

INSPECTION REPORT

CROSS GATES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 107934

Head teacher: Mrs R Hamer

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Murphy
16173

Dates of inspection: 30 September – 3rd October 2002

Inspection number: 250963
Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Poole Crescent Leeds
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Allison
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

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16173	Mrs L Murphy	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Art and design Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19741	Mr T Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30823	Mrs B Clark	Team inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Design and technology Religious education	
11510	Mr K Oglesby	Team inspector	Science Geography History Information and communication technology Educational inclusion	
31012	Mrs A Welch	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cross Gates Primary School is a large primary school on the outskirts of Leeds. It serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. There are 253 pupils on roll. Some year groups and classes have a marked gender imbalance. The majority of pupils are of white UK heritage and a very small proportion is of Chinese heritage. A very small percentage of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is above average nationally. The school has identified 80 pupils as having special educational needs ranging from learning to emotional needs. Of these, eight pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. This number is above average nationally. Pupils' attainment on starting school is well below that typically expected and in speaking it is low.

Since the last inspection the school has worked for a significant period of time without a substantive headteacher or deputy headteacher and has been led by a series of temporary postholders. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2002 and is working with an acting deputy headteacher. The school has also undergone extensive refurbishment during the academic year 2001-2002. Cross Gates Primary School was successfully re-assessed as an Investor in People in May 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is well led and soundly managed and gives an acceptable level of education to its pupils. Standards are well below average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science by the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching and the value for money provided by the school is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- The education provided for the children in the nursery and reception classes works well and results in children's good achievement.
- Pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 are taught well and learn at a good rate.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and results in pupils' good behaviour and very good relationships.
- The headteacher leads the school well.
- The care and welfare of the pupils including provision for those who have special educational needs are good.
- Standards in physical education are above those typically expected of pupils ages by Year 6.

What could be improved

- *Standards in speaking by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in mathematics in Year 3 to Year 6.
- *Standards in information and communication technology by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- *The rate of pupils' attendance.

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

*These aspects for improvement have already been identified by the school

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection in June 1998. In the period between inspections when there was no substantive headteacher in post, the school required help from the local education authority. The school used the support well, has overcome its difficulties and made improvements as directed in the last inspection in: raising standards in mathematics from well below average in the 1998 national tests to below average; clarifying the roles and responsibilities of senior managers; drawing up and implementing a school development plan; the quality of pupils' individual educational plans; and the use of assessment. In addition improvements have been made in the level of care and welfare the school provides and its work with parents. Standards have also been raised in science from below average to average across the school; in art from below average to broadly typical for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2; and in physical education from average to above average by the end of Year 6. Standards have fallen in information and communication technology by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and in religious education by the end of Year 2. Standards have broadly remained in the same band as they were in the national tests in 1998 in English.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E*	E	D	
science	C	D	D	C	

Trends in results over time have been broadly in line with the national trend though running at a lower point overall. The table above shows how the results compared with results nationally and with those from schools in similar settings. In 2002 the test results fell slightly, other than in mathematics, and as a result the school did not meet its targets.

Inspection findings are that by the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards well below those typically expected of 11-year-olds in English, and below the expected level in mathematics. They attain the expected level in science. This shows good improvement in two subjects but no change in English from 2001. The school has set challenging targets for 2003 and is on course to meet them.

Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in 2001 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with national figures though they compared very favourably with those of pupils in similar schools being well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The standards attained in 2002 were slightly lower in reading and mathematics and much lower in writing. Inspection judgement is that standards by the end of Year 2 are below the standards typically expected in reading and writing but broadly in line with expectations in mathematics.

Standards are well below average in information and communication technology by the end of Year 6 and below average by the end of Year 2. Standards in religious education are below that expected by the end of Year 2.

From a well below average level when they start school children in the reception class achieve well though they are unlikely to attain the goals set nationally for children of their age. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. Pupils' achievement is good overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils are keen to learn and most take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils are self-disciplined, courteous and polite because the school rules are clear and the school is orderly and calm.
Personal development and relationships	Good: pupils understand the impact of their actions on others. Very good relationships lead to constructive cooperation among the pupils.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory: the rate of attendance is below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Strengths are in the teaching of children in the nursery to Year 2 and in Year 6.

The basic skills of English and mathematics including literacy and numeracy are taught soundly. In Year 1 and Year 2 they are taught well. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are also taught well in science, art and design, geography, history and design and technology. As a result they make good gains in knowledge and understanding in these subjects. Teaching in physical education and information and communication technology is good across the school and pupils learn at a good rate.

The school meets the needs of all its pupils appropriately. Pupils who have special educational needs learn at a good rate because of the extra help they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

Overall strengths lie in teachers' good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teachers form strong relationships with their pupils and manage their classes well. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and this means that pupils get a good balance of direct teaching and independent work. Relative weaknesses in teaching are in the precise match of work to pupils' attainment including the challenge for higher attainers. The methods used are on occasion limited and in particular there are too few opportunities provided for pupils to speak in any depth.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: it is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The range of activities for the reception and nursery children is good. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. The school effectively offers equal opportunity to its pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: individual educational plans are carefully set for the pupils that need them. Teachers and their assistants give a good level of extra help to pupils who have special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory: pupils benefit from specialist help and from the curriculum which provides soundly for their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: the school provides clear guidelines to help pupils become mature citizens. Provision for their spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils' social development is very good resulting in very successful relationships.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision is good: the school takes good care of its pupils. Procedures are effective and include good procedures for child protection.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good: the constructive partnership with parent's means that they support the school well and give the help that they can to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: the headteacher provides strong, professional leadership. Sound management supports the leadership appropriately. Staff with management responsibilities have clear roles and work well as a team. All have a clear vision for raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body does this well; the governors are supportive and work through an effective committee structure. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory: the school knows its strengths and areas for development and is beginning to take appropriate action.
The strategic use of resources	Good: funds are used wisely and carefully to best provide for all pupils. Governors appropriately take on the views of the school community; they investigate the best way forward and check how the standards reached compare with those in other schools. The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good. The accommodation for the nursery and reception pupils is very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school helps children to become more mature and responsible.• Children's behaviour in the school is good.• The school is approachable if parents have problems or concern.• The school expects children to work hard and do their best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons.• The amount of homework.• Information about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team endorses the parents' positive views. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good as is the quality of information about pupils' progress. The amount of homework is satisfactory for younger pupils and good for older pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes because the teaching and the curriculum are good. The majority of children are on course to attain levels below those typical for their ages at the end of the reception year in all aspects of their development other than in speaking. Their skills at speaking are low when they start school and though they learn at a good pace are well below the expected levels at the beginning of Year 1. A shortcoming in the otherwise good curriculum for children in the reception class is that when direct teaching takes place to a large group, adults are inefficiently deployed. As a result of working in a large, rather than small group, pupils have too little opportunity to contribute and to extend their speaking.

2 The school has managed to raise standards by the end of Year 6 in mathematics and science despite the setbacks brought about by changes in the leadership of the school and the very disruptive year caused by the extensive building works. Nonetheless, much reliance is placed on the good and often very good quality of teaching in Year 6, together with extra lessons to boost pupils' attainment prior to taking the national tests. With help from the local education authority the school has improved the quality of teaching in Year 1 and Year 2, but insufficient focus has been given to improving the teaching in Year 3 to Year 5. Whereas at the time of the last inspection it was good it is now satisfactory overall which means that day-to-day, pupils make sound progress and it is not until they are in Year 6 that pupils' achievement is boosted and they make good progress. Other than in English, in Year 3 to Year 5 the work for the higher attainers is insufficiently challenging. The school set challenging targets in 2002 but did not meet them, however, the present Year 6 are on course to meet even more challenging targets in 2003.

3 Standards in English by the end of Year 6 are well below average as was the case in the national tests taken in the year of the last inspection. Pupils' skills at speaking hold them back and are the underlying cause of the well below average standards in English overall. There are inconsistencies in the quality of the pupils' handwriting, presentation and their spelling. However, recent achievement is good and pupils are benefiting from the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and tasks that are well-planned to build on pupils' last piece of work and help pupils meet the targets set for them. Resources are of good quality and engage pupils' interest. This is particularly the case of the interest of boys in reading where thoughtfully chosen books have already begun to address their underachievement. Indeed, in the national tests in 2001 the tables were turned and boys did better than the girls because the school not only identified the cause of the difference but took prompt action to address it. The school continues to monitor standards by gender and take appropriate action. Pupils' library skills are underdeveloped because they have too little opportunity for independent study and for using the library.

4 By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve well in mathematics and reach average standards. The use of targets for the pupils to work towards is a factor in the rising standards. In addition, teachers make good use of resources to help pupils learn. By Year 6 pupils' achievement is sound rather than good because tasks are insufficiently well matched to pupils' levels of attainment, pupils are not prepared to fully participate in answering questions – in part because too little attention is given to the use of mental strategies often leaving pupils unsure and slow in their calculations.

5 An influential subject leader in science makes sure that there is a focus on investigative work and this pays dividends. For example, in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002, over a third of the

group taking the test in this school attained a high level. This represented a good increase on 2001. Pupils enjoy the challenges presented to them, generally work hard and achieve well throughout the school. Assessment is used well and pupils' attainment is followed closely. Nonetheless the tasks provided for pupils capable of high standards are insufficiently well matched to their needs.

6 Since the last inspection standards in information and communication technology have fallen. A key factor in this has been that during the extended refurbishment of the school pupils were on the whole without access to computers and the programmes of study for the subject were not taught. Importantly the pupils are now making good progress through the regular use of a suite of computers. The content of the curriculum has been arranged so that it addresses the gaps in pupils' knowledge and computer skills and the quality of teaching is good. Nonetheless much work remains to be done to raise standards, for example, the use of computers across a range of subjects and extra resources in the aspects of controlling and modelling.

7 The school has allocated a greater proportion of time to physical education than found in most primary schools nationally. The leadership of the subject is good and so is the teaching in Year 3 to Year 6. The outcome is that by the end of Year 6 standards are at a level typical of pupils two years older. In swimming too, pupils achieve well, often from being non-swimmers in Year 4 with a significant number of pupils reaching a very proficient standard by the end of Year 6. On the other hand, the time allocated to religious education in Year 1 and Year 2 is low and as a result standards are below the expected level.

