

INSPECTION REPORT

OXBRIDGE LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stockton on Tees

LEA area: Stockton

Unique reference number: 111644

Head teacher: Mrs S Moppett

Reporting inspector: Miss WLR Hunter
3277

Dates of inspection: 29th October – 1st November 2002

Inspection number: 251644

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oxbridge Lane Stockton on Tees
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C McHale
Date of previous inspection:	July 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3277	Miss WLR Hunter	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	Pupils' results and achievements.
			Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
			Education inclusion	How well is the school led and managed?
			English as an additional language	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?
30834	Mrs A Lawson	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Art and design	
			Special educational needs	
23375	Mr J Hicks	Team inspector	Science	
			Music	
12631	Mrs M McLean	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Religious education	
28037	Mrs P Smith	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	
			Design and technology	

			History	
			Geography	
			Citizenship	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oxbridge Lane is a large school close to the town centre in Stockton. The number of children in the area is falling and this is starting to show in the number of children transferring into the reception class this year, although the nursery is still nearly full.

There are 338 pupils in the school (163 boys and 175 girls) plus another 38 boys and 34 girls attending the nursery on a part-time basis. The number of girls in Year 6 is almost three times the number of boys, but there are more boys than girls in Years 4 and 5. About a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals – this is above average. Forty pupils have been recognised with special educational needs, which is low for a school of this size, and there are no statemented pupils. Fifty five pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of these need support for English as an additional language. A lot of pupils move in or out of the school during the year, in particular in Years 5 and 6 when pupils join the school late in their primary education.

About one-third of the pupils come from an area that is designated for regeneration funding. However, because the school itself is not located in this area, it currently receives no extra money or grants. The school occupies four different buildings including the nursery, which is on a separate site. It has recently been awarded a Quality Mark for Basic Skills and is starting to work towards a Healthy School Award.

The school has limited and conflicting information about what children can do when they first start in nursery and transfer into reception. It therefore does not have an accurate assessment of children's attainment on entry. On balance, and on the limited evidence available, children come to the school with lower communication, language and personal skills than is typical for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Teaching and learning are good with the result that standards are improving. By the time pupils leave the school they have reached good standards in English, mathematics and science, and their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are satisfactory, but their standards are not high enough in religious education. This is a caring school where the team spirit, commitment and enthusiasm of the staff create an effective atmosphere for learning. Children enjoy being here and do well. The school is led and managed effectively to provide good value for money.

What the school does well

- The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught particularly well, leading to high standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The standard of work in art and design is high throughout the school.
- The school promotes pupils' moral and social development very well and this gives rise to very good personal development and relationships.
- Pupils are given a broad range of additional learning experience through visits and extra-curricular activities.
- The school is held in high regard by parents who support it well.

What could be improved

- The school does not have an accurate assessment of what children can do when they first start in the nursery, move into reception classes or finish their Foundation Stage of learning at the end of reception. Consequently the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is not yet matched clearly enough to their needs.
- The religious education curriculum does not meet requirements and standards are too low in this subject.
- The school improvement plan is not precise enough. It does not make sufficient links to the finance available to the school or indicate how the school's actions will be monitored and evaluated.
- The day-to-day organisation of the school causes some pupils to miss collective worship and means that some pupils miss religious education and ICT lessons on a regular basis.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1998 and, on balance, has made satisfactory progress since then. Standards have improved in English, mathematics and science, but have dropped in religious education. Literacy and numeracy have been the main areas of focus for the past few years and, in these areas, the school is doing well. For example, it has clear action plans, well established systems for assessing pupils' learning and for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. However, the monitoring and evaluating of other parts of the curriculum have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection and this is having an adverse effect in the Foundation Stage and religious education. Governors have become more involved with the school and its development planning but the school improvement plan is still not precise enough to identify and support the key areas that the school now needs to develop.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
well above	A

					average above	B
					average	
Mathematics	C	E	C	A	average	C
					below average	D
Science	C	E	A	A	well below	E
					average	

For the past few years, the school's test performance for seven year olds has been below, and sometimes well below, average with writing being a particular weakness. This does not necessarily mean that pupils have made unsatisfactory progress but, in the absence of a clear and accurate assessment of what they can do when they first start at the school, it is impossible for the school to demonstrate whether this is good enough. The results for 2002 were not much better than previous years but this year group has had a lot of unforeseen problems that have affected the learning for some pupils. The current Year 2 pupils are now working at a much higher standard and are on schedule to reach the levels expected for seven year olds in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of the year. On balance, and with the limited evidence available, pupils appear to be making steady progress through Key Stage 1 and standards appear to be improving.

The school uses the results of pupils' performance in Year 2 to set realistic targets for them in Year 6, and this is showing an upward trend over recent years. The school did well in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2002, with its performance in English, mathematics and science coming out well above average for similar schools. This was a big improvement on the previous year when a significant number of pupils had joined the school late and had not been able to make up enough ground to do well enough in the tests. The current Year 6 are still working well and standards in all three subjects are likely to continue to be above the levels expected for 11 year olds by the end of the year.

Pupils achieve well as they move through Key Stage 2. By the time they leave Year 6, they have good basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and have a thorough grounding in ICT. The standard of their work in art and design is high, but they have insufficient knowledge and understanding of world religions.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic, interested and enjoy being at school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils listen well, respond to instructions and act sensibly. They make an effort and are proud to receive awards for their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are encouraged to grow and develop as individuals and learn to respect and value the different ideas and opinions of their classmates. Relationships are very good. Pupils form friendships across gender and race boundaries to mix, work

	and play together very well.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development is a key strength of this school. The very good relationships help to create an atmosphere of care, concern and respect in which pupils are comfortable and keen to learn.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good. This is why pupils are now making good progress and are reaching the standards they do. Teaching is particularly effective in Year 6 where the oldest pupils get a great boost that helps them to do well.

The teaching for the children in the Foundation Stage is good at the moment. The arrangement of classes has recently changed and teachers in reception have very small numbers at present, which is allowing them to provide focused support to meet the children's needs. However, the curriculum is not planned clearly enough to accommodate another group of younger and less mature children who are scheduled to join reception in January, and the assessments of what the children can do are not secure enough. These weaknesses will make it difficult for the school to sustain the current strengths in teaching in this age range.

English and mathematics are taught well. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well to older pupils and this is one of the reasons why standards are improving. Teachers are conscious of pupils' differing needs and make sure that they meet them, whether by providing additional support to overcome a special educational need or by supporting pupils who do not speak English fluently. Consequently, all pupils make equally good progress in their learning and achieve well. The exception to this is in religious education where pupils are not being given enough opportunities and teachers have insufficient knowledge about what they are trying to teach.

One of the key features of teaching throughout the school is the way that teachers expect pupils to work together and plan activities specifically to make them do this. By working as 'learning partners' during their lessons, pupils not only strengthen their very good relationships with each other but also develop their speaking and listening skills particularly well. This has a positive knock-on effect on their learning in all areas.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory but with strengths and areas for development. The Foundation Stage curriculum is not clear enough and is confused by the areas of learning for children of this age being intertwined with the subject requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 get a broad range of experiences but religious education does not meet statutory requirements. Drama is a strong and effective feature of the English curriculum, particularly in Year 6, and there is a good range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities to extend the curriculum. These all support pupils' academic and personal development well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This has improved and is now good. These pupils make good progress, especially in literacy.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are supported well in their quest to learn English but also receive sensitive support from bilingual classroom assistants during lessons. They make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral development is promoted well and social development is very good. The strengths in moral and social development underpin pupils' very good relationships and positive attitudes to their work.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a caring community where pupils' needs come first. Assessment of pupils' academic progress is well established in English and mathematics but is not yet developed well enough elsewhere.

The school provides good support for pupils' academic and personal development. Its emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and the development of effective assessment systems in these areas, has had a positive benefit on standards in English and mathematics. Parents support the school well and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. Improvements are being driven particularly well by the subject leaders in key areas, such as English and mathematics. The senior management team manages a large and geographically disparate school effectively but the strategic overview and subsequent leadership of some areas is not consistent enough. This has led to problems in the Foundation Stage and religious education. New leaders for these areas have recently been appointed and the school has the capacity to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory in that governors have not ensured the curriculum meets statutory requirements for religious education, that all pupils are involved in a daily act of collective worship, or that annual written reports to parents contain sufficient information. However, they have worked hard to get a very good understanding of the school's performance and are now playing an important and effective role in helping it to improve. They are very supportive and are starting to ask critical and challenging questions of themselves and the school to help drive and sustain its development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has security in its analysis of what is happening in Key Stage 2 and is using this information well to set targets and track pupils' progress. However, the inconsistencies and confusion surrounding its baseline assessments in nursery and reception make it difficult for accurate evaluations to take place lower down the school or for it to evaluate its performance effectively at the end of Key Stage 1.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The principles of best value are followed sufficiently. When money is identified for a specific purpose, it is spent well. The school improvement plan does not make clear enough links to the budget and the school's spending tends to be too reactive as needs arise rather than being carefully planned in advance.

There are good levels of staff and educational resources. Accommodation is satisfactory but the layout of the different buildings, with the nursery on a separate site to the rest of the school, poses some problems. In particular, this fragments the Foundation Stage and compounds the fact that this age range is currently getting confusing and conflicting messages about its planning, which cause difficulties for continuity and adds to the fact that the school is not yet able to demonstrate the true progress children make. The Foundation Stage has lost its profile as a key stage in its own right.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children get a good deal at the school. They have an interesting range of activities and are taught well.• Their children like school, make good progress, and are encouraged to become mature and responsible.• They are welcomed into the school and encouraged to be part of its life and work.	There were no specific areas identified by parents.

Parents are right to praise the school and hold it in high regard for the quality of education it offers their children. However, parents are not kept well enough informed about how their children are getting on because the annual reports do not meet requirements or contain sufficient information on every subject. Similarly, there are a few gaps in the prospectus.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. This leads to high standards in English, mathematics, science and art and design. Standards in all other subjects, except religious education, are satisfactory. However, standards in religious education are too low.

