions of them.
92. By the age of nine years the pupils' number skills are developing well and they confidently find missing numbers in equations such as $62-19=31+?$ They plot co-ordinates accurately and can find fractions and percentages of various quantities. However, their knowledge of tables is not secure and they often make basic errors when multiplying two numbers together.
93. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in developing their mathematical skills in relation to their abilities. This is because teachers plan work that is at the right level for them and they receive good support from the classroom assistants. For example, in a lesson in the infant class the support assistant encouraged the pupils by asking good questions when they were using and recognising coins while they were buying certain items. The classroom assistant was heard to say, 'That's very well done, yes you are recognising the coins now', and 'Now you have started with this coin, think of something else to add on.' This helped to raise the self-esteem of the pupils and ensured that they had a full part in the lesson.
94. Pupils achieve well in the infant class and this is linked to the good teaching they receive. Lessons are planned very effectively and have varied activities to move the pupils forward in their learning. Work is matched well to the different ages and abilities in the class. This helps the rate of progress for all the pupils. For example, in a very good lesson, Year 2 pupils were working out money problems with amounts up to five pounds, while Year 1 pupils had smaller and simpler amounts of money. Two reception children were receiving very good support from a classroom assistant when completing practical activities to buy different items from the class shop. The lesson had very good pace throughout and the very good relationships between all the adults and children motivated all the pupils to work hard and remain on task.
95. The rate of progress is not as fast in the juniors because of the more ordinary mathematics teaching. Lessons lose pace when individual pupils are questioned at length and try to explain their answers and record their work on the whiteboard. The more able pupils tend to 'switch-off' and lose concentration instead of carrying on with their own activities. The time at the end of the lesson is not used effectively to assess and review what the pupils have learned. However, the mental arithmetic part at the beginning of lessons is used well to provide a good focus for counting, using number multiples and refining pupils' mental agility in handling number. When the pupils use whiteboards to record their answers, as was seen in the Year 4 lesson,

the level of engagement is high. In the infant class, when all the pupils were counting, they were encouraged to 'wave' or jump up and down when they came to certain numbers. Again this meant that they were all fully involved in the learning and having fun at the same time.

96. A strength of all the teaching is the constant encouragement of pupils to explain how they have arrived at an answer. For example, in the juniors the pupils were continually reminded to think about the strategies they were using to answer the number investigations they were completing. Consequently they were keen to explain how they were working out the problems. In the infant class, when they were explaining how they worked out their answers, comments such as, 'I put the biggest number in my head first and then added the other numbers', shows that the pupils understand what they are doing.
97. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to extend their knowledge while using mathematics in different situations. In geography, for example, they show their knowledge of directions and arrange information in charts or graphs. ICT is used appropriately to support the lessons in the infant class. Pupils use carefully selected programs to help develop their mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

98. Standards in knowledge and understanding of scientific facts at the end of Key Stage 1 are average. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. Most pupils reach the level expected for their age, but no pupils reach the higher Level 3. Although most pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate, higher attainers do not achieve as well as they could because not enough is expected of them. For example, written work in books shows that pupils of all abilities do the same work. Recording consists mainly of prescriptive worksheets that do not encourage pupils to think enough for themselves and express their own ideas. They do not have enough opportunities to find things out for themselves and test out their own ideas. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. There were many good features in the lesson seen during the inspection but again the work was very closely directed.
99. In Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities achieve well because the teaching is good. By the age of nine, knowledge and understanding of scientific facts are above average overall and, in some aspects, well above average. Discussion with pupils revealed that they know a lot more than is evident from the work in their books. For example, they have a very good understanding of how water changes state and relate this appropriately to everyday situations, such as windows steaming up in the bathroom and droplets of water running down as the water vapour changes back to water. They use scientific vocabulary accurately when describing these changes. It is clear from pupils' enthusiasm in discussion that they enjoy science and frequent class discussions help them to remember what they have learned. During the discussion about changes in water, one boy said, 'Did you know that when milk used to come in bottles they were never filled to the top because liquids expand when they are frozen and that would break the bottle?' A girl added, 'Yes, that's why when water freezes in a pipe, the pipe bursts.' Good emphasis is put on pupils using their initiative to plan and carry out their own investigations. Although standards in this aspect are slightly below those expected for pupils of this age, the pupils are catching up fast. In the lesson seen, pupils worked well together in mixed ability groups to investigate the stretch of springs and elastic bands. They know the theory of carrying out a fair test but they cannot always explain what they have found out.