8 Pupils who have special educational needs represent almost a third of the school's population. They achieve well, in part because the targets set in their individual educational plans are clear and measurable. The targets provide a reasonable level of challenge and a great sense of success when one step is achieved and pupils are ready to move on to the next step. The provision is well led with appropriate administrative support so that the co-ordinator can deal with the practicalities of the provision, which includes the effective deployment of support staff to give extra help where it is needed. Pupils learning English as an additional language attain appropriate standards and make satisfactory progress in line with other pupils in Year 3 to Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Pupils enjoy school and, overall, have positive attitudes to learning. This is a similar picture to that reported at the last inspection. Pupils listen well but the level of response to questions, or willingness to join in class discussions, is often quite low, with many pupils preferring to sit passively unless actively prompted by their teachers. This was the case, for example, in a daily lesson in mathematics in Year 5 where pupils were reluctant to answer questions at the beginning of the whole class lesson which meant that opportunities were lost for fast mental arithmetical work. They do, however, apply themselves well when given tasks to do and usually work with good levels of concentration.

10 The pupils' behaviour is good both in and out of class. Pupils understand the system of discipline operating in the school, and usually react well to it. This is because it is dispensed fairly and consistently and because there are always approachable adults at hand to talk to the pupils. For example, each playtime a teacher is available to talk through any problems that might arise. Pupils say that they appreciate the opportunity to discuss issues straightaway and get them sorted out so they can have a fresh start for the rest of the day. Those pupils with challenging behaviour are well managed so are able to take their full part in lessons and other activities. Bullying is not a problem and no incidents were observed or reported during the inspection. The rate of exclusion continues to be very low. Pupils care for their school and take great pride in their new classrooms. This is because the staff have made

sure that the pupils understood about the refurbishment and because staff use display very well to promote the pupils' work.

11 Pupils' personal development is good. They show respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs and understand the impact of their actions upon others. For example, in lessons in physical education pupils listen attentively to their teachers and work quietly because they know that safety is important. As a result they learn a lot in each lesson. Children in the nursery and reception classes have settled well into school life and are already developing good work habits. For example, children in the reception class choose activities independently within a limited range and they complete tasks before moving onto other activities. This is because they are taught the importance of finishing one task before starting another and the importance of leaving activities tidy ready for the next person. Pupils willingly take on responsibility to carry out minor jobs around school and carry out the duties well. Year 6 pupils also help in the nursery and at playtime. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to show originality or initiative in lessons. All too often they are told exactly what to do, and as a consequence, their creativity and the development of independent learning are restricted. Relationships are very good and this makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. Pupils are polite, friendly and work well together. Year 6 pupils know how to answer the school telephone and deal quite maturely with queries that arise because at lunch time they take turns to be responsible for this aspect and have been well trained.

12 Pupils learning English as an additional language have good attitudes to learning, and are involved in all aspects of school life. Pupils with special educational needs want to do well and are keen to take part in all activities. Almost all of these pupils attend regularly and undertake a full share of classroom and school responsibilities. Other pupils show a caring attitude towards them and ensure that they are never without a partner, for example, in physical education. Pupils with identified behavioural problems almost always behave responsibly in the classroom and respond well to the extra adult help the school provides. Staff spend much time in discussion with pupils which helps pupils understand the underlying principles that distinguish right from wrong and this helps pupils to mature, an aspect recognised by parents.

13 The rate of attendance is unsatisfactory and is below the national rate. It is at a level which is broadly similar to that reported at the last inspection. Around one quarter of all pupils in the school have poor rates of attendance (below 90%), with the largest proportion of these being in Year 3 to Year 6. Unauthorised absence, however, is much lower than before as a result of active measures implemented by the school, but still remains high when compared with national figures. The amount of lateness has also declined significantly since the last inspection and is now not a problem. Pupils mostly arrive on time and sessions start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14 Parents agree that the quality of teaching is good. This is certainly the case for the foundation stage through to Year 2 and also in Year 6 and indicates good improvement since the last inspection in Year 1 and Year 2. Common strengths in the good teaching are the knowledge that teachers have of the subjects they teach. This reflects the school's status as an Investor in People. For example, staff development on how to teach physical education means that good attention is paid to health and safety, that lessons are paced and well planned and allow pupils to make good gains in their physical development. Pupils are managed well, routines are set and pupils know what is expected of them. As a result no time is lost and the teaching can make sure that the lesson objectives are met. In the subjects, strengths are in the foundation stage and in physical education and information and communication technology across the school. In Year 1 and Year 2 English, mathematics, science, art

and design, geography, history and design and technology are all taught well and as a result pupils' learn at a good pace in these subjects.

15 Pupils who have special educational needs are helped in class when classroom assistants work with small groups of pupils. They make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and without them, pupils' acquisition of skills, the effort they make and their pace of working would not be as good as it is. Teachers provide helpful additional support for pupils learning English as an additional language; for example, in whole class discussions, placing a teaching assistant alongside the pupil to check their understanding of the work.

16 A mark of the good teaching in the nursery and reception classes is the way in which pupils are encouraged to be independent. The classes are organised well to facilitate an ease of access to the resources so that children can choose, use and return games and equipment without adult assistance. Expectations are made clear and rules carefully followed so that adults are able to concentrate on working with particular groups and individuals to provide a good level of direct teaching. This takes place because much thought and planning has gone into setting up the refurbished accommodation. Shortcomings are in connection with the teaching methods used at initial and concluding plenaries. At these times the whole class comes together led by one adult. Other adults are not deployed well and the opportunities to encourage speaking and listening in small group settings are lost.

17 In Year 3 to Year 5 teaching methods are insufficiently varied to make sure that pupils are alert and apply their best effort, especially in times when the whole class are seated together and expected to speak out and contribute their views and answers. This results in pupils appearing passive and it is not until they start their practical tasks that they really blossom. For example, in an English lesson in Year 4 pupils were slow in finding verbs in a text and contributing their thoughts. Pupils are often insufficiently drawn into discussion because the questioning is not at the right level and teachers accept initial responses from pupils without insisting on extended answers and using methods to encourage a range of views.

18 Resources for teaching and learning are used well across the school. For example, the books that are chosen really capture pupils' imagination as was the case in a group reading lesson in Year 5 and Year 6 where pupils quickly shared their response in their choice of books as one pupils pointed out "*I look for magic in a story.*" Because teachers listen to what pupils have to say the pupils are not reticent in sharing their innermost thoughts and view. This accelerates their learning well and is founded on the very good relationships within the school and with each other.

19 The policy for teaching and learning pays good attention to including all pupils and is soundly implemented in practice. General shortcomings in the teaching, though not in English, are linked with the way in which tasks are matched to pupils' level of attainment. This is particularly evident in mathematics in Year 3 to Year 6 where pupils are set identical work across a class. When this is the case, the work is often either insufficiently challenging for the higher attainers or too difficult for the lower attainers. For example, in a daily mathematics lesson for Year 5 higher attainers were not set work that was any more challenging than the rest of the class. The teaching focused on the class as a whole, so that there was no time allocated to teaching a particular group. As a result the pupils made sound progress but those capable of faster progress and lower attaining pupils were not well catered for.

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

20 The curriculum is broad and balanced with good emphasis placed on English, mathematics and science. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall, and the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. There is a good allocation of time to the majority of subjects and the total time spent in lessons is above the minimum recommended. An increased allocation to physical education has proved successful in raising standards in Years 3 to 6 to above those typically expected. Conversely too little time allocated to religious education for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 has depressed standards. The provision of extra classes to boost standards for Year 6 pupils is a good strategy to help raise overall standards, consolidate pupils' skills and improve their confidence. However, it is not strongly supported by the teaching and learning in Year 3 to Year 5 where the rate of learning though satisfactory does not move pupils on quickly to accelerate standards. All the pupils who attended the extra classes in 2002 reached the expected level in English.

21 Strategies for teaching reading, writing and numeracy are satisfactory overall. However, there is a mismatch of work to pupils' needs in mathematics, which disadvantages the lower-attaining pupils in particular. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in all subjects. It is when practical activities are planned that speaking and listening are best developed, for example in geography and design and technology practical work is used well to promote pupils' language development. As a result of extensive building work, which delayed the use of the computer suite, information and communication technology is in the early stages of development although a start has been made in using it in other subjects.

22 Medium-term planning is based on national guidelines for the majority of subjects. Care has been taken to ensure that pupils in mixed-aged classes neither repeat work nor have gaps in their learning. This is especially so in English where the subject leader acted upon the advice of the local education authority when planning the curriculum. Planning is generally good for English and satisfactory for other subjects. Teachers use medium-term plans as lesson plans in science, information and communication technology and the foundation subjects but are not consistent in refining them sufficiently to meet the needs of all pupils in the class, with the result that, at times, pupils are given the same activity regardless of their level of attainment. Also, teachers plan few opportunities for pupils' independent study. Religious education is taught according to the locally Agreed Syllabus.

23 Additional curricular time has been allocated to personal, social, health and citizenship education as the school takes on board the Health for Life initiative, set up by the local education authority. As well as addressing topics such as smoking, drugs and alcohol abuse, the programme focuses on aspects of personal development such as responsibility and self-discipline. A good start has been made to its implementation, as for example, when pupils in Year 6 considered the health risks connected with smoking. The school makes effective use of specialist expertise to teach sex education and awareness of drug abuse over and above that planned in the Health for Life programme.

24 Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from the close attention the school pays to equal opportunities and the inclusion of all pupils. The quality of individual educational plans has improved since the last inspection. They set appropriate and achievable targets that give direction to teacher's planning. This ensures that the work provided builds well on pupils' existing achievements. Pupils learning English as an additional language have access to all areas of the curriculum. Additional support, effectively used, ensures that the pupils understand the tasks and how to complete them.

25 The school provides a more extensive range of extra-curricular activities than at the time of the last inspection and provision is now good. These include football, netball, a French language club, infant and junior sports club, an infant Flying Start club, a book club and breakfast club. These clubs, which improve pupils' education and their quality of life, are well attended and promote the school aim to work together with the local community.

26 The community contributes soundly to pupils' learning. The school is on good terms with a local company that offers support, for instance, by providing pupils with bags for their books. The school has a good range of visitors including police officers, charity workers, members of the local clergy, musicians and representatives of charities. The school arranges a good number of visits during the year, which are linked very carefully into the curriculum and have a positive effect on pupils' learning and their social and cultural development. The school has a good working relationship with the family of local primary schools and with the two secondary schools to which most pupils transfer. Participation in a transition project, organised by the Multi-Agency Support Team, provides pupils with realistic expectations of the next stage of their education.

27 The school is an inclusive community where everyone is valued. Care, respect, justice and co-operation are values, which underpin the curriculum and lie at the heart of the good provision for pupils' personal development. Provision for social development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development remains good.