2 The school is well aware that its assessments of what children can do when they first start in nursery, and then transfer into reception, have not been secure or accurate enough in the past. As a result, there has sometimes been conflicting information about what children can actually do and where they are starting from. This makes it very difficult to judge children's attainment on entry. In the lessons seen in both the nursery and reception classes, it was obvious that there is a very wide mix of attainment with some children working well within the levels expected for their age but others showing limited speech, language and personal skills. However, the mix of children contains some who have been in nursery for nearly five terms while others have only been there a few weeks, and the attainment seen in lessons only shows what they can do now, rather than when they first started. On balance, and with the limited evidence available, it is likely that children start school with lower levels of communication, language and personal skills than is expected for their age.

3 By the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage, and are ready to move into Year 1, most of the children are working close to the levels typical for their age. However, although the school has a lot of information about the actual work the children have done, there is no clear overall picture of where the children are in relation to the recommended Early Learning Goals. The areas of learning recommended for the Foundation Stage are intertwined with the different National Curriculum subjects rather than leading into them. On the limited evidence available, children's skills are developing sufficiently and they are reaching standards close to what is expected for their age by the time they are ready to move into Year 1.

4 The school has recognised the need to strengthen the entire Foundation Stage and, in particular, to make sure that accurate and reliable assessments are carried out to give a clear baseline from which children's future achievements can be measured. In the absence of this so far, the school's performance at the end of Year 2 has looked low over the past few years. For instance, the school's test performance for seven year olds has been below, and sometimes well below, average with writing being a particular weakness. This does not necessarily mean that pupils have made unsatisfactory progress but, in the absence of a clear and accurate assessment of what they can do when they first start at the school, it is impossible to judge whether this is good enough. The results for 2002 were not much better but this year group has had a lot of unforeseen problems that have affected the learning for some pupils. The current Year 2 pupils are now working at a much higher standard and are on schedule to reach the levels expected for seven year olds in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of the year.

5 Despite the absence of reliable assessment data, the inspection team judges that children make at least satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The school uses the results of pupils' performance in Year 2 to set realistic targets for them in Year 6, and this is showing an upward trend over recent years at a similar rate to the national improvement.

6 The school did well in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2002. Its performance was above the national average in English and was well above average in science. The mathematics results were average in comparison to all other schools. This performance was a big improvement on the previous year when a significant number of pupils had joined late in Key Stage 2 and had not been able to make up enough ground to do well enough in the tests. For example, the performance in English was below average, while mathematics and science were well below average in 2001. The improvements in 2002 mean that, when the school's results are compared against other schools with a similar level of free school meals, it comes out particularly well. In fact, its performance in all three subjects is well above average. The current Year 6 are still working well and standards are likely to continue to be above the levels expected for 11 year olds by the end of the year.

7 The school has made good improvements in its standards in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils have good basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils have a thorough grounding in ICT and reach the levels that are expected for 11 year olds in all aspects of this subject. The standard of their work in art and design is high. This is also a good improvement from the last inspection and is due mainly to the very good range and quality of resources and the effective use of the work of famous artists to enthuse and inspire pupils. However, standards in religious education are not as high as they were last time. Pupils are working at levels below what the Agreed Syllabus expects for seven and 11 year olds, at the end of Years 2 and 6, and they have insufficient knowledge and understanding of world religions. There are several reasons why standards have dropped. For instance, there is insufficient time being given to this subject, there is insufficient guidance to support teachers' lesson plans, and pupils produce very little written work to show how well they have learnt.

8 Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding so that, by the age of 11, they achieve well in relation to their age and ability in most subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection where this area of the school's work was criticised. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their literacy targets are matched well to their abilities and are taken into account when planning lessons. Those pupils with English as an additional language, together with groups of targeted pupils, including gifted and talented pupils in Key Stage 2, also make good progress because they are supported well both in lessons and when withdrawn for group sessions with specialist teachers or trained support staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. This is similar to the last inspection. Pupils listen and respond well in lessons. They are enthusiastic and pursue each new task with interest and determination.

10 Behaviour in class has improved slightly since the last inspection and is now predominately good throughout the school. Pupils listen well, respond to instructions and act sensibly. They make an effort and are proud to receive awards for their behaviour. At break and lunchtimes, pupils continue to behave well. They mix and socialise freely, and take part in organised playground games in a mature and controlled way. Bullying is not a problem. Exclusions remain low and are applied properly whenever they are deemed necessary.

11 Pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are now very strong and make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. Pupils form friendships across gender and race boundaries to mix, work and play together very well. As a result, the school has a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere about it. Pupils co-operate and collaborate very well in lessons, are polite and friendly, and always ready to help each other or their teachers. They are encouraged to grow and develop as individuals and learn to respect and value the different ideas and opinions of their classmates. This is very apparent in lessons when they listen carefully to each other and value any contributions made. The youngest children in the nursery and reception classes are settled and already starting to develop good work habits. Responsibilities, which have increased since the last inspection, are willingly accepted and the duties are carried out well. For example, older pupils sell fruit at break and total up the 'takings' before giving the money to the secretary. A school council has been formed but has not been in existence long enough to have made any real impact on school life.

12 Since the last inspection, attendance remained low for several years. Last year, however, it improved significantly, as a direct result of good support by the local authority's education welfare service. Attendance is now broadly average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13 Teaching and learning are good in most subjects. This is why pupils make good progress across their time in the school and reach the standards they do by the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection with a greater proportion of good and very good teaching now taking place across the school.

14 The teaching for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, especially in the nursery. Here, the staff create a very positive atmosphere that helps children be happy and relaxed, and in which they are encouraged to learn. Children are given plenty of attractive and colourful resources to interest and stimulate them, and activities are well organised and managed to keep everyone on track. For instance, in one lesson a big puppet of 'Barnaby Bear' watched over some of the nursery children to 'check their accuracy' as they counted objects, while younger children new to the nursery tried to find dinosaurs hidden in the sand tray. The teacher and support staff work very well together and this high level of adult presence is a key factor in the success of the nursery. They all know the children very well and their constant interaction and questioning is encouraging the development of children's communication, language and personal and social skills, which prepares them well for their transfer into the reception classes.

15 The arrangements for transferring into reception have changed this year with the result that the teachers have very small classes at the moment. Teaching in these classes is good with children able to get focused individual attention, as they need it. For example, in one lesson where they investigated different types of fruit, the teacher was able to spend time with each child exploring their ideas, such as "the kiwi fruit tastes like bananas but smells like seeds". The children's expressive faces showed their enjoyment, especially when they thought the seeds inside a 'paw-paw' were made of chocolate. As in the nursery, the opportunities for children to work in small groups with focused adult attention are helping to develop their language, speaking and listening skills well, and this is setting the foundation for the very good relationships within the school. However, despite the current good teaching

in the reception classes, it is doubtful whether, without adaptations to the planning and curriculum, this can be sustained when another group of younger and less mature children join each reception class in January. These teachers were not in reception for most of last year and are therefore planning as they go. Consequently, the curriculum is not yet planned clearly enough to accommodate these younger children, especially since it is linked closely to the individual subjects of the National Curriculum, which is a long way off for many of these children. Also, the assessments of what the children can actually do are not yet secure enough for teachers to plan the wide range of activities matched to the diverse needs of larger classes. The school is aware of this and one of the key tasks for the newly appointed leader of the Foundation Stage is to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning under the new arrangements.

16 Teaching is good elsewhere in the school and is particularly effective in Year 6 where the oldest pupils get a great boost that helps them to do well in the national tests. There are strengths in each year group with experienced and effective teachers supporting their colleagues very well. For instance, teachers regularly plan together, share resources and equipment and discuss how their lessons went to help their colleagues modify their ideas before tackling the same theme or topic. One of the key features of teaching throughout the school is the way that teachers expect pupils to work together and plan activities specifically to make them do this. By working as 'learning partners' during their lessons, pupils not only strengthen their very good relationships with each other but also develop their speaking and listening skills particularly well. For instance, in a Year 2 English lesson when pupils were told to "talk to your class partner" to find phonemes in common words, and in a Year 1 ICT lesson when pupils worked with their partners to draw a face using the different features in a 'paint' package.

17 English and mathematics are taught well. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well to older pupils and this is one of the reasons why standards are improving. In Year 6, in particular, teachers challenge pupils to achieve and succeed. They make it crystal clear that they expect hard work and effort at all times and this is rewarded by regular praise and celebration of pupils' achievements, both through the displays in the school and by discussions of their work at the end of lessons. Teachers are conscious of pupils' differing needs and make sure that they meet them, whether by providing additional support to overcome a special educational need or by supporting pupils who do not speak English fluently. Bilingual support assistants make a particularly strong contribution to the learning of these pupils and help them overcome language barriers. Consequently, all pupils make equally good progress in their learning and achieve well.

18 Teachers have good knowledge of most of the subjects they teach. This is particularly true in ICT, where training by the subject leader has been effective, and in art and design where they teach the basic skills very well alongside a good appreciation and understanding of different forms of art. This is why the quality and breadth of the curriculum has improved in ICT since the last inspection and why standards are high in art and design. However, teachers' weak subject knowledge in religious education is having the opposite effect. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in this subject and standards are suffering. This is because teachers do not know how well pupils have previously learnt and, as a result, expectations of what pupils can do are too low. Teachers do not plan well enough to give pupils the opportunities they should have in this subject with the effect that standards have dropped.

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

19 The curriculum for children in the nursery is planned well against the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. However, in the reception classes this is not so secure. Although the quality and range of learning opportunities are currently appropriate, there is no clear overview beyond the present term, so it is unclear how the young children joining the reception classes in January will be accommodated. Planning for the reception children is being influenced by the schemes of work for the different National Curriculum subjects rather than the areas of learning. As a result, the areas of learning are intertwined with the National Curriculum rather than leading into it, and there is no clear picture of how children's skills will develop either through direct teaching or investigational activities.