100. Throughout the school there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are supported well in lessons. In a Year 3/4 lesson, for example, through the good support of the group and the timely interventions by the teacher and the support assistant, one girl grew visibly in confidence as she realised that careful measurements are needed to ensure that a test is fair.
101. Teachers make good use of pupils' mathematical skills such as when measuring and completing tables and graphs to support teaching and learning. However, they do not give pupils enough opportunities to write independently about what they have done and found out. ICT is beginning to be used effectively as was seen in an ICT lesson when pupils in Year 3 were learning to compile a database of minibests as part of their science work.
102. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator recognises that teachers' expertise is lacking in some areas and this is highlighted in the school improvement plan.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Standards are average by the end of Key Stage 1 and when the pupils leave the school at the age of nine years. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Boys and girls of average and above average ability achieve at a satisfactory rate overall, while those with special educational needs make good progress because of the support and encouragement they receive in lessons. However, there is the potential to raise standards by increasing the amount of time available for art and design. Currently, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their skills.
104. Teaching in the younger age class is good. Pupils are taught well to do observational drawings. The work is planned very effectively to encourage them to pay attention to detail. A study of trees, for example, begins with pupils making bark rubbings so that they can compare different textures. The work provides a good link to science as the pupils then do careful drawings of the leaves that match the bark. This attention to detail is reflected in other work on display, notably high quality pastel drawings of 'The Snowman'. Photographic evidence shows that these pupils really enjoy their work and concentrate well. A good start has been made to pupils evaluating their work, for example, their clay leaves and their wooden tree decorations.
105. Very little work was seen in the Year 3/4 class but what was seen was average. The co-ordinator teaches this class normally, but she has been on long term leave since the beginning of this academic year. Her file indicates that she leads and manages the subject well. Termly planning is very detailed and indicates that skills are built progressively across the full programme of study as pupils move through the school. She carries out suitable end-of-year assessments and records show that at least half of the pupils currently in Year 3 reached above the standard expected at the end of Year 2.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Standards are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. As with art and design boys and girls of average and above average ability achieve at a satisfactory rate overall. Again pupils with special educational needs, spurred on by good support and encouragement achieve well. In Key Stage 2, not enough work was seen to support a secure judgement of standards and achievement. Throughout the school, as is the case with art and design, pupils have the potential to achieve more if they had more opportunities to practise and develop their skills. Currently, not enough time is allocated to the subject to allow the full programme of study to be taught in sufficient depth.
107. Photographic evidence shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to use tools safely. When making a wooden Christmas tree decoration, for example, they used saws to shape the wood. The concentration on their faces as they complete their designs indicates good attitudes to learning. The work is linked effectively to other subjects, such as art and design and history. The subject supports pupils' social development well. In the current topic on toys, for example, pupils are working in groups to make a train carriage for the class train. While the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, it does not allow pupils enough opportunities to use their own ideas and choose materials for themselves.
108. The teachers do the best they can but the school has not had a coordinator for the subject for the past few years. Consequently, there is no effective leadership and management. The school improvement plan identifies that teachers lack expertise, and training has been arranged in the near future.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

109. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Most pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress from their low starting point. Effective use is made of a planned programme of educational visits that support the pupils' learning. A good example was the visit to York to the Jorvik Museum when junior pupils were studying the Vikings.
110. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of grandparents who come into school to talk to the pupils about their lives, in particular the toys they played with when they were young. In Year 2, through their topic on 'Toys from the Past', the pupils show their developing understanding of the passage of time and how people's lives have changed. They know that the materials toys are made from have changed and realise that they have a much wider choice of toys, which include computer programs, not available to their grandparents. Year 4 pupils talk knowledgeably about aspects of the Viking life and World War II. A weakness in teaching is that recorded work consists solely of worksheets that do not present enough opportunities for the pupils to use their writing skills in the subject.
111. In Year 2, the pupils are aware that the world reaches beyond their locality. They can find places on a map and pick out countries and seas. They learn that where people live affects their lives. They can talk about the weather in different parts of the world, compared to that in Britain. Year 4 pupils understand the water cycle and can talk about the journey of a river, knowing what terms such as tributary and meander mean. They understand the effects that pollution would have on the local area. They have well developed mapping skills and a good knowledge of other areas and cities

of Britain. They contrast life and work in cities such as Stoke, Manchester and London to their own rural locality.

112. Leadership of these subjects is satisfactory. The school has adopted the nationally recommended guidelines and adapted them to meet the needs of the school. A weakness in both subjects, however, is the over reliance on worksheets. All pupils complete the same worksheets and so there is no opportunity for the higher attaining pupils to extend their knowledge.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Standards in ICT are broadly typical of those seen nationally at the end of Years 2 and 4. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and at a satisfactory rate in Years 3 and 4. Progress slows in the junior class because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use computers as tools for learning in other subjects such as science, geography and history. Thus pupils do not have the opportunity to practise their computer skills and develop their knowledge and understanding in the wider range of contexts.
114. The subject leader for the local cluster of schools teaches the main body of skills to the pupils in Years 3 and 4 and this has considerably enhanced the provision for the subject since the previous inspection. In addition, the number and quality of computers have improved.
115. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 get off to a good start and achieve well. Those in Year 1 are already attaining above the standard usually seen for similarly aged pupils. For example, their understanding of the relationship between the vertical and horizontal axes on a graph to represent mathematical ideas on screen is very good. Pupils help each other to understand the computer effects particularly well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve well in lessons designed to teach computer skills. For example, they learn to create a simple database and understand the terms involved well. Pupils with additional learning needs are guided by the teachers and encouraged so that their skills are built on effectively. Most pupils work in pairs. This works well.
116. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is of a higher quality in the lessons that are designed to teach step-by-step skill development. There are very good arrangements that keep a check on each pupil's progress. This is added to by the very good opportunities pupils are given to make judgements about their own learning. The use of the cluster of local schools has enabled the school to raise the profile of the subject in the curriculum. This includes good teaching plans. Staff expertise and new software have improved in line with increasing expectations of computers in learning nationally. Most teachers have undertaken training in the subject and this is bearing fruit in pupils' improving achievement.
117. Very good subject leadership is building the school's capacity to support learning through computer technology. Much of this work has been undertaken over the past year. The school has clear guidelines to ensure the safety and protection of pupils as they prepare to use electronic communication to search and transmit information, including through emails and the Internet.

MUSIC

118. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The very good quality provision and teaching contributes to standards in the subject that are above those

usually seen at the end of Years 2 and 4. Boys and girls of all ages and abilities achieve well. A visiting specialist provides very good leadership and her expert teaching skills bring enjoyment, knowledge and creativity into lessons. This was evident from two observed lessons in Years 1 and 2 and Year 3, and the provision for those pupils who are learning to play the violin.