28 Strong aspects of the provision for pupils' spiritual development lie in the way the adults celebrate the pupils' achievements. In assemblies, the headteacher takes the lead in acknowledging the efforts and successes of pupils. The issuing of certificates and public praise does much to raise pupils' self esteem. One pupil in Year 6 felt nervous but pleased to receive his certificate and commented "*it encourages you to try harder*". In collective worship time is given for pupils to reflect on aspects important to them and also on common values. In some lessons, pupils are helped to reflect on their own learning, but with the exception of physical education, this is not consistent.

29 All staff promote a strong moral code effectively in all aspects of school life. Time is taken to discuss with pupils what is right and wrong and the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are encouraged, and expected, to do the right thing such as saying sorry when there are upsets and problems. They are involved in considering classroom rules and the systems for rewards and sanctions and this increases their motivation to behave well and to respect others. Moral issues, including bullying and racism, are discussed during assemblies and pupils come to a better understanding of the importance of being considerate of the views and beliefs of others.

30 Pupils' social development is promoted very well and is one of the things that most pleases parents. The caring relationships in the school contribute strongly to pupils' good attitudes towards helping others and self-discipline. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities, such as giving out materials in lessons, taking registers to the office and tidying up at the end of lessons. Pupils in Year 6 have responsibilities including acting as lunchtime receptionists or tour guides for visitors to the school and monitoring the playground equipment. Members of the 'playground committee' take on their responsibilities with pride. Clubs before and after school encourage pupils to work and play together. Pupils have opportunities to practise their social skills as well as their sporting skills when they take part in football and athletic competitions against other schools. The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs supports all pupils' social development and promotes very positive attitudes. The school also develops the pupils' understanding of citizenship through fund raising for charities and links with the community such as distributing the harvest gifts and singing at the local hospital.

31 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to encounter and understand the traditions and values from different cultures in history, geography and music. Pupils develop their understanding of the diversity of other cultures when they study religions other than Christianity, such as Sikhism and Islam, in religious education. Visits are made to local places of educational interest, such as Thwaite Mills and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Theatre groups and visiting musicians all make a valuable contribution to cultural development.

Opportunities are missed, however, for pupils to look at the work of well-known artists and come to a better understanding of how art can reflect the culture and heritage of the artist.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32 The school continues to place a high priority on ensuring the general welfare of its pupils and as a result looks after them well. Fitting measures for health and safety are implemented closely. Pupils are supervised carefully and the daily working practices adopted by all staff are good. Child protection arrangements are good, and include clear liaison with outside agencies. The coordinators are fully trained to carry out their role. In addition, as part of its efforts to raise pupils' overall well-being, the school has recently joined the Healthy Schools Programme, and a breakfast club now operates each day before school. This is well run, very popular, and is also helping to develop pupils' social skills as well as getting them to school on time.

33 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are effective. Teachers know their pupils well, get on very well with them and continue to work hard to build confidence and levels of self-esteem. For instance, a Learning Mentor has been appointed and is now making a valuable contribution to school life by providing well-focused help for pupils with identified problems, particularly those with behavioural difficulties. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to take on responsibilities outside of the classroom for example; a playground committee has been formed to provide pupils with a chance to help suggest ways of improving outdoor play facilities. A shortcoming is in the limited opportunities for pupils to take initiative in lessons. Their work is often over-directed and as a result their resourcefulness and inventiveness are restricted. Overall, all staff promote high standards of behaviour successfully, and as a result, the school has a very calm and orderly atmosphere. Praise and rewards are used well to encourage effort and good behaviour, and pupils' efforts are recognised each week at a weekly celebration assembly.

34 Pupils' attendance is monitored thoroughly, and the school is now starting to implement a range of measures in order to improve the present unsatisfactory level. For example, various reward schemes have been introduced but, as yet, have not been running long enough to make any real impact. There are no targets set for individuals though the school has exceeded three-fold the target set by the local education authority to improve pupils' attendance but has still some way to go to bring the levels up to those typically found nationally. The school is also doing its best to reduce unauthorised absence. It contacts parents on the first day of absence of pupils who are absent without reason. This is having some success, as unauthorised absence is less than reported at the last inspection, but still remains relatively high. External agencies provide appropriate support.

35 In English, mathematics and science, the school has good procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do. These systems have improved considerably since the last inspection. In these subjects teachers use national and other standardised tests to check and record pupils' progress. The information is used to set realistic targets for individual pupils and to predict how well pupils will achieve in the next year. Teachers also use the results of tests, and their own assessments, to identify whether pupils need extra help and if they are learning at a fast enough rate. Teachers make good use of this information in lessons when they check pupils' understanding or when they deploy an adult to help individuals or groups. They use it less well to provide opportunities for higher attaining pupils to show what they can do. The school makes a thorough analysis of the results of national tests and this information is used well by teachers to identify areas, which need improving. In the nursery and reception classes' assessment is used well to place pupils into teaching groups.

36 The procedures for assessment in other subjects are satisfactory. The system is used soundly to keep a record of how well each pupil is doing and this generally works well. There are some minor

inconsistencies between subjects because of recent changes in the curriculum. Some subject leaders, for example of science and information and communication technology, have introduced useful additional systems, which record pupils' skills in more detail. Teachers use these records to check whether the level of difficulty in lessons, or their teaching methods, needs to be changed. These records are also used to give information to parents in the annual report and to the next teacher, so that no time is wasted in September.

37 A marking policy of good quality underpins the marking of pupils' work. The marking is sometimes good, with comments to make pupils feel that their efforts are valued and show them what they have to do to improve. However, it is less well followed at other times and not enough is done to encourage further effort or tell pupils how well they are doing. The assessment coordinator scrutinises pupils' books regularly and makes suggestions for improvement.

38 At the last inspection a key issue was to use assessment to ensure that individual pupils work towards attaining the highest possible levels. The school has made sound progress on this by gathering accurate information and using it well to calculate the rate of progress for each pupil year on year. However, a weakness remains in some lessons and some subjects, including mathematics. In these, most pupils are working at the same level of difficulty and so for some learning is not fast enough.

39 An improvement since the last inspection is in the way that targets on individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed and revised regularly. Assessment information is used well in this. Support staff provide sensitive guidance for pupils with emotional and behavioural problems and this helps them to work with the minimal disturbance. The school ensures that pupils with statements of special needs receive their entitlement from a learning assistant. Using annual assessments, completed by the Speech and Language Service, the school ensures that pupils learning English as an additional language receive appropriate provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40 The response to the questionnaire for parents was relatively low, and only a few parents attended the parents' meeting before the inspection. Nevertheless, the views expressed indicate good support for the school, and are far more positive than at the time of the last inspection. Parents identified strengths in the provision the school makes for their children's personal and social development and the resulting good behaviour. Parents were confident to discuss matters with the school and were pleased that the school expects children to work hard and do their best. Some slight concern was raised on the extra-curricular provision and the amount of homework that was provided though these are judged good.

41 The school continues to work hard to build links with its parents and has built a good partnership with them. Friendly and helpful contacts are made right from the start of children's time in the nursery and a high quality booklet is available for parents explaining the routines in the early years. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, with annual reports providing a clear picture of their achievements as well as setting suitable targets to help them do better. Newsletters and regular updates about class work, also helps to keep them fully informed about life in school. Documentation for parents is well written though the governors' annual report has some omissions. In particular, it lacks information about the progress being made towards addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report. There are good procedures to inform parents of pupils who have special educational needs but parents do not always respond to them. The school is proactive in enabling parents of pupils with English as an additional language to be involved in their children's learning.

42 The school puts on a variety of courses and information evenings for its parents and does what it can to encourage them to help with their children's learning at home, particularly with reading. The Friends of Cross Gate is an active association, which provides generous support for the school. Currently, for example, it is raising money to buy new library books. Parents give good support to activities such as school plays and music events, and a few regularly help out in class.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43 The school has a strong sense of purpose; the head teacher has a clear vision of the school's educational direction and provides good leadership. The roles and responsibilities of key staff are clear and the acting deputy headteacher provides good support. Effective channels of communication provide cohesiveness among staff, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. Despite the many changes of key staff and the extensive building programme, the headteacher has upheld high morale among staff. This has in part been brought about by regular staff meetings where consensus enables all staff to share in the decision making process.

44 The school's aims are reflected well in its work. Leadership effectively promotes pupils' attitudes, values and self-respect. Systems for ensuring good behaviour are very successful. However, while pupils' standards of attainment are improving, the headteacher and senior managers recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.

45 The school is developing self-evaluation and monitoring the quality of teaching satisfactorily. Information is beginning to be evaluated more sharply to increase the pace of pupils' learning. The headteacher has worked extremely hard to produce a wide-ranging school development plan, which soundly addresses the many issues facing the school. Though it is prioritised, it contains a great many items, which reduces its usefulness as a management tool. Action plans, written to guide developments in each subject, augment the main plan by showing the details of the tasks to be undertaken. The format and content of these is inconsistent in quality and usefulness. The precise responsibilities for tasks and monitoring are insufficiently well separated. When staff are given dual responsibilities in these aspects it is difficult to ensure objectivity in the process. Success criteria are set to measure improvement but these are insufficiently quantifiable in terms of standards.

46 Subject leaders manage their areas of the curriculum soundly overall. They check planning to ensure that agreed teaching and learning policies are being implemented. Co-ordinators for English, science and physical education have a good understanding of standards, strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Other co-ordinators have yet to develop a robust overview of the quality of provision in their subjects.

47 Staff know the pupils and their needs well. The school's commitment to ensuring equal access to the curriculum and all that the school offers is evident throughout. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the good practice seen then. It has improved provision for equal access for pupils who have special educational needs by increasing the number of teaching assistants and making better use of individual educational plans. Weaknesses remain in that teachers do not always achieve a precise match of work to pupils' level of attainment and there is insufficient chance in some lessons for pupils to take responsibility for their learning, or to practise any special skills and aptitudes. Nevertheless an increasing number of pupils are reaching higher levels in the national tests.

48 The management of special educational needs is good and has been instrumental in improving the school's provision during the past year. All duties are carried out conscientiously and close contact is maintained with staff and outside agencies. Every attempt is made by the co-ordinator to maintain close contact with parents. The school uses funding wisely for these pupils and it contributes

effectively to the progress made by those who need help with their learning or personal development. There is no policy outlining the school's provision for pupils with English as an additional language. However, the headteacher is proactive in ensuring extra help for pupils, either through the use of the school's own resources, or the involvement of the Speech and Language Service.