20 In Key Stages 1 and 2, the school's curriculum offers a broad range of experiences covering all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Teachers have adopted the national guidance, which provides a solid framework for each subject, and they are using the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively to raise standards in English and mathematics. Pupils use their literacy skills very well to support their learning in many other subjects. There are good opportunities for pupils to use and apply what they have learnt in mathematics in other subjects, when appropriate. In science, pupils have good opportunities to investigate and present scientific evidence. ICT is another subject that has been given a higher priority since the last inspection through teacher training and improved resources. As a result, the curriculum in this subject is much broader than it was and standards and pupils get a good grounding in all areas of ICT. However, religious education does not meet statutory

requirements in Key Stage 2 and learning opportunities are insufficient to allow pupils to reach the standards expected by the end of Years 2 and 6.

21 The curriculum for older pupils is enhanced well by a range of visits and other activities. For instance, pupils in Year 3 have recently started to learn French, and drama is a particularly strong feature of the English curriculum in Year 6. Extra-curricular opportunities are good and, again, are particularly good for pupils in Key Stage 2. A residential visit in Year 6 and a range of sporting activities, support pupils' personal development well. A programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) has recently been introduced throughout the school. This is being promoted very well and is impacting positively on pupils' personal development and relationships. There are good opportunities for pupils to share their opinions and to respect what each other has to say. The school has applied for the Healthy Schools Award and aspects of the PSHE programme cover elements of this first award. Appropriate provision is made for sex education and dealing with awareness of drug misuse. These opportunities contribute well to the positive relationships that pupils develop with each other and support their good attitudes to school and to work. They also have a strong impact on the very good provision for pupils' social development, which is a strength of the school.

22 Links with the local community make a satisfactory contribution to the curriculum and opportunities offered to the pupils. Educational visits related to topics continue to enrich the curriculum and links have been developed with a local business that contribute to the teaching of science. Pupils support a variety of charities and the choir performs at a few local venues, which includes a residential home for the elderly. Good links exist with the local comprehensive school, to which nearly all Year 6 pupils transfer. The induction programme operates smoothly and there are also close curriculum links through subjects, such as science, design and technology, mathematics and ICT, which all serve to broaden pupils' experiences.

23 The school works hard to provide all the pupils with equal opportunities and access to the curriculum by providing a good ratio of additional adult support in lessons to support pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language, as well as those pupils who enter the school at different times during the school year. However, some pupils in Key Stage 2 miss the same lessons every week when they are withdrawn for additional support, particularly for English and music tuition. This is unsatisfactory because the statutory requirements are not being met for religious education, and it also impacts on pupils' learning in some other subjects. For example, during the inspection, a group of pupils missed a high quality experience in ICT, which could not be recaptured despite planned work to compensate in the classroom.

24 The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. The school has established a comprehensive policy that is reflected in its everyday practice. There are individual education plans for each pupil identified as having special educational needs, but the quality of these plans varies from good to just satisfactory. Crisply written targets are evident in some plans, particularly in literacy, and these are used well to give clearly focused support where it is needed most. However, on some individual education plans, many targets are too vague to be measurable and are of little use, although staff often provide sufficient support through their knowledge of the individual pupils. Very few individual education plans reflect learning needs in mathematics, even though the mathematics subject leader has clearly identified some pupils who are achieving

standards significantly lower than expected, by effective analysis of test data. This was an issue raised at the time of the last inspection and, whilst some progress has been made, is still an area for further development. Despite this, pupils with special educational needs are still being supported well by teachers who know them individually and therefore help them to make sufficient progress in their learning.

25 Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well in their quest to learn English. They receive sensitive support from bilingual classroom assistants during lessons and, consequently, make good progress in developing their language skills and similar progress to their classmates in other subjects.

26 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now generally good. The moral and social elements, which are now promoted effectively through the school's personal, social and health education programme, are noticeably the stronger elements.

27 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and remains broadly similar to the last inspection. It is still not systematically planned across the curriculum although, where it does happen, it is promoted well. The work done by Year 6 pupils about their hopes for 2002 is a good example where suitable opportunities for thoughtful reflection have been provided. In assemblies, however, periods of quiet reflection are often very limited and this significantly reduces the impact of these gatherings.

28 Provision for pupils' moral development is now good. Pupils are taught from the outset what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and quickly learn to distinguish right from wrong. Teachers are good role models and work hard to promote caring attitudes that enable pupils to show respect for others and their school environment. In assemblies, moral issues are discussed well. For example, the story of David and Goliath in a Key Stage 1 assembly was a good example of this. Older pupils also find out about deeper issues, such as drugs misuse. There is a clear set of school rules and these are supplemented by extra class rules devised by the pupils themselves. A suitable reward system is in place and pupils are proud when they receive them.

29 Provision for pupils' social development is now very good, and is a significant strength of the school. Relationships are based firmly on mutual respect and are very strong throughout the school, with teachers placing great emphasis on collaboration during lessons. Older pupils have opportunities to do jobs around school, such as preparing assemblies and selling fruit at break. The school's good range of extra-curricular activities encourages pupils to mix and socialise together, for example during sports. Pupils in Year 6 are also taken on a residential visit, which helps them mature socially. For some, it is the first time they have been away from their parents and they are expected to be independent and take care of themselves. Pupils' awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves is raised through regular support for charity.

30 Pupils' cultural development remains satisfactory. Their understanding of their local heritage is well promoted through a variety of visits and this also provides them with good first-hand experiences. An understanding of other cultures is promoted through subjects such as art and design, history, and the use of the Internet to research information for topics, such as Ancient Egypt. Pupils have attended a world music workshop on Latin rhythms, and staff responsible for supporting English as an additional language have taught ethnic dance and music, which pupils later performed at a Mela festival. However, religious education, and the celebration of the multi-cultural diversity in the school, are not as strong as they could be.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31 The school looks after its pupils well and now has good procedures in place for ensuring their general welfare. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Suitable health and safety measures are in place and followed closely. Nevertheless, a few minor concerns were identified during the inspection and brought to the school's attention. Child protection arrangements operate effectively and staff carry out their roles effectively to ensure pupils' health and well-being.

32 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development have improved since the last inspection, and are now good. Teachers know their pupils very well, have strong relationships with them and work hard to build confidence and self-esteem. High standards of behaviour are successfully promoted by all members of staff and, as a result, the school is calm and orderly, allowing effective learning to take place. Praise and rewards are used well to encourage effort and pupils' significant achievements are celebrated. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic progress have also improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory overall, but are still very mixed. They are very good in English and mathematics, where they provide a secure foundation for raising standards and improving individual pupils' progress in these subjects. These good practices are not yet,

however, extended into other areas of the curriculum. Furthermore, the school currently has insufficient accurate and reliable information for children in the nursery and reception classes to enable a clear judgement to be made about children's attainment at various points through the Foundation Stage.

33 Arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance continue to be satisfactory. The school is currently receiving good support from the local authority's education welfare service and, as a result of this, there has recently been a marked improvement in the levels of pupils' attendance.

34 Pupils with special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress. Links with a range of external agencies are well established and the school makes effective use of the support available for pupils with specific difficulties. The assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs follow current school guidance and practice, but these do not always allow close enough tracking and monitoring of individual pupils to ensure that they are achieving well against the targets set for them. This links to the vagueness of some of the targets that are actually set in the first place. Nevertheless, the support staff have very good relationships with pupils and use these effectively to encourage, guide and support their academic and personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35 Parents support the school well and make a good contribution to their children's learning. Parents have very positive views about the school and its work – better than the last inspection. They feel it is doing a good job in educating their children and are happy with the standards achieved. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views.

36 Since the last inspection the school has done a lot to develop links with its parents and has now established an effective partnership with most of them. There are ample opportunities provided throughout the year to discuss their children's progress, with the summer term meeting now taking the form of a whole school event to celebrate pupils' achievements. This has proved very successful and is to become a permanent fixture in the school calendar. Parents are kept well informed about general life in the school through various forms of correspondence, and this includes regular updates about curriculum topics. However, the quality of information parents receive about their children's progress in the end of year reports is not as good as it could be. Whilst teachers give detailed comments for English, mathematics, science and ICT, their comments on other subjects, and religious education in particular, are often too brief and not very helpful. The governors' annual report is generally well written and meets requirements, but the prospectus has some gaps. There is no statement informing parents of their right to withdraw their children from collective worship and religious education and, in addition, the description of the school's special educational needs provision is too superficial. Despite this, the involvement of parents with pupils with special educational needs is good. They are invited to termly review meetings, kept fully informed about what is being done in the school to help their child and, on occasions, have particular roles to play, such as helping their child with specific activities at home.

37 The school puts on a variety of events for its parents, such as a recent poetry reading evening, and actively encourages them to get involved with their children's learning at home. Homework is set regularly and home school diaries have been introduced for pupils in the junior classes, which have been well received by parents. For the younger pupils links with parents have been strengthened through the use of story sacks. The Parent Teacher Association remains very active and continues to provide generous support for the school. A few parents also help in lessons or with organised trips, such as a recent visit by Year 3 pupils to Stockton market.

38 Parents of pupils with English as an additional language receive good support from the school. The bilingual assistants play a pivotal role in communicating with parents and

bridging the language barrier between them and the school. This is being further extended by training and support for these parents using laptops to help them have a greater understanding of their child's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39 The school is led and managed effectively to promote good teaching and learning in most subjects and to develop pupils' personally and socially as well as reaching high standards in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

40 The head teacher leads the school well and underpins the caring and supportive atmosphere that pervades the school. There has been a conscious effort to get the climate right to then give pupils every chance to succeed academically. Academic rigour is there in English and mathematics, where the school has put its main focus over recent years, and this has shown itself in the improved standards at both ages seven and 11. However, there has been a casualty in religious education. The organisation of the school day accommodates the different needs of some pupils, for instance by providing additional literacy work in small withdrawal group sessions, or by giving them the chance to learn to play a musical instrument. However, on some occasions, the school's attempts to provide such activities actually disadvantage pupils in other ways. For example, pupils in Year 4 miss assembly and collective worship once a week when they leave to go swimming, some pupils are withdrawn from religious education lessons for additional literacy support, and a group of Year 3 pupils missed a very good ICT lesson where their classmates were given their first taste of the Internet for a similar reason. These anomalies could be overcome with a clearer strategic view of how the school day is organised and how time is used to best effect.