119. In addition, African and other ethnic traditional musical instruments, as well as a rich range of objects and textiles from cultures other than European, are just some examples of materials that are used to bring to the pupils a taste of the richness of musical cultures other than their own.
120. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 join in lessons with delight and energy. They behave very well. The very good link between the traditional rhythms of English dance steps (in a lively performance by the talented teacher) and body sounds such as clapping and finger snapping provides pupils with prime opportunities to listen, respond and keep to the beat. Pupils are beginning to use some of the technical words to explain features they enjoy. They can name most of the very good range of tuned and untuned instruments, but better than this, they can match an instrument to a musical phrase with some flair. For example, to 'The bear fell off the bed... falling down, down, down', they chose the glockenspiel, but for 'Action man' it was the whistle. Listening skills are developed well through these early 'sound stories'.
121. In Year 3, the enthusiasm continues and these skills are built on very well. In their recorder lessons, pupils are taught the technical language to describe musical features as they learn to play. Higher attaining pupils are very good role models for those pupils in the early stages of learning to play. Some of these pupils have additional learning needs and they too make very good progress, given their different starting levels.
122. The knowledge and skill of the teacher bring imagination and joy to the curriculum. To achieve this relevant and well-balanced curriculum, the subject leader has modified nationally suggested activities and added flourishes that appeal and relate well to the pupils in this school. Provision for pupils with musical talent is very good and those with an aptitude or interest in the subject are encouraged and supported. Equally parents support their children very well by attending concerts and encouraging them to practise playing their instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. One dance lesson and swimming were timetabled during the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on the overall standards attained in the subject at the end of Years 2 and 4, except in dance. The standard in dance is above that usually seen in Years 3 and 4. Pupils achieve very well. All pupils attend swimming classes and evidence from discussions indicates that they achieve well.
124. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are especially skilful in remembering and repeating the patterns of steps in their dance lessons. In the traditional sequences of several different dances, pupils moved with ease, momentum and direction and showed a delightful spirit as they joined up phrases of movement with fluidity and deftness. They responded with pleasure and spontaneity to the contrasting music and complex arrangements for each traditional dance.
125. The pupils' confidence and above average control is a response to the very good teaching. Most pupils work especially well with a partner. They are able to negotiate space rapidly and most of them can keep to the rhythm well. In the lesson seen,

pupils with additional learning needs made good progress. They were supported initially by an adult, who then withdrew in a measured way, as children's confidence and agility were sufficient to enable full participation.

126. The teaching seen in the subject was very good, and it enabled the pupils to have great fun. For example, they learned the steps of the 'Durham Reel' so well because the teaching was clear and sought to involve everyone in this spirited and lively dance. Where there was an occasional entanglement, pupils reacted with good humour. Good opportunities for pupils to think about the difficulties they encountered in these dances enabled them to examine their heart rate and consider the effect of exercise and what happens as their body calms down.
127. From the evidence available, leadership of the subject is at least satisfactory. The pupils gain from the wider range of activities in the residential experience the school organises. Teaching plans indicate that all the aspects of the subject are in place in the curriculum, although there is an unusually high amount of time allocated over the year. This is partly because of the time given to swimming. While the relevance and importance of this activity is recognised, this high allocation of time adversely affects the balance in the overall curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. Standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 4 are in line with those expected in the local guidance. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection.
129. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and evidence indicates that in some of their activities they achieve very well. For example, in pupils' work on the theme, 'Things that are special to us', there are remarkably beautiful paintings of 'The Snowman' in flight (from the book by the author, Raymond Briggs). Matching photos of the pupils capturing tiny snowflakes in the school playground complete this tantalising moment of learning in the subject.
130. Pupils in Key Stage 2 also make good progress. They have a good knowledge of Christianity and know about key events and stories of other religions. In their studies of the journeys of St Paul, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have detailed recorded work that covers the full range of the curriculum for the subject. They have a good understanding of the meanings and importance of worship to the different believers in each of the major religions that they study. In much of their work, a deeper understanding of festivals, key religious and moral figures such as Gladys Aylward, is reasonably represented. However, pupils of different abilities regularly fill in the same worksheet. While this supports their knowledge to a degree, it does not always deepen their understanding, particularly for more able pupils. When pupils have the opportunity to record their feelings and to reflect on their own experience, they can think for themselves and respond with some individuality. For example, a child's interpretation of peace is, 'I would go to my bedroom because no one is allowed in there and it is quiet.'
131. The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs make better progress now than they did at the time of the last inspection because classroom assistants support them well. However, a weakness in Years 3 and 4, is that pupils' work is not presented well and marking does not support their learning enough. This does not send messages of value and care about a subject that underpins values that contribute to pupils' lives.

132. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The stories pupils encounter contribute well and assure good opportunities for them to consider moral dilemmas and different ideas and beliefs. Although teaching plans identify opportunities to extend and enrich pupils' experiences, the overuse of worksheets limits the impact of these activities. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' moral, spiritual and cultural development. This is evident in collective worship where pupils reflect on and respect the prayers they offer.