49 The suitably qualified staff provide a good balance of experience and expertise. The school is an Investor in People and sets much stake by training. This is reflected in the good knowledge teachers have of the subjects they teach. They are ably supported by a good number of classroom assistants, who carry out their work well and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school. Induction arrangements for new staff are good and work well. The national systems for the management of the performance of the headteacher and teaching staff are implemented soundly. The administrative support ensures that the school runs smoothly and in this makes appropriate use of computerised systems.

50 The school has recently undergone major refurbishment though there remain problems with dampness, lifting floors and the quality of paintwork on many of the walls, which detract from the quality of the accommodation. The quality of display is very good and helps pupils to take a pride in their achievements and those of others. Pupils often stop and discuss their pictures and photographs and take great pleasure in explaining them to adults. Classrooms are conducive to learning with many information charts and interactive displays to promote pupils' learning. For example, one teacher described the classroom as an *'open book where children come to learn'*. Accommodation for the nursery and reception children is very good with an outside area that strongly promotes pupils' knowledge and understanding of the natural world and their physical and social development. The school has an extensive playing field and a large hard surfaced playing area, which is used well for lessons in physical education and this contributes to pupils' achievement. Outdoor play facilities are limited, but a playground committee has been set up to investigate ways of improving the provision.

51 Resources for teaching and learning are good for teaching English in the classroom but as a result of many outdated books being recently discarded, the number of books in the library is barely adequate for a school of this size. Resources are good for religious education, physical education, art and for the pupils in the nursery and reception classes. Resources for information and communication technology have improved with the establishment of a suite of computers. However, there is a lack of programs to use in other subjects and insufficient resources to teach the controlling and modelling aspects of the subject.

52 Financial management is good. The governing body are fulfilling their role well through a series of committees and statutory duties are met other than in the information to parents. Governors have an overview of their strategic role and are clear about their duties. The school is beginning to work with a much lower level of intervention from the local education authority and is very well placed to improve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53 The headteacher, other staff, governors and the local education authority should:

- (1) Raise standards in speaking across the school by:
 - developing and implementing a policy for speaking and listening; and
 - developing and implementing a scheme of work for speaking and listening.[paragraph 67]
- (2) Raise standards in mathematics in Year 3 to Year 6 by:
 - matching work more accurately to pupils' level of attainment;
 - involving pupils fully in question and answer sessions; and
 - improving the use of mental strategies.[paragraphs 80, 81 and 83]
- (3) Raise standards in information and communication technology across the school by
 - providing training for staff;
 - using information and communication technology in other subjects;
 - improving resources; and
 - regularly checking on pupils' progress.[paragraphs 109 - 112]
- (4) Improve the rate of pupils' attendance by:
 - working closely with parents and external agencies to raise the rate of attendance; and
 - setting challenging and measurable targets including those to be achieved by individuals.[paragraphs 13 and 34]

Other weaknesses:

- standards in religious education by the end of Year 2; and
 - the development of pupils' independence in learning.
- [paragraphs 123, 124, 127, 69, 11]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

57

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	23	27	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	40	48	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	227
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		108

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	75

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.7

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	20	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	14
	Girls	15	17	16
	Total	28	32	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (62)	89 (67)	83 (77)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	13
	Girls	16	18	14
	Total	30	31	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (67)	86 (82)	75 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	20	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	20
	Girls	15	11	16
	Total	23	20	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (46)	49 (44)	88 (79)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72))	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	13
	Girls	14	*	16
	Total	20	14	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49 (31)	34 (44)	71 (54)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.
** Numbers omitted where the number of boys and girls is below 10.*

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	226	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	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: Y R – Y1

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.2
Average class size	20.6

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	15.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	442

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	730211
Total expenditure	734991
Expenditure per pupil	2722
Balance brought forward from previous year	23520
Balance carried forward to next year	18740

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1..9
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	198
Number of questionnaires returned	52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	38	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	35	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	48	0	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	38	13	2	2
The teaching is good.	63	33	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	38	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	19	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	21	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	46	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	31	0	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	48	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	23	12	2	10

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

Introduction

54 Children start in the nursery after their third birthday and attend part time until they transfer to the reception class in the year in which they are five. After a gradual induction they attend full-time. Children's levels of attainment when they start in the nursery are well below those typically expected for their age and in speaking and listening standards are low. Indeed a significant number of pupils have very weak speaking skills often barely speaking a word.

55 The children gain ground at a good rate and respond well to the sensitive though firm teaching in the nursery and reception classes. They achieve well by the end of their time in the reception class and are on course to attain levels which are, nevertheless, below those that are typical of five year olds in each of their areas of learning. Overall, this is a similar picture to that at the last inspection.

56 The nursery and reception classes are well led and managed. The children get off to a good start and are well prepared for their work in Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

57 Children's personal and social development is nurtured well. Nursery children are reticent and need much encouragement to participate in activities, many not having worked in groups other than their families prior to starting the nursery. Routines are quickly established so that pupils know what is expected of them. Reception children respond willingly and give of their best. The good teaching promotes pupils' independence well and because children are given a manageable choice of tasks and the opportunity to make simple decisions their sense of responsibility increases. Relationships are good and teachers and assistants are good role models for children to follow. As a result children learn to be polite, to care for others and to follow simple instructions. At the beginning of a lesson in physical development children were given the opportunity to quietly reflect about their work. Higher and middle attainers thoughtfully contributed their feelings, being confident in the adults and that they would be listened to. By the end of their reception year pupils still need reminders to take turns when speaking and a significant proportion need extra help to enable them to concentrate for a reasonable length of time.

Communication, language and literacy

58 Teaching of good quality means that the very youngest pupils learn to use spoken language to explain their immediate needs and to begin to offer contributions to simple discussions. Resources are used well to engage the children's interest, for example, well-chosen topical stories and pictures that provide a base for very early reading. Pupils enjoy using the resources, are proud of their success and achieve well. Higher attaining reception class pupils ask for help confidently and converse with their workmates about their activities. Middle attainers need encouragement from adults, both in having the confidence to speak out and in widening their narrow vocabulary. Insufficient opportunities are provided for formal speaking in small groups. At whole class discussion times one teacher is responsible for teaching the whole class, other adults are under-deployed. Best use is not made of the

opportunity to create a number of adult led groups to provide more opportunities for children to speak to an audience. At times, staff accept one word answers without modelling a more appropriate reply.

59 Conversely in reading lessons when children work in small groups with an adult this works well. Work can be matched to the needs of the group and lots of time is given in particular to listening to sounds to help pupils discriminate letter sounds. Higher attainers can read very simple repetitive phrases and enjoy the humour in stories. Middle attainers can recognise the letter with which their name begins and, with prompts, re-tell very briefly the pertinent points of well-known stories. Below average attainers often only utter single words about a short sequence of pictures and need much practice to be able to 'tell' the story. The teaching of reading is well organised and parents are brought on board to help their children read at home. In the classroom a good supply of attractive books with good story and picture lines and the use of games and puppets to introduce the characters in the reading scheme, provide the children with good opportunities to develop a love of books and reading. These factors ensure that children's achievement in reading is good. On occasion, best use is not made of the accommodation to make sure that reading takes place in a quiet area.

60 The teaching of writing helps children to write for a range of purposes such as shopping lists and letters. Work areas are set up well to support this with a range of pens, pencils, paper and white boards. Children need much help to grip pencils correctly and to make marks on paper. They particularly enjoy tracing over letters of the alphabet. Middle and lower attainers need adult encouragement to choose to write and a significant number are at an early stage in writing. Provision in the children's creative learning helps them to develop the manipulative control that they will need to write successfully. Pupils achieve well from the low starting point when they start in the nursery.

Mathematical development

61 Children enjoy mathematical tasks because their practical activities take an investigative approach. Children make good progress from when they start in the nursery. For example, nursery children played with large wooden bricks learning how the shapes would fit together. They played alongside each other or just watched. The children used very little spoken language but the teacher provided a commentary and suggestions to promote both their spoken language and their concepts of shape. Pupils achieve well because the practical work is continued in the reception class as when children were finding out about solid shapes. They rolled and slid a range of cylinders to find out about their properties. Other children hunted for sweets contained in small cylinders in the role play area though needed much encouragement to concentrate for a reasonable length of time. Boys in particular soon lose concentration and find it difficult to listen to instructions and follow them through. The investigative approach works well overall, so, for example, when children later went out to play the high attainers quickly recognised that the play tunnel was a cylinder. Middle and lower attainers need much help to use mathematical language and are not at all confident in doing so. Teaching is good and children are gradually being introduced to a daily lesson in mathematics. Children enjoy reciting simple number rhymes, though need many prompts. Middle attainers can count by rote to 15 and lower attainers need much help in matching and sorting items into groups.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62 The children achieve well and this is an improvement since the last inspection. It has come about because their natural curiosity is well catered for. This was the case, for example, when children in the reception class worked with an adult to investigate which food was easier to cut. The activity was managed well and gave good opportunities to develop language. By the end of the task higher attainers were using terms such as *soft* and *hard* and middle attainers who had great difficulty using a knife extended their knowledge about fruit and cheese. A strength in the good teaching is the way in

which the activities are planned to reflect particular topics. For example, at the same time as some children were testing the cutting, others were playing in role, in a fruit and veg shop, while yet another group used fruit to make prints. Questioning by adults in such situations as these is of good quality, for example, *Why do you think that?* Even so children need much help and a patient approach to offer suggestions and these are often one-word answers that are not always focused on the task in hand. Their general knowledge is limited and they take much enjoyment from simple tasks, which are judged just right to stimulate children's senses and broaden their understanding of the world about them. The lesson planning is very time consuming and has yet to be streamlined to make it more manageable.

Creative development

63 When they start in the nursery many children have not had experience of paint, glue and modelling and know hardly any rhymes or songs. The good teaching enables children to achieve well. By the time they are five years old children use a wide range of media. They are particularly adept at mixing water colours because the process is taught in clear stages and children can even explain that you need to, in turn, dip the brush in *water, on the sponge, and in the paint*. This is a simple system developed from the nursery onwards with good results. With gentle reminders, higher attaining children were able to concentrate on attaining the shades they wished to use. Children became immersed in their work concentrating really hard. No time was lost and so paintings were finished but not rushed which gave a good sense of satisfaction. The adult gave good reasons for tidying away after oneself and children took on the responsibility well, thinking it only fair to leave the painting activity set up ready for the next person just as they had found it. They washed the pallets carefully and a good sense of responsibility was being developed. Lower attainers have not yet learned how to hold a paint brush correctly and so their work lacks flow but they made attempts at painting lines. The quality of teaching is good and adults plan time to sit with children so that children's speaking skills can be developed alongside their creativity.