41 The senior management team manages a large and geographically disparate school effectively. They provide a sound management infrastructure for the teams of staff working in each age range and their regular meetings with colleagues help to overcome the problems associated with working in several buildings. However, one area where the geographical nature of the school does have an impact is in the Foundation Stage. Here, despite the best efforts of staff to maintain close contact with each other, the location of the nursery at a significant distance from the school does affect the continuity and cohesion of this age range. The new leader of the Foundation Stage is acutely aware of this and is already starting to think of ways to tackle the problem and to raise the profile of this age range in its own right within the school.

42 On balance, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Clear and definite improvements are being driven particularly well by the subject leaders in key areas, such as English and mathematics, with the result that standards have improved. However, other areas, such as the Foundation Stage and religious education have lost their direction and focus, although this has been recognised by the school and new appointments have recently been made specifically to these areas. In the short time they have been involved, these new staff already have a good firm grasp of what needs to improve and how this can be achieved, which bodes well for the school's future improvement. The provision for special educational needs was criticised in the last inspection and this has now improved. The co-ordinator has given good quality training to all staff and the day-to-day management of the school's provision and general administrative procedures are good. These enable pupils with special educational needs to enjoy equal access to all that the school offers.

However, there are no formal systems in place to enable the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs, or to monitor the effectiveness of teachers' planning to ensure that targets identified in individual education plans are being met.

43 Governors are very keen to do well for the school. They have undergone a lot of training recently and the partnership between the experienced vice chair and new chair of governors is very strong. So far, governors have not ensured that the religious education curriculum meets statutory requirements, that pupils all get a daily act of collective worship, or that annual written reports to parents contain sufficient information. In this respect, they have not fulfilled their statutory obligations sufficiently. On the other hand, governors have worked hard to get a very good understanding of the school's performance and are now playing an important and effective role in helping it to improve. They are starting to ask critical and searching questions, of themselves and the school, and are now much more clearly focused on evaluating the value that the school is adding to pupils' education and learning.

44 The head teacher plays a key role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, and is supported well by the subject leaders in English and mathematics. For instance, they observe teaching and learning and have a good understanding of what is happening in individual classrooms. The school's evaluation of its own performance is secure on the basis of regular analysis of what is happening in Key Stage 2, where staff are using this information well to set targets and track pupils' progress. However, the inconsistencies and confusion surrounding its baseline assessments in nursery and reception make it difficult for accurate evaluations to take place lower down the school or for it to evaluate its performance effectively at the end of Key Stage 1.

45 When money is identified for a specific purpose, it is spent well, for instance the deployment of bilingual assistants to support pupils with English as an additional language but to also forge stronger links with parents, overcome language barriers and improve communications between the school and home. However, the school improvement plan is vague and does not make clear enough links to the budget. Although the broad priority areas are identified, there is little substance to the actions and targets that are supposed to drive the school's development. Money is allocated to subject leaders on a historical pattern and the school's additional spending therefore tends to be reactive as needs arise rather than being carefully planned in advance. Nevertheless, given the standards reached by the end of Year 6, and the school's positive influence of developing children's personal and social skills, it still provides good value for money.

46 Staffing levels are good. All staff are hard-working, dedicated and clearly have the best interests of the pupils at heart. Staff training is a high priority and, for example, classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors have benefited from training linked closely to their roles and functions in school. Performance Management procedures maintain a good balance between the needs of the school and the individual professional development of members of staff. Teachers are aware of the need to update their skills and knowledge and have a very positive attitude to training. The school is justifiably proud of its team approach and new members of staff, including supply teachers, are made to feel welcome. The school also works in close partnership with local universities and contributes fully to the training of teachers.

47 The school is well resourced. Resources for art and design are particularly good, and the computer suite is a positive addition since the last inspection. Accommodation is adequate but has many shortfalls. Difficulties caused by the small size of the hall continue to be managed well but mean that opportunities for whole school assemblies are very limited. Classrooms are of sufficient size for the number of pupils in them and are suitably furnished. The nursery, which is situated two streets away, also offers satisfactory facilities but its remoteness does severely restrict access to main school. Although staff work hard to liaise and bring children across to the school on planned visits, the journey between the two sites is unpleasant and potentially hazardous. Outside, the playgrounds contain a good range of recreational games but are relatively small. The school field is also quite a distance away and is therefore not really useful as a teaching resource.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48 The school should now:

- (a) Strengthen the Foundation Stage by:
- providing sufficient management time for the new Foundation Stage leader to get a clear picture of precisely what is happening in the school;
 - making sure that assessments of what children can do when they first start in the nursery, and when they move into reception, are accurate and give a clear baseline from which teachers can plan how to extend children's learning;
 - making sure that teachers pay sufficient attention to the recommended areas of learning for children of this age by reducing the apparent confusion between this stage of a child's learning and the National Curriculum;
 - making sure that teachers assess what children can do, in relation to the Early Learning Goals set out for children of this age, by the time they are ready to leave reception;
 - carefully evaluating the impact of the school's decision to alter the organisation of the reception classes this year, in particular on the quality of learning for children from January onwards.
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 15, 19, 32, 44, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57)
- (b) Raise standards in religious education by:
- ensuring that groups of pupils are not withdrawn from parts of lessons for support in other subjects;
 - allowing sufficient curriculum time in all classes to teach the full requirements of the Agreed Syllabus;
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of what should be taught from the Agreed Syllabus;
 - producing subject guidance to support teachers' planning for lessons;
 - planning activities that are matched sufficiently well to pupils' varying abilities and that build on what they have previously learnt.
(Paragraphs 1, 18, 30, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131)
- (c) Make the school improvement plan more effective in supporting the school's strategic development by:
- identifying clear and precise targets within each general priority area;
 - identifying the costs, and other, implications of working towards each target;
 - specifying clear outcomes against which the success of the school's actions can be monitored and measured;
 - including sufficient financial information to allow the cost-effectiveness and value for money of the school's actions to be evaluated.
(paragraphs 45, 131)

49 Minor issues for the school to consider:

- (a) Look at the organisation of withdrawal groups to make sure that all pupils get an equal entitlement to a daily act of collective worship and that they do not miss the teaching of key skills, such as ICT or religious education.

(Paragraphs 23, 40, 130)

- (b) Improve the quality of annual written reports to parents.
(Paragraphs 36, 106, 111, 116)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
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	1	16	28	20	2	0	0
Percentage	1	24	41	29	3	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)	36	338
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	102

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	39

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	55

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	23	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	15
	Girls	19	23	21
	Total	30	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63% (83%)	71% (79%)	75% (92%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	14	15
	Girls	22	23	23
	Total	33	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69% (83%)	77% (92%)	79% (89%)
	National	85% (85%)	89% (89%)	89% (89%)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	27	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	23	26
	Girls	27	22	28
	Total	49	45	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84% (67%)	78% (61%)	93% (75%)
	National	75% (75%)	73% (71%)	86% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	23	24
	Girls	25	22	27
	Total	46	45	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79% (65%)	78% (58%)	88% (74%)
	National	73% (72%)	74% (74%)	82% (82%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	283	5	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	48	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	5	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	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	24.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	195

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	36.0
Total number of education support staff	2.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.0

Financial year	2001 – 2002
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	£
Total income	953,694
Total expenditure	928,246
Expenditure per pupil	2,179
Balance brought forward from previous year	50,366
Balance carried forward to next year	75,814

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	350
Number of questionnaires returned	178

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	57	42	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	44	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	46	7	2	1
The teaching is good.	63	37	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	44	5	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	45	6	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	65	31	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	37	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	42	5	1	5

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

50 The Foundation Stage consists of the nursery class and two reception classes. Children start nursery in the term after their third birthday in either September or January, whichever is appropriate. Children stay in the nursery on a part-time basis for five terms. This means that they enter the reception classes either in September or January. At the time of the inspection, the nursery welcomed 36 children every morning and afternoon, whilst the reception classes each had 11 children staying full-time. Another 12 children will enter each reception class in January. There are three children recognised with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage and a significant minority have speech problems. There are a significant number of pupils with English as an additional language, especially in the nursery, some of whom have little grasp of English.

51 The two reception classes are accommodated within the main school site, but the nursery is on a separate site a considerable distance away from the school. This makes the Foundation Stage very fragmented and spontaneous liaison between children impossible. Teachers do, however, carefully plan visits from nursery to reception, particularly in the term before transfer. The journey requires generous supervision as a road has to be crossed and so fewer adults are then left with the nursery children.

52 The nursery teacher has only been in school for a few weeks and is the new leader for the Foundation Stage. Her priority has been to settle the children into nursery and work with the nursery assistants to establish new routines with the children. She has informally identified areas across the Foundation Stage, which need to be addressed. The head teacher recognises that there has been an inconsistent approach in the past to the assessment of children within the Foundation Stage and the leader is to manage this process in the future. A new system using the 'Stepping Stones' of the Foundation Stage that lead children to achieving the early learning goals has been introduced and once embedded will act as a useful record of children's achievements. It will also support the planning process more effectively.

53 When children enter the nursery their achievements vary widely, and the nursery community consists of children who have enjoyed this experience for almost five terms whilst others have been there for only a matter of weeks. The nursery teacher is experienced in planning for the Foundation Stage and activities are well matched to the different needs of all the children.

54 Observations of the children in the present reception classes suggest that children's attainment on entry to reception is typical for four year olds. However, the children that are due to transfer into reception in January are working at much lower levels at the moment. On balance, the intake to reception is likely to be below the levels expected, with some children that are achieving well but others that are struggling to meet the levels expected of four year olds, especially in their communication and language skills.