Physical development

64 Good use is made of the outside accommodation by both the nursery and reception classes. Children regularly play and work outside and also have a formal lesson in physical education where skills of catching, throwing and climbing are taught well. In such a lesson, however, too much time was taken placing the children in groups and lining up prior to beginning their work. After a slow start, good attention was given to stretching muscles as children were taught how to do this prior to exercise. Middle and higher attainers can pedal and already steer tricycles quite well and have developed a sound awareness of using space around them safely. They can catch a football because they have been taught how to do so. They have greater difficulty returning the football to a particular place as their hand and eye co-ordination is under developed. Children's finer manipulative skills are below average and they need much help to cut with scissors or to use small constructional toys.

In summary

Strengths

- *the provision including very good outdoor facilities; and*
- *teaching of good quality.*

Areas to develop

- *the use of accommodation for reading, speaking and listening activities; and*
- *the deployment of adults at initial and concluding plenaries.*

ENGLISH

65 By the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is below what would normally be expected for children aged seven in reading and writing and well below in speaking and listening. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is well below what would normally be expected for pupils aged 11 in reading and writing and below in speaking and listening. This reflects the standards found in the national tests in 1998 and the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests in reading and writing and teacher assessments in speaking and listening for both age groups. The school's records show that pupils achieve well. There are a number of reasons why this is so. Teachers have used guidance from the National Literacy Strategy to enhance their expertise in developing pupils' skills in all aspects of English. Almost half of the teaching is good with very good teaching in Year 6, and this increases pupils' rate of learning. All pupils who attended the Year 6 booster classes were given the extra impetus to achieve the expected level in national tests and the provision for pupils who have special educational needs in reading and writing, almost a third of the school, is good. Even so, in 2002 the results in the national test were very slightly lower than in the previous year.

66 Strong leadership by the co-ordinator has helped maintain standards throughout a sustained period of disruption caused not only by many changes of leading staff but also by extensive building works. Particularly good is the depth of analysis that identifies weaknesses in pupils' attainment and focuses planning for improvements. Gaps in pupils' achievements are being filled by acting on the good advice and support of the local education authority. As a result, standards in reading by the end of Year 2 rose significantly in the 2001 national tests with the number of pupils reaching the higher levels meeting national levels. Another success has been in the increase in the number of boys in Year 2 who have reached the expected levels in reading and writing. Teachers have begun to tackle the issue of why girls do better than boys in national tests by focusing on topics of particular interest to boys. Also, a wide range of story books has been purchased to boost boys' enthusiasm to read. This is already paying dividends in Years 1 and 2 as more boys than girls reached the expected level in reading in 2001 and an equal number of boys and girls reached the level in writing.

67 Pupils listen to their teachers politely. However, a significant number of pupils are passive listeners and are reluctant to answer questions. Too often their teachers do not draw them into the activities and consequently they do not make any contribution to whole class reading or writing tasks at the beginning and end of literacy lessons. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions in pairs or groups. Pupils often need prompting before they give their opinions and they rarely question the views of others in a lively way. However, when teachers do ensure that all pupils take part in whole class activities, as for example, in a good lesson in the Years 3 and 4 class, they are much more forthcoming. Every pupil was bursting with enthusiasm about a *space poem*, written on their white boards. Another good feature of the teaching was the opportunity given to one group to read out their poems to the rest of the class, who in turn responded with their opinions of them. Teachers expect pupils to use technical terms in subjects such as science and music and this increases pupils' vocabulary considerably. The school has no policy for speaking and listening and no discrete scheme of work to consistently promote pupils' skills at speaking.

68 Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are good at teaching pupils a range of strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words. They are taught to look for clues in the pictures and to build up words by sounding them out so that they are always able to have a go at difficult ones. Another strong feature of teaching throughout the school is the way in which teachers guide pupils' reading working with small groups of pupils. These develop pupils' reading and comprehension skills as well as broadening their vocabulary. Questions from teachers, such as "*What do you think?*", encourage pupils to discuss and justify their views. Pupils appreciate time in class for silent reading. One pupil in Year 5 commented "*I can really get into the book*" and "*it takes you into a different world*".

69 By Year 6, most pupils are able to discuss their preferences in reading although several boys readily admit that they rarely read for pleasure. The school is working hard to change this attitude by providing a good range of quality books to whet their appetite for reading and pupils are helped to choose books, which are suited to their abilities. Favourite authors tend to be limited to *Roal Dahl* and *Dick King Smith* although pupils are reluctant to give reasons for their choice other than that the books are “*interesting and funny*”. A weakness in the teaching of reading is that pupils have insufficient opportunities to use reference books, not only to sharpen their skills at using the contents, index and glossary pages but in using such books for independent research. Although the library is used very effectively for a book club, held twice weekly after school, it is rarely used at other times to enhance either pupils’ library or research skills.

70 In Years 1 and 2, most pupils have been taught suitable spelling strategies and higher-attaining pupils are able to spell words such as *decided* and *gaped*. The teaching of spelling in Years 3 to 6 is not consistent. Although pupils are expected to learn spelling rules and to practise their spelling regularly, some teachers do not ensure that spelling skills are used consistently in pupils’ independent writing. Pupils in Years 4 and 6, for example, have personal spelling logs in which spelling mistakes from their independent writing are noted. This good practice is, however, inconsistent and spellings are often altered by the teacher with no requirement for pupils to do corrections. Also, weekly spellings for homework are not always matched to pupils’ abilities and lower-attaining pupils often struggle to remember them.

71 Pupils in Year 1 and 2 experience a wide range of writing types and purposes, including stories, book reviews, tongue twisters and poems. While the lower-attaining pupils make free use of “*and then*” to keep their stories going, higher-attaining pupils use speech, adjectives and ploys such as capital letters for effect. In a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher used the pupils’ experiences of making a salad in design and technology to demonstrate how instructions are written. Her constant reminders to use a *bossy* word at the beginning of each instruction helped pupils to choose appropriate words such as *put*, *make* and *mix*.

72 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are given enough opportunities to develop their skills in writing to entertain, inform and persuade. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher chose a very appropriate text about computer messages. This not only helped pupils to draw a checklist for writing about a dilemma but also gained the interest of the boys. She stressed the need to use *premiership* words to sustain the reader’s interest. Teachers’ focus on extending pupils’ choice of vocabulary is beginning to pay dividends. An average-attaining pupil in Year 3 used “*The earth is a big ball of colour*” while a higher-attaining pupil in Year 5 used “*Pain is crimson red*”.

73 Some teachers have low expectations of what pupils can do and accept work that is untidy or incomplete. Although work in the autumn term is generally satisfactory in these classes, much of it takes a dip in the spring term and remains unsatisfactory for the rest of the year. Handwriting is inconsistent. Although pupils practise joining their letters during handwriting lessons, a significant majority do not transfer this skill to the rest of their writing. The handwriting of some teachers is not always the best model.

74 A strength of the teaching is the use of assessment to plan the next stage of learning and to set individual targets. Most pupils know their targets and can explain which target they are focusing on in their work. Teachers’ planning is thorough. It is amended as and when necessary following their day-to-day assessment of what pupils know and can do. Pupils benefit from the guiding comments in their books, such as “*a super effort, think now about different ways of organising a sentence*” made by the Year 6 teacher.

75 Good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs. Because of the good relationships they have with adults, they respond well to the extra support they are given. This enables them to read a range of simple texts and produce short pieces of written work. Pupils in Year 6, for example, made good progress in redrafting their story opening because of the way their teacher helped them to look more closely at their choice of vocabulary and at spelling rules such as adding “ed” to change verbs to the past tense. Teachers’ follow the plans for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and teaching assistants are at hand to help with widening the pupils’ vocabulary and developing their understanding.

76 Pupils generally make satisfactory use of their reading and writing skills in other subjects. Teachers use correct vocabulary in all subjects to extend and develop pupils’ vocabulary. In writing during science for example, pupils in Year 2 label a flow chart to show the life cycle of a butterfly while pupils in Year 6 empathise with the harsh conditions experienced by some Victorian children. The use of information and communication technology in English has fallen behind but is now being rectified following the installation of the school’s new computer suite.

77 Leadership and management of English are good. Thorough monitoring of teaching and learning, planning and pupils’ work has enabled the co-ordinator to identify the strengths and weaknesses of provision and to take the necessary action to make improvements. The school is now in a good position to raise standards.

In summary

Strengths

- *the successful implementation and use of the National Literacy Strategy;*
- *the good quality of the teaching by the end of Year 2 and in Year 3 and the very good quality of teaching in Year 6;*
- *planning which ensures that pupils build securely on previous work;*
- *the use of assessment to set targets for improvement for individuals, groups and the whole school;*
- *good provision and support for pupils with special educational needs;*
- *the quality, quantity, range and use of resources in the classroom; and*
- *the good quality of the subject leadership.*

Areas to develop

- *provision of more opportunities to develop pupils’ speaking and listening skills;*
- *pupils’ handwriting and the presentation of their work;*
- *spelling in pupils’ independent writing;*
- *provision of more opportunities for pupils to undertake independent study and develop research skills; and*
- *the use of information and communication technology.*

MATHEMATICS

78 Results in the 2001 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 were below the national average. However, pupils’ attainment was above that of schools with similar backgrounds to Cross Gates Primary School. In the national tests in 1998, the year in which the school was last inspected standards by Year 6 were well below average. In 2001 the performance of pupils in Year 6 was well below the national average, and boys achieved significantly less well than girls. Pupils’ attainment at Cross Gates was below that of similar schools. In 2002 results for Year 6 pupils were at a similar level to the previous year.

79 Standards are now rising and by the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is broadly typical of what is expected of seven year olds. By the end of Year 6 it is below what would normally be expected for pupils aged 11. The improvements in standards is due to the effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the good teaching in Years 1, 2 and 6. Additionally, the school has begun to check carefully pupils' attainment and progress over time, which enables teachers to helpfully target groups and individuals, and allocate additional classroom support. In the recent 2002 national tests the results for pupils in Year 2 improved bringing them broadly into the expected levels for their ages. This is because teachers now concentrate on developing pupils' mental agility and early computational skills. This is successful, and by Year 2, most pupils confidently add and subtract numbers to 100, and use a good range of strategies to solve problems; for example, doubling or rounding numbers to the nearest 10 when adding. This exposure to constant practice is leading to good achievement over time. Teachers provide work that closely matches the needs of differing groups of pupils, enabling them to build effectively on previous learning. Pupils work hard because teachers provide challenging activities which interest and motivate them. They reinforce their understanding of concepts well because teachers build in revision at frequent intervals. Pupils have a sound understanding of metric measures; they estimate lengths and measure accurately. Pupils produce a large amount of work but a significant minority have unsatisfactory standards of presentation, which is not always highlighted in teachers' marking.

80 Through Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is less consistent than in Year 1 and Year 2. This is because most teachers set work that does not always provide for the differing levels of attainment in the class. Pupils of below average attainment, while well supported by teaching assistants, are given work that is too difficult. This reduces their level of understanding, limiting the scope of learning, and is a significant reason why only approximately 50 per cent of pupils reach average levels in national tests. Pupils who have special educational needs are helped well by additional staff, but provision for work in mathematics does not always closely match that outlined on individual education plans, reducing pupils' overall rates of progress. Similarly, since all pupils complete the same work, teachers' expectations of higher attaining pupils are sometimes not high enough. The rate of progress increases in the Year 6 class. This is because of good teaching, the provision of extra teaching to boost standards, and the additional support given to targeted pupils. Pupils of average and above average attainment are making sound progress over time, with more attaining the higher levels in national tests as was the case in 2002.

81 By the end of Year 6, average and above average pupils have a satisfactory understanding of addition and subtraction. A sound understanding of tens and units enables pupils to multiply and divide by 10,100 and 1000, and to break numbers into component parts when multiplying larger sums. Pupils correctly find fractional parts of numbers, change improper fractions and find decimal equivalents. They construct a limited number of block and line graphs. A significant weakness in pupils' learning is the ability to apply previously learnt skills to solve new problems. For example, most pupils confidently add and subtract, but have limited skills to identify the correct number operation to use when solving a multi-part problem. Additionally, teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to apply the skills taught in mathematics to other subjects; for example, adding measurements to plans in design and technology, or extending predictions in science experiments.

82 There are many positive features of teaching throughout the school. Teachers use successful strategies to manage pupils' behaviour, so that pupils behave well and listen carefully. Pupils see a purpose to their work because teachers provide relevant examples. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils scrutinised a range of sale offers in local newspapers as part of work on percentages. Teachers share the learning objectives so that pupils understand the purpose of the lesson.

83 The teaching is stronger in Years 1 and 2. In a good lesson in Year 1, the teacher's detailed planning provided a good range of strategies to maintain pupils' interest. The work built carefully on the previous lesson, giving pupils confidence. Effective questioning, matched to pupils' level of understanding provides challenge and ensures that all contribute. Good relationships resulted in a sense of enjoyment in which pupils were responsive and willing to participate. In Years 3 to 5, teaching is satisfactory, with good teaching seen in Year 6. The teachers have sound subject knowledge, but lack a sense of rigour in their teaching. For example, teachers did not challenge pupils sufficiently to answer questions so that a significant majority were passive learners, allowing a few to answer. The lack of a rigorous mental starter at the beginning of the lesson reduced opportunities to practise mental agility skills. Additionally, most teachers did not challenge pupils to explain their answers, reducing opportunities to practise speaking. Teachers consistently mark pupils' work and frequently add helpful comments, but most do not insist that pupils correct mistakes. Opportunities to consolidate learning are therefore missed.

84 There is insufficient rigour in the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and as a result the lack of adaptation in pupils' work has not been addressed. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, is well trained and gives helpful advice to other teachers. Using annual tests, there are sound procedures to ascertain the attainment and progress that pupils make. Test results are now used effectively to track the achievement of groups and individual pupils and to set challenging targets. Information and communication technology is underused in mathematics lessons. There are few planned opportunities to supplement skills using current technology; for example, data handling programmes for constructing graphs, or the use of spreadsheets and variables. Differences in the attainment of boys and girls have been closely analysed and action taken to address this. There is now a representative sample of boys and girls in all groups set by the level of pupils' attainment.

In summary

Strengths

- *younger pupils achieve well, and by the end of Year 2, attain standards similar to the national average;*
- *targets are set regularly and standards are rising;*
- *good use of relevant visual aids helps pupils to understand their work; and*
- *effective action has been taken to address the differences in attainment of boys and girls.*

Areas to develop

- *the match of tasks to the different levels of attainment in Year 3 to Year 6;*
- *fuller involvement of pupils in question and answer sessions;*
- *the rigorous practice of mental strategies; and*
- *the presentation of pupils' work.*

SCIENCE

85 Standards in science by the end of Year 6 are about average. The school's results in national tests have been close to or just below national figures for the last 4 years. This shows good achievement because pupils' knowledge and understanding when they enter Year 1 is generally below average. When compared to similar schools, standards were above average in 2001. In 2002 just over a third of pupils attained a level typically expected of older pupils which was a good rise on the year before. This success is due to a well-planned curriculum, effective leadership and some good teaching in Year 6. Boys have performed better than girls in the tests in recent years; the school is aware of this and is tracking progress carefully. This aside, all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, enjoy their lessons and achieve well in science. They can carry out an investigation, make predictions, decide if the tests are valid and record their results. Pupils have a reasonable

knowledge of scientific facts and use the correct terminology. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

86 Standards by the end of Year 2 are also broadly average. The 2001 teacher assessment results were below average when compared to similar schools, this was partly due to the number of pupils who have special educational needs in this group. However, an increasing number of pupils reach the higher level, this indicates good teaching with high expectations. Pupils can investigate, observe carefully and record their results in various ways. They work hard and enjoy their lessons. Pupils achieve well.

87 The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2. Pupils make a good start in science because teachers make them think for themselves, for example pupils in Year 2 have to devise their own friction experiment with ramps and vehicles. They explain their ideas with words, diagrams and labels, this increases understanding. Teachers extend this work with probing questions and comments. For example in Year 1 the teacher wrote, "*How do you think your seed will change?*" and in Year 2 "*Your explanation is a bit confused, a diagram would help.*" Such teaching means that pupils' recording improves rapidly in these two years. They use scientific words such as temperature, vitamins and criteria and use these in their lists, sketches and sentences. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 even provide a glossary when they handle and sort materials.

88 In Years 3 to 6 the teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Teachers continue the training in carrying out investigations begun earlier, and so pupils including those who have special educational needs gain a deeper understanding of science. In some of the best work, teachers show that a simple test does not always give a complete answer, for example when pupils in Year 6 learn about air resistance they look at the results and realise that it is sometimes necessary to repeat tests and compare. However, in some other work the lesson comes to an end without a satisfying conclusion or a pointer towards further work. The school's record of skills shows that many pupils are capable of taking responsibility to extend what the rest of the class has found out. This would be very good learning for the higher attainers and would inspire the other pupils. However, they are rarely given this opportunity and too often have to sit through the same explanation and complete the same task as the rest of the class. Pupils' skills in recording improve steadily in this part of the school; they make especially good progress in Year 4. Teachers build on previous skills well. For example, by Year 4, pupils have to give reasons for their predictions and questions in Year 6 become harder. "*But did the length of the wire affect the brightness of the bulb?*" Some of the teaching in Year 6 is devoted to a thorough revision of scientific knowledge. This is done by a well-qualified visiting teacher and partly explains the consistently good results in the national tests.

89 There are some strengths and weaknesses in the use of mathematics in science lessons. All classes learn to measure, look closely and collect data. Teachers show pupils how to record this, for example in charts. They suggest appropriate ways of communicating information. Pupils in Year 5 use tally charts and straight-line graphs, and in Year 4 they transfer their insulation test results to a multiple line graph with reasonable accuracy. However pupils are rarely asked to examine this data and look for patterns or to see where results do not fit. This affects their ability to evaluate evidence. There is no use yet of information and communication technology to examine data in different ways, but the opening of the new computer suite should make this possible.

90 Leadership of science is good. The subject co-ordinator has been effective in raising standards throughout the school by reorganising the curriculum and resources, providing training, and helping teachers with their planning. There is a good system in place to record what pupils know and can do, this is used well to check that pupils are learning at a fast enough rate. It is used less well in lesson planning to make sure that the more able pupils are challenged. Pupils' work and teachers' planning

are looked at regularly, and this has enabled the co-ordinator and headteacher to keep a close eye on standards. There has been no monitoring of teaching for some time, and this will be an important step if standards are to rise further.

In summary

Strengths

- *a good emphasis on investigative work throughout the school;*
- *a thorough programme in Year 6 which includes revision and consolidation of knowledge;*
- *good procedures for assessment and tracking of pupils' progress;*
- *pupils are encouraged and trained to do their own recording from the beginning; and.*
- *the influence of the coordinator in promoting science.*

Areas to develop:

- *the monitoring of teaching;*
- *some investigations could be extended, to provide time for pupils to consider results and ask further questions;*
- *tasks to extend those capable of higher attainment; and*
- *the use of information and communication technology.*

ART AND DESIGN

91 Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly typical for pupils' ages. Pupils achieve well in Year 1 and Year 2 and soundly by the end of Year 6. Strengths are in pupils' skills at sketching and drawing. A weakness is in their understanding of the work of famous artists. Standards among younger pupils have improved but have remained the same for older pupils since the last inspection.

92 Teaching, for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 is good and as a result pupils learn a range of skills at a good pace. They apply them with imagination and style. For example, pupils can mix paint independently because they are taught to do so early on. Because they have this knowledge at their finger-tips, it means that they can concentrate on the composition of a piece and build-up beautiful shades of colour to add depth and feeling. Good subject knowledge on the part of the adults means that pupils learn how to improve their first attempts. Good use is made of an interesting range of resources. Photographs of local buildings were used well in Year 1 to engage pupils' interests and demonstrate shape and line. In this lesson, because of an initial well focused discussion with links to geography, pupils were raring to have a go at drawing the buildings. The outcome was confident and bold drawings where the middle attainers included a good degree of detail in the line and decoration.

93 Pupils throughout the school use sketchbooks to experiment and record their development. As a result they are confident to try out ideas and build up a good understanding of how the use of shape, line and shade can improve their work. Higher attainers in particular build very well on their initial sketches. The sketchbooks help those who have special educational need to recall their last pieces of work and adults discuss with them what their next step might be. Initial sketches also provide a starting point for pupils learning English as an additional language to develop the vocabulary related to the subject.