55 Teachers in the reception class know their children well and have the skill to match learning to meet the needs of the children currently in their classes. The present numbers are small so children are very well supported in these classes at the moment. In the short term, the quality and range of

learning opportunities is good, but there is no clear picture beyond this term. It is therefore unclear how the young children, who will be joining the reception classes in January, will be accommodated since the current planning systems would not meet their needs sufficiently.

56 The profile of the Foundation Stage is not high enough in the school. Reception class teachers are still influenced in their thinking by specific National Curriculum subjects rather than the areas of learning recommended for young children, and they do not readily think in terms of 'Stepping Stones'. As a result the areas of learning are intertwined with the National Curriculum rather than leading in to it. There is no clear picture of how children's skills will develop either through direct teaching or investigational activities.

57 The quality of teaching overall is good, and this has improved in the nursery since the last inspection. Children learn well. This may not be the case in reception in January if the curriculum is not sufficiently developed to meet the needs of all the children.

Personal, social and emotional development

58 This area of learning is a strong feature of the Foundation Stage. All adults work sensitively to create a warm secure atmosphere in which children grow in independence and confidence. Nursery children quickly gain a sense of belonging and feel valued members of the class. They have their own peg in the cloakroom and their pictures are on the wall to help them find the right place. New routines have been introduced successfully into the nursery, and are reinforced consistently by all the adults. Children respond well. For instance, snack time is a courteous social occasion where children take turns to be the helper and talk quietly to each other and adults. Adults encourage children to do things for themselves, for example resources are at a suitable height for children to help themselves. They readily put on their outdoor coats because they look forward to playing with the large toys. The majority of children tidy equipment away after use, although some still need encouragement.

59 Adults promote social development very well and organise activities to help children take turns, play together and make friends regardless of age, gender, or race. The small group situation in the reception allows children to take turns in discussion more easily because they know that they will get their turn without having to wait too long. They confidently share their feelings about what makes them happy, sad or worried in an atmosphere of warmth and trust. Planned opportunities to reinforce safety messages are naturally and sensitively woven into the discussion by the caring teachers to alert children of dangers and where to seek help. Reception class children have grown in confidence and readily take the register to the main office in another building. The majority dress independently for playtime and physical activities.

60 All adults in the Foundation Stage are good role models for the children. They treat the children with care, respect and courtesy. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good because of high expectations and the very good relationships that exist. As a result children respond very well, their behaviour is good and they relate very well to each other. By the time they are ready to transfer into Year 1, most children have secure personal and social skills.

Communication, language and literacy

61 Adults in the nursery take every opportunity to talk with children and listen carefully to what they have to say. Speaking and listening skills develop well because of the good questioning skills of the staff and the stimulating use of resources. Children discuss the weather conditions and days of the week with growing confidence. For example, "Is it

Saturday tomorrow? I go dancing tomorrow.” Children become aware of how sentences are constructed because the teacher models writing on the whiteboard and uses a ‘washing line’ of cards to help children learn that words need spaces between them and a full stop at the end of the ‘line’.

62 Children in reception enjoy sharing big books. They know that authors “do all the hard work” and that their names appear on the cover. They know that print carries meaning. Stimulating activities encourage children to find clues about unknown words through pictures and by what the rest of the text is saying. They have a good grasp of initial alphabet sounds because their teachers introduce a wide variety of reinforcement activities, which make learning fun. Children apply early reading skills to their own individual books and discuss the stories confidently. They handle books with respect and talk about their favourite books.

63 In both the nursery and reception classes, good opportunities are provided for children to learn to write. There are informal writing tables in both settings and activities are planned to match children’s needs. Nursery children learn to control a pencil by following patterns and tracing shapes, while more formal handwriting is practised in reception and the work in books is well presented. More able pupils are beginning to write independently using known words and words from the display to help them to write a sentence.

64 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Teachers teach the basic skills well. They use resources effectively and make learning fun. As a result children concentrate well, enjoy lessons and learn well. The learning support assistant effectively supports children with English as an additional language. She liaises with parents who have little English and uses her bi-lingual skills very well to support children in both settings. For instance, she adds Punjabi text to resources where appropriate. She cannot be in two places at once and there are times when nursery children do not participate in speaking and listening sessions because they have such little grasp of English. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through individual learning targets and they make good progress. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1, most children are working close to the levels expected.

Mathematical development

65 Adults in the nursery and reception classes seize every opportunity to reinforce mathematical learning through informal opportunities throughout the school day. Nursery pupils count numbers in the snack group and then count cartons of milk, they count ingredients when decorating biscuits, and the number of children in activities. They learn the difference between full and empty through water play. Children are given valuable time to explore and investigate shape and patterns for themselves through puzzles, small world toys, sand and water play. Children increase their knowledge of numbers through good focused group activities carefully planned to match their learning needs. They order and count objects to six accurately and know when ‘Barnaby Bear’ is trying to trick them by miscounting.

66 By the time children are in reception they count accurately to 20. They begin to understand the concept of one more and one less as they investigate numbers, and are introduced to simple graphs. Number songs effectively reinforce learning in both the nursery and reception classes.

67 Children learn well because the teaching is good in this area of learning. By the time children are ready to move into Year 1, most are working at levels close to the levels expected. The small numbers in the reception classes this term has ensured good quality teaching and learning. However, it is questionable whether this level of provision can be sustained if the curriculum planning is not clarified.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68 Children's curiosity is stimulated considerably by the collection of natural foliage, cones and dried flowers in the nursery. They are intrigued by the hand-lenses and investigate carefully and enthusiastically. They handle the various sized cones gently and decide if they are rough or smooth. Learning is good because the teacher is skilled at asking questions to extend vocabulary and promote thinking.

69 Children in the reception classes investigate different kinds of fruit. They use their senses to observe, smell, touch, but best of all taste the fruit. "I can't wait to taste this," said one child when the teacher cut the juicy mango. Another child thought the paw-paw seeds were "like chocolate". Children confidently discussed preferences, comparing the taste of one fruit with another, using vocabulary such as "sweet", "sour", "juicy", "soft" and "hard", accurately.

70 Children in the nursery experiment with recycled materials to make models. They decorate biscuits and investigate the possibilities of working with play dough. In all of these activities they use the tools appropriately. By the time they are in the reception classes, children spread butter on bread fairly skilfully, mash bananas and make sandwiches very successfully. Early computer skills develop in the nursery and children know that the mouse controls the cursor; they use the 'paint-box' program confidently to make shapes which can be erased or coloured. Reception children have access to the computer suite. They have good control of the mouse and draw fruit then change colours using the 'paint-box'.

71 Children learn well because the activities they are given are so stimulating and the teaching is good. Well-chosen resources are used very effectively and teachers give children the opportunities and time to find things out for themselves. This is an improvement since the last inspection when too little opportunity was given to investigation in the nursery. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1, most children are working at the levels expected in this area of learning.

Physical development

72 Children in the nursery enjoy the freedom and challenge of playing outside with their friends. The majority move with confidence and climb, jump and steer the wheeled toys enthusiastically at the level expected for children of this age. Children have little opportunity, however, for more extended work or to devise their own challenges because the resources are fairly limiting.

73 Reception children have the opportunity to visit the nursery twice a week; but the large equipment is too small for some of them. Children in reception learn to follow instructions from lessons in the hall. They develop an awareness of space, and control their movements satisfactorily as they stretch and balance. Children in both settings have good opportunities to practise skills to help them to write, glue, paint and cut.

74 Teaching is satisfactory and children make steady progress in this area of learning. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1, most children are working close to the levels expected. The Foundation Stage leader has already identified that outdoor play activity is an area in need of review and greater planning.

Creative development

75 Children enjoy investigating with colours and textures across a wide range of activities. In both the nursery and reception classes, children paint self-portraits, decorated with textured hair. They match their eye colour accurately. These charming pictures illustrate a growing maturity as they move up from one class to the next. Children in the reception classes use photographs and a mirror to closely observe themselves as they work. They closely observe fruit and use pastels to draw what they see. This work is of a good standard.

76 Role-play is promoted appropriately in both nursery and reception. For example, the post office supports children's writing development well. Children sing tunefully, and enjoy action and number songs that encourage their creative development.

77 Teaching is good, particularly the focus and development of close observational skills which impacts on all areas of their work. Teachers value children's work and display it well. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1, most children are working close to the levels expected.

ENGLISH

78 Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. Standards match what is expected for seven year olds by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. As a result, standards are above what is expected for 11 year olds by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because literacy targets are matched well to their abilities and are taken into account when planning lessons. Those pupils with English as an additional language, together with groups of targeted pupils, including gifted and talented pupils in Key Stage 2, also make good progress because they are supported well either in lessons or when withdrawn for additional group sessions.

79 Throughout the school standards in speaking and listening are good. Teachers provide opportunities in lessons for pupils to talk with their 'partners' about their work. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development because they gain confidence in their own ability to express their opinions and talk about what they have learnt. They participate enthusiastically in class and group discussions. Teachers use these strategies across the curriculum to continue supporting pupils' learning well. Drama opportunities are well planned throughout the school. For example, in Year 6 a few pupils took on some of the character roles from Shakespeare's Macbeth, and classmates questioned them about why they took certain actions in the play. Both the questions pupils posed and the replies by the 'characters' were mature and showed how confident these pupils were when speaking in formal situations. Gifted and talented pupils from Key Stage 2 have recited poems, written by themselves, in front of an invited audience of parents, families and teachers.