94 Teaching is sound overall for the Year 3 to Year 6 pupils. Teachers provide time for pupils to give their views and because of this, by Year 6, pupils are confident to voice their feelings and the higher attainers use subject terminology when giving reasons for their choice. Such self-evaluation is welcomed because pupils show respect for the thoughts and feelings of others – something well

established, across the school by the teaching. Lower attainers proudly share their work and discuss it in laypersons terms. In a good lesson in Year 4 pupils quickly set out artefacts for a still life composition building well on the last lesson. The provision of a simple yet wide range of artefacts promoted a broadly spiritual dimension for pupils to which they responded well. For example, one middle attainer explained how blue glass and seashells were chosen because they made her think of the sea. Another pupil chose textures and colour in autumnal shades because the leaves outside were already turning into *golden colours*.

95 A weakness in pupils' attainment is their lack of knowledge about famous artists. For example, pupils in Year 6 were unable to name particular artists or to recall any famous works. Moreover, they did not know where in the library to find reference books on art. The time allocated to art is somewhat lower than schools nationally and because pupils love practical work insufficient time is allocated to developing pupils' knowledge of other artists. There is no portfolio of assessed work to show staff exactly what pupils can achieve.

In summary

Strengths:

- *drawing and use of sketch pads;*
- *skills at colour mixing to attain beautiful shade; and*
- *the evaluation and development of individual pieces.*

Areas to develop:

- *the study of famous artists; and*
- *a portfolio to guide teachers' expectations of what can be achieved.*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96 Pupils reach standards typically expected for their ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are the same as at the last inspection. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average skills in using small tools such as scissors. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 because teachers plan and provide many opportunities for pupils to develop these skills. Pupils achieve well by the age of seven. Older pupils achieve soundly.

97 In the two lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching was good and pupils' learning was correspondingly good. In the Year 1 lesson, pupils drew plans and then used a range of fixings to construct model houses. Because the teacher's planning was explicit, covering fully the requirements of the work, pupils had the tools and materials they required, and worked with interest and diligence to complete the task. The management of pupils' behaviour was good; pupils worked independently and concentrated well. The concluding plenary was used well to recap on the work and to show how some pupils had overcome the difficulties of constructing a roof. Because teachers provide a curriculum for design and technology that has real purpose, pupils, including those who have special educational need understand the task and are motivated to work hard. For example, Year 2 pupils designed food hygiene posters to be displayed in a kitchen. There was good reinforcement for work in literacy because the teacher used bullet points and encouraged pupils to use imperative verbs such as *wash* and *tie* in their lists of instructions.

98 In the one lesson seen with older pupils, the teacher had carefully planned the work on designing a torch to take place after science lessons on electricity. This gave pupils the knowledge and skills required to use switches and circuits when designing lamps. Discussions with Year 6 pupils highlighted the impact of the subject on their learning. They spoke enthusiastically about earlier projects, such as designing slippers or a moving vehicle, and gave considered evaluations of the finished

products. Older pupils have a sound understanding of the design process because teachers have planned a series of purposeful lessons that build systematically from design generation to finished product. For example, Year 4 pupils constructed picture frames to house their paintings of Tudor monarchs. They gained a clearer insight by first making prototypes, investigating strengthening techniques for frame and support. Overall, teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy skills, for example, by routinely adding measurement to the design.

99 The subject leader is new to the post, but has written a clear action plan to move the subject forward. The scope of learning is reduced because pupils do not use computers to support the design process nor to control mechanisms. The co-ordinator monitors planning but has no time to work alongside other teachers in order to directly improve the teaching. Formal assessment of standards is at an early stage.

In summary

Strengths:

- *the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2;*
- *pupils enjoy the subject and have good recall of earlier design projects; and*
- *the interesting range of relevant, practical activities that make the work purposeful..*

Areas to develop:

- *the use of computer technology for control purposes and the use of numeracy;*
- *the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, and*
- *the use of assessment.*

GEOGRAPHY

100 Standards are broadly typical by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been just about maintained since the last inspection because the teaching is good for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 and sound for other pupils. This has been enough to make up for the fact that in the past, the school has not been able to allocate enough time to geography teaching. The curriculum has been reorganised and there are guidelines to ensure that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 achieve well; those in Year 3 to Year 6, including those who have special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.

101 Lessons are well planned, build on previous learning and are presented in a lively, informed way. As a result pupils listen very well and are keen to show what they can do. In one very good lesson on the water cycle in Year 6, the pupils were competing to answer and say what they had remembered. Teachers explain new learning clearly with plenty of examples and illustrations. When pupils in Year 4 were learning about maps and symbols they knew exactly what they had to do, concentrated well and so made good gains in understanding. In this case, however, the higher attainers were not well challenged and were capable of more in terms of quantity and depth. Teachers develop pupils' geographical skills, such as the use of maps, from the youngest classes. Pupils in Year 1 can make a very clear street map of the area around their own house. By Year 2 they draw and read a simple map of a Scottish island, marking several human and physical features. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of scale, keys and symbols when they make their own maps of the school grounds. Another reason for this good progress is that the co-ordinator, with help from the planning department, has built up a good store of local maps for the pupils to study.

102 A weakness in the teaching is that there are sometimes opportunities missed to give pupils responsibility. One example is in Year 5, when pupils learn about the impact of change in a traffic study. There are several strengths in this work. Pupils are taught to use the correct vocabulary, for example *public inquiry* or *congestion*, indeed, in the context of the subject higher attainers use this well. Pupils learn some of the processes of environmental change, how to write a questionnaire, and that there are usually winners and losers. Teachers in previous years prepare the ground well by asking questions like "Would you like to live there?" or "How would it be different from here?" However, all the characters involved in the new road proposal are imaginary and the teacher provides all their points of view. Pupils do not get the chance to try out their new skills in a real situation or in role-play to increase their geographical understanding, extend their literacy skills or have the chance to work independently.

103 A good start has been made by sorting out the curriculum and increasing the quality of resources. However, teaching has not been monitored or an eye kept on the pupils' books. This is because, rightly, the school has given priority to raising standards in English and mathematics. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology such as CD ROMs and the Internet to support teaching and learning in geography.

In summary

Strengths:

- *pupils are taught to use terminology related to the subject;*
- *well organised curriculum and clear guidelines on the skills and knowledge to be taught; and*
- *the quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2.*

Areas to develop:

- *the use of literacy;*

- *opportunities for pupils to take responsibility; and*
- *the use of information and communication technology.*

HISTORY

104 Standards in history are broadly typical for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils have a reasonable knowledge of different periods of history and are beginning to understand how we collect information about the past. The quality of teaching is good for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 and sound for older pupils and this has been enough to keep standards as they were at the last inspection. It has not been enough to raise standards, mainly because in some classes the teachers do not find quite enough time for history lessons and the time allocated to the study of particular topics is insufficient. Nevertheless, pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well in Year 1 and Year 2 and pupils make steady progress after this.

105 Pupils in Year 6 can extract information from a variety of sources and organise their own notes. An example of this is in the work on Ancient Egypt, where pupils made good collections of facts and sketches after a visit to the museum. Teachers extended this skill by asking questions such as “*What do you think life was like for...*” Pupils responded well by using their evidence to write about a Victorian child labourer’s day, or a lively conversation between two schoolchildren. Higher and middle attaining pupils can remember significant facts about the people and periods that they study. They are able to put these in the correct chronological order. All teachers encourage this, for example pupils in Year 1 sort toys into time order and in Year 5 they order events since 1930.

106 A weaker area of the work is the pupils’ lack of experience in looking at different interpretations of history. This is because the teachers do not plan it consistently enough. When pupils in Year 6 study the different points of view of people in the Victorian mining industry they make a good attempt to write a miner’s diary, but there are chances missed in other years. Another weak area is that teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to consider why things happened as they did. When the Year 4 class looked at “*Henry VIII’s problems*” they showed that they were able to link cause and effect, and this increases their understanding.

107 A strength in the teaching is that, in most lessons, teachers train pupils to write about history using their own words. Many pupils do not write fluently, but teachers help them by giving patient support and setting interesting and challenging tasks. A good example of this is the writing in Year 3 about museum artefacts where the teacher asks “*What do you think this was used for?*” This is effective teaching because it increases both historical understanding and writing skills. Pupils work hard in these lessons, but when the work is too easy, such as copying notes from the board, the standard drops. Teaching assistants work well with pupils who need extra help and as a result the pupils cover the same ground and make the same progress as others in the class. Too little use is made of information and communication technology.

108 An important start has been made in sorting out the curriculum and the time allocated to history. Samples of work have been assessed against levels of the National Curriculum, this is a useful way of checking that pupils are learning at a fast enough rate. The subject has not been a priority for the school in recent years and there has been no opportunity yet for the co-ordinator to look at lessons and gain information about teaching and learning at first hand in order to inform future planning.

In summary

Strengths:

- *the curriculum is well-organised and provides a good spread of interesting work;*
- *teachers encourage pupils to use their own words and ideas when they write, most pupils*

make steady progress in this; and.

- *lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in lessons.*

Areas to develop:

- *the use of information and communication technology to enrich the history programme;*
- *allocation of time to some topics in some classes; and*
- *the skills of comparing different accounts of the same event and the ability to consider why things happened as they did.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109 Standards are well below those that are typical for pupils in Year 6 and have declined since the last inspection because pupils have not been able to have computer lessons during the rebuilding work. As a result, most pupils have weak information and communication technology skills and have not fully studied all that is necessary. Teachers in the youngest classes have managed to make some use of the available computers and so there has been slightly better progress in this part of the school. Nevertheless standards by the end of Year 2 are below those expected at this age.

110 By the time they reach Year 6, pupils can combine different forms of information, for example adding pictures to their text. Higher and average attaining pupils can create the effect they want by carefully choosing layout, typeface or graphics. Most pupils can save work and cut and paste, but they are slow to find their way around a keyboard. A few pupils remember using a database and creating graphs, but none could explain how this is done. However, pupils in the Year 5/6 class have made a good start in revising this work by making a branching database. Most can open a CD-ROM and find their way around it. All can enter a series of instructions on screen, predict the desired effect and make changes. However, because of the disruption in the last two years, pupils have not been able to learn about e-mail, spreadsheets or use simulation programmes. Their understanding of control and modelling is low because the school has not yet fully resourced these aspects of the subject. Other than the higher attainers, pupils' understanding of the wider uses and implications of information and communication technology is also limited, in part because they have insufficient opportunities to use computers to forward their studies in other subjects.

111 The teaching is good though staff have yet to benefit from the national training available to schools. As a result their subject knowledge, though adequate, has yet to be refined. Pupils using the new computer suite are beginning to make better progress. This is because the teachers plan carefully to build on previous learning and the pupils are keen to make up for lost time. For example, pupils in Year 5 were able to move ahead and work independently on a control programme because the teacher set a challenging task at the right level. Teachers prepare lessons well and make the most of the time available. For example, when pupils in Year 2 were learning to give instructions to a floor robot, the teacher provided clipboards and grids for everyone so that there was no waiting for turns. Teachers explain clearly and support pupils of all abilities in the lessons. They use other adults well in this so pupils do not have to sit and wait for help to arrive. In a Year 6 lesson almost half the class found interpreting angles and directions on the screen difficult, but by the end of the lesson every pupil was confident. Pupils who have special educational needs are making good progress because of the extra help they receive from adults.

112 The school has revised the curriculum so that gaps in pupils' learning can be plugged and in particular for the older pupils. A good addition to the curriculum is the after-school computer club. This is open to pupils in all classes and is popular. Pupils who attend the club make good progress because of the very worthwhile activities such as making a newspaper and pupils are keen to show

what they have learned. The monitoring of pupils' work and the quality of teaching is at an early stage. The school has a long way to go, but is well placed to improve.

In summary

Strengths:

- a well-equipped computer suite used by all classes. Teachers are making good use of this;
- the revised curriculum designed to fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skill;
- the quality of teaching is good, the pace of lessons is increasing and the pupils enjoy the lessons; and
- plans for further improvement are appropriate.

Areas to develop:

- to fill in the gaps in pupils' experience and knowledge, particularly for the older pupil;
- training for teachers;
- the systematic monitoring of lessons and pupils' work;
- the use of information and communication technology in other subjects; and
- resources for teaching and learning.

MUSIC

113 Standards are typical for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and have been maintained since the last inspection. Throughout the school pupils generally achieve soundly. Improvements have been made to the curriculum following the introduction of a national programme to guide teachers' planning and fill any gaps in provision.

114 The subject leader, who is an experienced musician, provides a weekly lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to improve their singing. This is marked by pupils' energetic enjoyment of music. Their singing is mostly tuneful but generally too loud. This is exacerbated by the very poor acoustics of the school hall, which detract quite significantly from pupils' singing. The co-ordinator's tuneful singing and use of the piano to teach a new hymn in preparation for the school's Harvest Festival, helped pupils to grasp the first verse in a short time. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a wide repertoire of favourite songs and hymns and join in clapping and tapping exercises vigorously.

115 Teaching in Years 3 to 5 is satisfactory with good teaching by the co-ordinator in Year 6. Pupils develop their musical appreciation by listening to a range of music from different times and places. A pupil in Year 5 particularly enjoyed the repetitive singing of Indian music while another commented, "*you get carried away with it*". There is a good stress on using correct terminology and the higher attainers are becoming adept at using it. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 talk confidently about *pulse* and *ostinato* while pupils in Years 6 quickly picked up *timbre* following their teacher's good explanation of the term. However, not enough emphasis is placed on pupils using the names of instruments. A pupil in Year 5 who referred to a cymbal as a *thingy* was not corrected by his teacher.

116 Pupils enjoy music. In the lessons seen they listened attentively, using instruments correctly and with care. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 remained attentive and kept the correct posture throughout their singing lesson while pupils in Year 6 worked well in small groups as they used instruments to demonstrate *open* and *closed* sounds. Perseverance was in evidence in Years 3 and 4 as pupils needed high levels of concentration in order to maintain their particular rhythm part of *Jelly on a Plate*.

117 The co-ordinator has a strong commitment to providing pupils with instrumental tuition. The introduction of the school's *Big Band* goes some way towards this with a small number of dedicated pupils already beginning to make good progress in playing a musical instrument. Visits from string and woodwind quartets enhance the provision and increase pupils' enjoyment of music. There are no

opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe the quality of teaching in the classroom, and formal procedures to check pupils' skills and understanding are at an early stage of development. However, the co-ordinator's development plan for the subject, which includes training for all staff to enable them to introduce information and communication technology into the music curriculum, places the school in a satisfactory position to raise standards.

In summary

Strengths:

- *the implementation and use of a national programme for music; and*
- *the introduction of the school band to provide pupils with instrumental tuition.*

Areas to develop:

- *the use made of information and communication technology.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118 Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Year 2 pupils' reach typical standards for their age and by Year 6 standards are above those expected of 11-year-olds. This is because the full range of the physical education curriculum, including dance, movement, gymnastics, athletics and games is taught well and extra time is allocated for this because the school considers that sport not only improves pupils' health but their lifestyle and self-esteem. In addition older pupils reach good standards in swimming. This is a positive picture, and a good improvement since the last inspection.

119 A mark of the good teaching is the organisation of lessons where routines are well established, for example, good attention is paid to health and safety and to carefully stretching of muscles prior to strenuous exercise. The teaching is pacy and has high expectations of the pupils. In a games lesson in Year 1 for example, pupils worked outside to develop their ability to stop quickly and safely. The instruction was clear and plenty of time was given for pupils to practise. They got better at stopping by bending their knees and balancing their weight carefully. So much so that in the plenary pupils were put to the test running between given lines and the majority were able to stop quickly at the line. The lower attainers tended to slow down towards the line in readiness to stop and as a result their work was less accurate than others but nonetheless made good gains in using the technique. All pupils had a good sense of spatial awareness and were confident. They tried very hard to improve on their best and took delight in their success clearly developing sufficient skill to begin to play simple, competitive games. In a very good lesson in Year 2 the choice provided for pupils gave opportunities for intellectual as well as physical effort.

120 Teachers make good use of demonstration and self-assessment. They provide constructive comments to individuals and groups and this sets a good example for pupils to give helpful evaluations of each other's work. This was a very good feature of the Year 6 teaching when pupils made substantial headway in evaluating how personal improvement could be made. For example, pupils were quick to point out that when experimenting with receiving the body weight on hands and feet that "*quieter landings*" and "*stretching the body*" would improve the fluency of the actions. Pupils recognised the accomplishments of others and gave praise when it is earned. The work of higher attainers was noted by the use of tension to finish off their tasks. Time was used well. At one point when pupils lost a degree of concentration the teacher quickly directed pupils to '*Get back into work mode and hone those skills*'. The response was quick because pupils know that time must not be wasted and that every effort must be made to bring about self-improvement.

121 Comparative weaknesses in pupils' learning are in their independence in selecting particular skills. This is in part, because the lessons are very structured and though they build well in developing

skills and sequence of tasks too little time is provided for individual choice. Nonetheless, time is given for pupils to reflect on their work and how improvements can be made next time. For example, at the end of their lesson Year 4 pupils relaxed their muscles and quite unselfconsciously closed their eyes to consider their work.

122 The subject is well led and managed. The leader has organised equipment and resources effectively and a great amount of work has made sure that the curriculum is well planned and that plans are easy to follow. Extra-curricular clubs are available for pupils through a range of team games and other activities, which not only provide much enjoyment for pupils but also provide extra time to practise and refine their skills. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' health and to their spiritual development.

In summary

Strengths

- *standards by Year 6 including pupils' knowledge and understanding of fitness and health;*
- *time set aside for reflection; and*
- *the quality of teaching including the use of demonstration and self-assessment.*

Areas to develop

- *independence in selecting skills.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is below the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This represents a decline since the last inspection when standards were typical for pupils' age. This is because the lesson time pupils receive is approximately half the minimum time recommended in the Agreed Syllabus. In consequence, it is not possible to comply fully with the prescribed content. Moreover, teachers plan insufficient opportunities for pupils' to consolidate their learning through written work.

124 Pupils' achievement by age seven is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils' experiences have been fragmented so both subject knowledge and their capacity to reflect on prior learning have not developed, as they should. For example, in discussions, Year 3 pupils could not name any of the topics they had studied in Years 1 and 2, nor a major faith. Their knowledge of bible stories and key events in the Christian calendar were very limited. Insufficient time allocation also reduces the time that teachers spend developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. For example, Year 2 pupils can describe the main features of a church, but below average speaking skills limit their ability to correctly name the features seen. For example, they name pews as "long seats", font as "christening place", and "piano thing" to describe the organ.

125 In Years 3 to 6 pupils develop a sound understanding of the Christian faith. This is because teachers follow the curricular guidelines and allocate sufficient time to the subject, enabling pupils to build new knowledge and understanding in a consistent way. As a result, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Christian practices such as communion and baptism, understanding the significance of these. They know about the Old and New Testaments and are conversant with the life of Jesus and the principle celebrations in the Christian faith. Year 6 pupils correctly name the signs and symbols, key figures and practices of Sikhism and Islam. They are developing an understanding of how rules, such as the Ten Commandments, determine the ways in which Christians live. Pupils enjoy the subject and show respect for the beliefs of others. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use computers in their work; for example in word processing or through the use of CD Rom. This reduces the scope of their learning and the development of skills of enquiry.

126 In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory. Teachers managed pupils effectively, so that pupils behaved well and showed respect, both of other views expressed in the class, and also of different faiths. Lessons were planned and prepared appropriately. Religious artefacts were used imaginatively to extend new learning. For example, Year 3 pupils examined a small range of flags and symbols of the Sikh emblem, the *Khanda*, successfully identifying its component parts. The main weakness in the teaching overall was the limited number of strategies used to engage pupils' interest and motivation; for example, through the use of drama, large photographs or discussion. Pupils were very passive, using little personal effort to contribute ideas. In a significant number of lessons, teaching was at a factual level, limiting opportunities for pupils to explore personal responses to beliefs.

127 The subject leader has worked hard to produce good subject guidance. A strength of this provision is the relationship between subjects which deepens pupils' knowledge, and enables them to make connections in their learning. For example, in the history topic *The Victorians*, pupils experience faith in action through studying the life of Florence Nightingale or the work of Lord Shaftsbury. The monitoring and evaluation of the subject are unsatisfactory, because the limited work in some pupils' books and insufficient allocations of time on teachers' timetables have gone unnoticed. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistently used, so that gaps in pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2 have not been identified. Pupils visit Cross Gates Methodist Church, but visits to other places of worship are not made. There is a good supply of books and artefacts to support work on all aspects of the subject and this helps to retain pupils' interest and concentration.

In summary

Strengths:

- *the quality and range of resources;*
- *comprehensive, clearly written curricular guidelines that give good support to teachers and enable pupils to gain knowledge and understanding in a consistent way; and*
- *pupils enjoy the subject and show respect for the beliefs of others.*

Areas to develop:

- *increase the rate of pupils' learning by the age of seven;*
- *increase the amount of time given to teaching religious education;*
- *monitoring and evaluating the subject and taking effective action; and*
- *consistent use of assessments.*