80 By the end of Year 2 standards in reading are satisfactory. The school successfully runs a structured approach to teaching reading and pupils are encouraged to choose books to take home and share with their family. Pupils read fluently because they are taught to read unfamiliar words by saying the names of letters and to look for clues in pictures. Many pupils recognise author and title, and know the purpose of chapters in books. Pupils understand well what they read. For example, one pupil said "It's funny – carpets don't cut grass!" Standards in reading are good by the end of Year 6. The majority of pupils read with good understanding and many achieve beyond what is expected for their age. This is because these pupils have a good understanding of challenging texts in plays such as A Midsummer's Night's Dream and Macbeth. They read extracts from Macbeth expressively, paying good attention to punctuation for effect. When challenging teaching introduced Macbeth's soliloquy, "Is this a dagger I see before me", more able pupils quickly expressed their understanding by saying, "It is like a narrator in a story, but the actor is telling the audience what's going on in his mind". Pupils say who is their favourite author and they are able to critically review books they have read. One pupil had chosen a child's version of Hamlet as a library book, and when reading to an inspector quickly recognised an extract by commenting "It's a soliloquy, isn't it?" Pupils know how to find and retrieve information from books. They use index pages and most pupils know the purpose of a glossary.

81 The school has successfully placed a high priority on raising standards in writing over the last two years. As a result, standards in writing are now satisfactory by the end of Year 2. Writing skills are also practiced in some other subjects. For example, when

describing what they thought it would be like to live on the island of Struay, one pupil wrote, “I would like to go for a paddle because it would be faskit (fantastic)”. Pupils also write for a range of purposes including instructions and book reviews. Their writing follows a logical sequence. However, letters are not always positioned carefully on lines and some pupils are unsure about when to use capital letters and therefore place them in the middle of some words. Spelling is usually readable because pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them spell new words. By the end of Year 6 standards in writing are good. Pupils write for different purposes and writing skills are often practiced in other subjects. Pupils are often given opportunities to talk about what they are going to write with their ‘partners’. This helps them to organise their work logically. Much written work is of a high standard, with some pupils using a wide range of punctuation such as brackets and a separate line for each speaker when writing dialogue. Pupils think carefully about the words they choose, such as “paranoid” and they use similes to good effect. For instance, “The wild storm rages like an angry giant”. Pupils practice the important skills of concise writing, for example when composing accounts and instructions, such as when Year 6 pupils wrote an account of their visit to “Crucial Crew”. Their writing supported their understanding of citizenship well. They wrote about what they would do in emergencies such as road traffic accidents, accidents in the home or if there was a fire. In Year 4, pupils have written instructions on how to make a didgeridoo and have researched information about ‘The Haka’ (used by Maori warriors). This makes a good contribution to their multicultural awareness and understanding.

82 Teaching and learning are good, and particularly so in Years 3 and 6. All teachers plan their lessons well and make sure that activities for pupils with special educational needs are matched to their individual education plans. They also ensure that pupils with English as an additional language receive support, either from the teacher or from classroom assistants. This helps these pupils make good progress in their learning. Additional adult support in lessons is planned well and is effective in supporting different groups of pupils to ensure that they achieve well. Classroom assistants know what they need to do to help pupils learn. They regularly record how well pupils have achieved, and this is shared with the teacher. Teachers ask questions well to assess how well pupils are learning. They provide brief opportunities in all lessons for pupils to share what they have learnt with their 'partners'. In addition, all pupils are given their own writing targets, which are matched well to their previous learning. These opportunities impact well on pupils' learning and have helped to support the improvement in standards.

83 Teaching and learning are particularly effective in Years 3 and 6. In these classes, teachers have very high expectations of how pupils will behave and the quality of work they will produce. Consequently, pupils respond well. They are enthusiastic and work hard. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils were given responsibility for making choices in their learning. They shared with classmates at the end of the lesson the reasons for their decisions when designing their posters, such as "It will have more impact if I write these words in big letters". In Year 6, teachers provide a variety of challenging activities and lessons move at a brisk pace. This makes pupils work hard, concentrate well and they also enjoy their lessons. For instance, this was evident when pupils were disappointed that they were not going to study another Shakespearean play after Macbeth. Marking of pupils' work is very good. Teachers not only praise good work, they also identify clearly for pupils where they might improve.

84 English is led well by a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader. Management of the subject is also good because the progress pupils make is regularly checked and pupils are regularly tested to check the standards they reach. This information is then used very well to help group pupils for extra support and to plan future lessons. This effective subject management has already identified the minor weaknesses in handwriting. As a result, the subject leader plans to produce clearer guidance for teaching handwriting throughout the school. The effective leadership and management of English have contributed well to the improvements in this subject since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

85 Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, standards match what is expected for seven year olds. Pupils achieve well with the result that, by the end of Year 6, standards are above the levels expected for 11 year olds. This improvement in standards is due mainly to good teaching across the school but to particularly good teaching in Year 6, which prepares pupils very well for the national tests in this subject.

86 All pupils receive a broad and balanced mathematics curriculum and have a good range of learning opportunities. Pupils who have English as an additional language are supported well in lessons and consequently make good progress and achieve just as well as their classmates. For example, bilingual assistants give effective support in the initial part of lessons, which enables pupils

to take part in answering questions. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from class teachers and learning support assistants and this also enables them to achieve well. Booster classes for those pupils who need extra support are well taught and effective.

87 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, although in some lessons better teaching was seen. Consequently, pupils make sound progress in developing their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. Learning resources are used effectively and teaching reinforces the basic skills of numeracy and the correct use of mathematical vocabulary. In some lessons, the pace slows when teachers do not use their time to good effect, such as when pupils lined up to have their work marked, but lessons generally catch pupils' interest and hold their attention throughout. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall and is very good in both Year 6 classes. Strengths in the teaching of the oldest pupils in Year 6 are the lively pace of the lessons and the level of challenge, which keeps higher attaining pupils on their toes, interested and enthusiastic. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is also very good in Year 6. For instance, when marking work the teachers challenge, set further questions to extend knowledge and understanding and then provide activities to broaden pupils' knowledge through independent study. However, in some lessons in Key Stage 2, the quality of teachers' planning is not so carefully thought out and there is a lack of consistency in the way teachers plan activities to support the learning targets for pupils with special educational needs. Not all lessons match work well enough for lower attaining pupils and, without the effective support they receive from learning support assistants, pupils would be unable to tackle some of the worksheets and activities presented to them. Pupils with special educational needs do make good progress and achieve well, but this is mainly due to the professional approach of learning support assistants in their day-to-day work when working with small groups.

88 All staff make effective use of new technology to support learning in mathematics. For example, they use pupils' computer skills well to collect and present data in graphs. Effective links are made with other subjects, for instance data handling skills are used well in the science curriculum to present findings from investigations. All staff pay good attention to the correct use of technical vocabulary and therefore provide further opportunities for the extension of pupils' literacy skills. For example, all teachers use the initial part of a mathematics lesson well to encourage pupils to explain clearly how they arrive at answers. Teachers use good questioning skills to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding and give them time to answer questions using a good range of vocabulary. A strength of teaching throughout the school is the way teachers plan opportunities to develop pupils' personal and social skills. Many opportunities are planned for pupils to work in pairs and groups. In many lessons, pupils have a 'maths mate' to sit with during whole class activities and discuss different ways to tackle problems. This works well and in all classes, relationships between pupils are very good. They are supportive of each other and respond well to instructions.

89 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has very good subject knowledge and is therefore able to offer her colleagues effective support when planning lessons and activities. The new assessment and tracking system, designed to monitor the progress of pupils in mathematics, is very good and is proving a useful tool in the school's objective of raising standards. However, individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs rarely identify specific targets to improve skills in basic numeracy. This was an issue raised in the last inspection and has still to be tackled successfully.

SCIENCE

90 Standards in science have varied widely over the past few years but have generally improved since the last inspection. Standards match what is expected for seven year olds by the end of Year 2 and are above the levels expected for 11 year olds by the end of Year 6.

91 By the end of Year 2 pupils have developed satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding in all the main areas of the science curriculum. Most pupils understand what constitutes a fair test and carry out simple investigations. The school puts a strong emphasis on practical investigations with the result that pupils make good progress in this aspect of science through Key Stage 2. For example, Year 3 pupils observed the passage of dyed water up plant stems and recorded what they saw using clear, labelled diagrams. The more able pupils recorded their observations in writing such as, "I can see the veins at the bottom of the celery". Pupils in Year 4 were clear about what constituted a fair test as they planned their own investigations to find how different materials act as thermal insulators. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 used a systematic approach to their investigations on evaporation and condensation. They observed carefully, made valid comparisons and recorded their results using clear, descriptive phrases and well annotated diagrams. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have learnt about woodland food chains and used spider diagrams and keys to identify specific creatures. They build on their earlier work about electricity, although some pupils do not recall those experiences very clearly and need extensive revision in Year 6. In most classes pupils of all abilities do very similar work at the same time although the more able record their results in more detail, using a wider range of techniques such as tables.

92 Pupils systematically develop their scientific vocabulary as they progress through the school. The use of 'learning partners' in lessons encourages pupils to talk about their work and discuss their findings with others. This has a positive influence on their scientific language but develops their confidence, speaking and listening skills at the same time. Pupils also use ICT effectively to support their work in science, such as when some Year 6 pupils used computers to input data on the rates of absorption of different types of paper then produced bar charts of their results.

93 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers prepare their lessons well and use a range of techniques to make them interesting. Teachers are also good at creating positive relationships in their classrooms so that class control is only occasionally needed. As a result, most pupils have a positive attitudes to their work, and particularly enjoy the practical investigations and experiments that are rightly emphasised in all classes. Planning and carrying out investigations is the very essence of science and pupils throughout the school learn and remember better because of their first-hand work. Homework is set regularly and contributes to pupils' understanding, for instance when Year 6 pupils were asked to list equipment powered by batteries in their homes as part of their study of electricity.

94 Planning is closely linked to the national scheme and this ensures full coverage of the curriculum with topics being taught at increasingly more difficult levels as pupils move up through the school. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and conscientiously and occasionally add written questions or comments on how work could be improved. However, pupils do not always respond to these comments and so do not gain the benefit they could if this was monitored more closely. Pupils' work is carefully assessed against National Curriculum levels at the end of each unit of study. Although this does not measure long-term knowledge and understanding it does allow the school to measure the effectiveness of current teaching and learning. However, there is no system for monitoring the progress of individuals or groups of pupils on a year-by-year basis as is done for English and mathematics.

95 The leadership and management of science are good and this has contributed to the progress made since the last inspection. The school has adopted the national guidance for this subject, which is helping to improve standards as the teachers become increasingly familiar with it. The subject leader still has no opportunity to observe lessons but offers useful advice to colleagues when requested. Resources have been improved and are linked to the requirements of the school's new science curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

96 Pupils make good progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of the art and design process. As a result, standards are now above the levels expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is due mainly to the very good range and quality of resources and the effective use of the work of famous artists to enthuse and inspire pupils. The subject leader has organised resources very well and has put together a good portfolio of work representing skills in each area of the curriculum. This portfolio is used to good effect by all staff to extend pupils' skills and knowledge.

97 Pupils experience a good art and design curriculum. In all year groups, pupils are taught new techniques well and extend their skills through the use of a wide range of media.

Many styles of art are explored by looking at the work of artists from the modern, natural sculptures of the Cumbrian artist Andy Goldsworthy, to the traditional portraits and landscapes of famous artists. Teachers make good links with other subjects across the curriculum, for example art and design is used to extend work in history. A good example of this was seen in Year 3 as pupils explored printing techniques after studying Celtic writing and designs through their work on Anglo Saxons. Effective use is made of new technology to extend pupils' art and design skills. For instance, Year 1 pupils explored self-portraits by first using a digital camera to take their photograph, which was then used as a resource as they used pencils, charcoal and paint to make a self-portrait. Multicultural aspects of art are developed well and good examples of this were seen in Year 3 work on their investigation of patterns. Pupils used a range of cultural artwork to identify patterns typically found in Eastern, African, European and Oriental art.

98 Teaching is good and this another reason why standards are high. A clear strength is how well the basic skills are taught and built upon over time. For example in a particularly effective lesson in Year 6, pupils explored proportion and perspective in the composition of a picture. The teacher used the first sketches of pupils' work very well to demonstrate good techniques and then used the portfolio of work to show how their work could be extended and developed. Pupils responded enthusiastically to this and showed good knowledge and understanding of how to use a wide range of media, including acrylic paints and oil pastel crayons, to give bold, bright colours.

99 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has very good subject knowledge, has organised a very good range of resources for her colleagues and gives good advice and support. The current portfolio of work provides a useful assessment tool showing what pupils know, understand and can do in different year groups, but no formal systems are in place to assess and track the development of individual skills. Resources for art and design are very good and are used well to increase pupils' learning opportunities.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100 Only one lesson was seen during the inspection but a wealth of evidence was available from other sources to judge that there have been improvements in design and technology since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained in Key Stage 1 and match what is expected for seven year olds by the end of Year 2. Standards have risen in Key Stage 2 because the identified weaknesses in the quality of teaching have been tackled successfully and this has had a significant impact on standards. Consequently, standards now match what is expected for 11 year olds by the end of Year 6.

101 In the last inspection, pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 was judged to be uneven because the teaching was unsatisfactory. Their skills were not being developed systematically and, as a result, pupils were not being challenged at an appropriate level. This is not the case now. Pupils now develop their skills in a step-by-step way, building on what they have learnt already. However, opportunities are still occasionally missed in Key Stage 2 to allow pupils more scope for individuality. For instance, the "Moving Monsters" project did not challenge pupils' design skills as well as it could because pre-printed pictures were used as a starting point when pupils had the pre-requisite skills to design their own monsters.

102 Teaching is now good and this is a definite improvement. Teachers' knowledge and understanding has been supported by new curriculum guidelines for design and technology but, more significantly at Key Stage 2, by very effective links made with specialist teachers from the local Secondary School. This initiative has enabled school staff to work alongside colleagues from the Secondary School and has proved a successful form of training. Their subject knowledge and understanding has increased as well as their confidence. As a result teachers' expectation are high and this has had a direct impact on the standards pupils achieve. Pupils take great pride in their work. The quality of the products they make is good and they present their written work well. They evaluate their work honestly and logically. For example, one pupil questioned the warmth of the slippers she had designed and made. When looking critically at the model he had just finished, one pupil wrote: "It fits together properly. I am proud of it."

103 Teachers use resources well. A wide variety of large wheeled toys and interesting small vehicles captured and sustained the interest of Year 2 pupils in a lesson relating to the uses made of vehicles. As a result, they worked productively and enthusiastically and, by the end of the lesson, had matched labels to vehicle parts correctly and drawn and labelled their own diagrams using specific terminology such as 'axle', 'chassis', 'wheel' and 'body'. In the same lesson the teacher used support staff very well, they were well briefed and played a valuable part in the success of the lesson. As a result the pupils with special educational needs had gentle but effective support to ensure they sustained concentration and overcame difficulties as they arose. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language were supported very well to make sure they understood the main teaching points. As a result these pupils had the same access to the curriculum as the others and learnt well during this lesson.

104 A strength of the school's approach to design and technology lies in the way topics are linked to work in other curriculum areas in a meaningful way. For instance, pupils in Year 6 learn about the importance of the structure of the Anderson Shelter in history. When they then design a shelter for a remote area of the world, they test structures using technology skills, test materials for appropriate weather conditions by applying scientific skills, and tabulate their findings using mathematical skills. Pupils' collaborative work with their 'partners' during lessons makes a positive contribution to their social skills as well as encouraging their independence, speaking and listening.

105 The subject leader has provided effective leadership and management and has actively driven improvements. She and her colleagues have worked hard to implement the new curriculum guidelines and have ensured that each topic is sufficiently resourced. Regular liaison with Secondary School colleagues has supported the success of the linked project between the two schools and helped to raise standards for the older pupils.

106 The subject leader keeps a portfolio of work to illustrate standards in each topic, which is very well presented, and photographs track the many experiences and opportunities that have been offered to pupils and their positive response. Currently the subject does not have a formal system in place to summarise pupils' attainment at the end of topics or at the end of key stages. This means that standards are not judged formally in National Curriculum terms and the school is missing the opportunity to see how far standards are rising. This is also why comments in annual reports to parents are often too bland and lack sufficient information on the progress pupils have made.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

107 Few opportunities were available to see history or geography lessons during the inspection. However, sufficient evidence was available from other sources to judge that standards in both subjects have been maintained successfully since the last inspection. Standards match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make steady progress throughout the school.

108 The quality of teaching has improved in Key Stage 2 in both subjects since the last inspection and this is due to the successful implementation of new curriculum guidelines, which support teachers effectively in planning their topics and lessons. Teachers focus clearly on what they want pupils to learn and ensure that the route to new learning matches the ability and interest level of all pupils.

109 Teachers use resources well in both subjects. A strong focus is the use made of the local area and visitors from the local community. For instance, in a Year 2 history lesson a visitor from the community shared his wartime experiences with the class. He was the same age as the pupils when war broke out and this captured pupils' interest immediately – they were rapt. History was brought to life when a pupil tried on the evacuee's coat, complete with identification label, and cap. When the battered suitcase was opened to reveal the one soft toy, which the evacuees were allowed to take with them to their strange but safe new home, the pupils fully appreciated the differences between then and now. Similarly in geography, pupils study life on a remote Scottish Island and compare and contrast it with their life in Stockton. They write about their preferences drawing on their geographical knowledge and sound reasoning, such as: "I would miss the shops and the cinema, but I would enjoy riding my bike along the empty road and building sandcastles." The Year 4 history topic has been modified to focus on Captain Cook as an explorer because his birthplace is nearby and he is regarded as a local hero. This deepens pupils' understanding of their local culture. Visits to Stockton and around the immediately locality enrich pupils' learning and help to increase their geographical understanding. As a result of closely observing photographs, simple maps and aerial photographs, Year 1 pupils develop early mapping skills. For example, they knew that "The nursery was easy to find because it is really close to the field and the railway line." They draw maps of their route from home to school and include well-known landmarks labelled clearly. The use of the local and wider community means that geography and history make a valuable contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

110 A good feature of the curriculum in both subjects lies in the way teachers plan lessons to link with other curriculum areas in a meaningful and appropriate way. For example, Year 6 pupils use the Internet as a rich source of information for both subjects. They find information about the mountainous regions of the world, and present their findings about climate, jobs, and transport well, often using mathematical tables. Teachers take every opportunity to develop literacy skills through history and geography. Pupils record their work appropriately in geography, labelling maps clearly and carefully. They scan read information in history and make notes; even the younger pupils in Year 1 write their own labels to share the history of the old toys which parents and grandparents have loaned for their display. History accounts are well presented and punctuated and Year 6 pupils used their word-processing skills to record their visit to see an Anderson shelter. "Mr Tom" is studied in

literacy during the topic on World War 2 and pupils thoroughly understand the setting of the novel. Year 4 pupils very effectively used coffee-stained paper to record Captain Cook's instructions on how to combat scurvy. Year 6 pupils used their residential visit to the Lake District to see for themselves the physical features of the area and this deepened their understanding of how the weather influences the way in which the area has developed.

111 The subject leaders manage their subjects satisfactorily. They keep useful portfolios of pupils' work, which help them to monitor standards, although opportunities are missed to monitor the teaching and learning in the classrooms. Teachers assess pupils' work informally through ongoing questions, marking and evaluation but there is no procedure in place to formally assess pupils' work in either history or geography, and this leads to some superficial comments about pupils' progress and learning in these subjects on annual reports to parents.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have been maintained since the last inspection but the range, quality and breadth of experiences offered to the pupils has improved. Standards match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

113 Pupils make steady progress and develop their skills systematically and effectively. They start in Key Stage 1 using simple graphics programs to create and manipulate simple pictures. For example, Year 1 pupils learn how to use the 'fill' option to colour-in shapes and liken this to pouring marbles into an enclosed space until there is an even coverage of colour. By the end of Year 2, pupils have created simple text using word processing packages, and have combined their sentences with clip-art or graphics of their choice, such as digital photographs or images picked from CD Roms. Pupils in Key Stage 2 start to handle information in different ways, including spreadsheets, from which they often create different types of graphs, and databases. They develop confidence to search the Internet and select information and pictures for themselves. By the time they are in Years 5 and 6, pupils confidently combine information from different sources, for example when creating advertising posters using a range of font styles, layouts, backgrounds and graphics. Year 6 pupils take this one step further by creating slideshows including sound and simple animation. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of control technology is developed throughout the school, starting with simple floor robots and leading to controlling more complex devices.

114 Staff have undergone an intensive programme of training since the last inspection. This has been effective and has raised their levels of knowledge, skill and confidence in this subject. Consequently, teaching is now good, and sometimes very good. Teachers plan carefully, using the nationally recommended scheme for guidance, and focus well on the specific skills that they expect pupils to learn. A strong feature of the ICT curriculum is the way in which skills are taught at the same time as making use of the technology to support pupils' work in other topics and subjects. For example, when Year 5 pupils were introduced to the use of formulae in spreadsheets, this was carefully linked to their work in mathematics. Similarly, when Year 3 pupils explored the Internet for the first time, they were looking for images of pyramids linked to their study of Ancient Egypt in history.

115 Teachers have just started to use an interactive whiteboard in the computer suite. This has revolutionised their teaching and has added a stimulus that captures pupils' interest and imagination. For instance, Year 3 pupils gasped in amazement when the Internet first loaded onto the big screen in front of them and they realised the amount of information they had access to. Teachers structure their lessons well. For example, there is always a clear introduction and demonstration of the skills to be learnt, a precise recap of the vocabulary and important language for that lesson, and plenty of time for pupils to work practically followed by a brief, but effective, round-up session that usually illustrates how well pupils have done during the lesson. During their practical work, pupils are encouraged to work with 'learning partners', which not only encourages them to learn from each other, but contributes strongly to the development of personal, social and speaking and listening skills.

116 The subject leader has a good grasp of what is happening across the school, and is leading and managing the subject well. The computer suite is an effective resource that is having a positive impact on the development of pupils' skills, and computers in classrooms are regularly used to reinforce this learning. However, there are occasions where some pupils are withdrawn from ICT lessons for additional work in literacy. This disadvantages these pupils and prevents them from getting the same high quality experiences that their classmates receive. A portfolio of work from all year groups gives staff clear guidance to judge the standards in this subject, but the comments in their annual reports to parents often focus too much on what has been taught and how pupils responded rather than on what they actually learnt.

MUSIC

117 Standards in music have been maintained since the last inspection. Standards match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. It is apparent that the school does a great deal to enrich the curriculum for many pupils by offering additional instrumental tuition, expert teaching from a number of sources and many opportunities to take part in concerts and music festivals.

118 Pupils make steady progress throughout the school. During their time in Key Stage 1, pupils begin to develop an understanding of pitch, tempo and rhythm. They begin to see how music can be represented by written shapes and use their knowledge of pitch to follow a zigzag high/low pattern. Pupils sing songs, like "Halloween's Coming", enthusiastically although they have not yet developed sufficient proficiency to sing tunefully. They also use instruments, like the glockenspiel, to make simple tunes although some still need help with the correct technique needed to create clear notes. Older pupils listen with interest to music, such as "The Carnival of the Animals", and show sensitivity when they describe their responses. For example, pupils in one Year 3 class said: "There are lots of animals that don't eat meat and then a big animal comes and catches them".

119 Teaching is satisfactory overall but there is some better teaching where teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the music curriculum. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were encouraged to read notation accurately and combined a simple range of notes from the pentatonic scale with different rhythms to produce pleasing sounds. This type of teaching is stimulating, and challenges pupils to do well. They really enjoy their music lessons, especially when they are given the opportunity to compose and use a range of instruments.

120 Teachers of classes within the same year sensibly share ideas and plan together. However, their assessment of pupils' work is not developed well enough yet. Teachers do not have any formal systems to help them establish how well pupils are making progress or how high their standards are. Pupils' work, such as composition or musical appreciation, is not recorded or written down and this hinders the assessment of their learning. This shows in the vague comments about pupils' progress in music on the annual reports written for parents.

121 Music is used well to support a number of other areas of the curriculum, such as physical education where it combines readily with dance. It also makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. For example, support staff have taught some pupils Asian dances and music so that they could take an active part in the Asian culture festival in Middlesbrough. Teachers are beginning to use ICT to enliven pupils' music lessons and add an extra dimension to their work. The school enriches the music curriculum considerably in a number of ways. Selected pupils are given tuition in a range of instruments but this is restricted in numbers, and pupils taking part inevitably miss out on other parts of the school curriculum. The subject leader runs a school choir for pupils aged seven to 11, which performs in the local community, raises money for charities, and provides a focus for worship during assemblies and at Christmas. Music is also an important part of assemblies. Teachers provide good role models when they play the piano or, in one case, play the guitar to accompany singing.

122 Music is being led and managed well by the subject leader, who does a great deal to maintain the profile of music in the school, including giving advice to support colleagues and running extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum for many pupils. Problems with the use of the music suite were noted in the last inspection. At that time, concerns were raised about the suitability and location of this room and the considerable loss of teaching time when pupils had to move from the main school buildings. During this inspection, a similar situation occurred. On one occasion, a great deal of time was spent by pupils walking to the suite, which could have easily been saved by teaching the same lesson in the classroom. In one case, audio equipment was carried to and fro risking damage unnecessarily. In addition, such journeys require a non-teaching assistant for security purposes but, because they have little real function during the lesson, valuable time and professional expertise are wasted. These factors are not impacting on pupils' standards in music but are organisational issues affecting the use of the music suite, which is not necessarily adding much benefit to pupils' learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123 Standards in physical education have been maintained since the last inspection. Standards match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils learn to swim in Years 3 and 4 and, by the time they transfer into Year 5, roughly half can swim well in a range of strokes beyond the 25 metres expected by the time they leave the school, with the rest managing 10 metres and a small number still struggling to swim.

124 The physical education curriculum follows the nationally recommended guidance for this subject. Teachers plan their lessons carefully with the result that teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers give clear instructions and use their very good relationships with the pupils to support their learning. For example, in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were introduced to the 'cha cha', the teacher sensitively joked with the pupils, referring

to current pop-stars, such as Ricki Martin, when describing their attempts to dance. Lessons are paced well to keep pupils interested and involved in physical activity. For instance, in an outdoor games lesson for Year 3, the teacher expected pupils to respond quickly and keep moving as they practiced throwing balls to each other. Teachers are confident to teach the basic skills and intervene appropriately to correct pupils' techniques, such as showing them how to hold and project the ball correctly for a chest pass.

125 Pupils respond well to instructions and clearly enjoy their lessons. They understand why they get 'puffed' during exercise and that their heart is pumping blood round their body as they work to give it enough oxygen. Physical education lessons give pupils plenty of opportunities to work together and develop their social skills in team situations. In this way, pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are fully included and integrated into lessons.

126 The subject leader is new to the post and is still coming to terms with it. There is no strong leadership or management in physical education, although the head teacher takes an active interest and many other staff are involved in supporting the wide variety of extra-curricular sporting activities on offer. The school has a good reputation for its sporting achievements, including recent success in local football and netball leagues. There are sufficient resources to support the curriculum but the hall is small, there is limited outdoor playground space and the school field is too far removed from the main buildings, and often too wet, to be of any real use. These limitations are managed well to make sure that pupils get a broad and balanced curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127 Standards in religious education are below what the Agreed Syllabus expects for seven and 11 year olds at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are lower than they were at the last inspection. There are several reasons why standards have dropped. There is insufficient guidance to support teachers' lesson plans and there is very little written work, particularly by pupils in Years 5 and 6, to show how well they have learnt. Teachers plan the time allocated to religious education by alternating it with history and geography. This results in insufficient time being given to the subject to allow pupils to reach the expected standards by the end of each key stage. Consequently, by the time pupils reach Year 6, their knowledge and understanding of the faiths taught is too patchy.

128 By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise the name of Jesus but many do not know that Jesus was born at Christmas and died on a cross at Easter. They know the Bible is an important book, but only more able pupils know some stories from the Bible. In Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding is patchy. They know the names of the three faiths taught but are often confused. For example, they recall making Diwali lamps but are not sure which faith celebrates this festival. Some pupils think that Jews go to the synagogue on Sundays. Pupils do not know the significance of the symbolism of Jewish prayer clothing. Some pupils think that Jesus is very important to Jewish belief. Pupils in Year 4 visited a mosque during the inspection. They learnt a lot about the importance and ritual of Muslim worship during this visit. However, when talking to these same pupils, it was evident that their previous learning about Islam was weak. They had not done any work about Islam this term, before visiting the mosque.

129 Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Lesson planning is often too brief and work is not matched well enough to pupils' differing abilities. This is because teachers do not know how well pupils have previously learnt and, as a result, their expectations of what pupils can do are too low. Planning also reflects teachers' weak subject knowledge and understanding of the Agreed Syllabus. For example, pupils in Year 4 are being taught about the Five Pillars of Islam, which should be taught in the Secondary school. Teachers do not plan well enough for pupils to use their writing skills to record what they have learnt – this is reflected in the scant amount of written work that older pupils produce.

130 The leadership and management of religious education are unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2 religious education does not meet statutory requirements because small groups of pupils are regularly withdrawn from some lessons to receive specific support in English or music. This affects their statutory entitlement to an appropriate curriculum. Annual reports to parents do not give sufficient information about the progress pupils make. Where there are examples of pupils' recording what they have learnt, marking of work is perfunctory. There are no records of pupils' attainment in religious education and there has been no checking on the quality of teaching and learning.

131 The school has identified the need to improve this subject and has identified it loosely in the school improvement plan. A newly appointed subject leader, who has only been in post for a few weeks, has already identified that teachers lack confidence and need more guidance to support their lesson planning. She has a good understanding of the Agreed Syllabus requirements and has sought the help of a co-ordinator in another school to review long term planning of the subject. Resources have been re-organised and an inventory produced. This indicates that the school has a good capacity to make the improvements needed to raise standards in the subject.