

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST CHAD'S RC VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bishop Auckland

LEA Area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114263

Head teacher: Mrs C Holborn

Reporting Inspector: Mr A M Scott  
27545

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 254932

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Witton Park Bishop Auckland County Durham
Postcode:	DL14 0EP
Telephone number:	01388 603632
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Wootton
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Andrew Scott 27545 Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Music Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs Judith Menes 11468 Lay inspector	Education inclusion	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?
Mr Mike Wehrmeyer 15015 Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education The Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and the other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a smaller than average primary school with 92 pupils. All the pupils are white and there are no pupils from ethnic minorities; approximately half of the pupils are Catholic. The school serves an area which has suffered from social deprivation but which is now beginning to move forward. Eighteen per cent of pupils take up free school meals and this is broadly average. A third of pupils have special educational needs which is higher than average. About half of these pupils need specialist help, while four pupils have statements of special need. This is also higher than the national norm. Most of the special needs are moderate learning difficulties or speech and communication problems. The attainment of pupils when they enter school is below the national average. The school has four classes with two year groups in each class, except for pupils in Year 2 who are in one class.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. There is a strong, caring atmosphere which values the full development of pupils, including their academic achievement. The pupils enter the school with below average abilities and make good progress through the school. By the time they leave the school, pupils have at least average standards in English, mathematics and science. There is a strong team spirit among the staff at the school and this helps to produce good quality teaching and effective teaching support. The leadership and management of the school are good; the head teacher and governors have worked hard to improve the school over recent years and have a clear and sensible vision of how it could develop further. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The pupils make good progress because of good teaching. They benefit from a good start in the Reception and Year 1 class, which is successfully built on as they move through the school.
- Pupils feel secure and valued because teachers are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and value their contributions. The teachers' clear expectations ensure that pupils develop good attitudes to their learning and behave well.
- The curriculum is rich and varied and this inspires the pupils to enjoy learning and to work hard.
- The links with the community and other local schools are especially strong.
- The head teacher and the governing body have a clear sense of direction and, together with all members of staff, work very hard to develop the school.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards of work in science investigations in KS1, and in geography, history and art and design throughout the school are not high enough.
- There is not enough rigour in identifying what is and what is not so effective in the school as, for example, in the quality of teaching and the use of assessment information.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good improvement. The curriculum of each subject now has a good structure, there are more opportunities for independent learning, and there is a clear system for monitoring subjects. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen, especially for junior pupils, because of better teaching. The personal development of pupils is now very good. The accommodation has improved to include an extra teaching area for pupils in Year 2, a small computer suite, refurbished offices and a new playground.

## 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	E	A	A*
mathematics	B	C	A	A*
science	A	E	A	A*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards in English, mathematics and science were well above average in 2002. They were very high compared to similar schools and the school's performance was in the highest five per cent nationally. These results are impressive when compared to results in previous years, especially in English and mathematics. Only a small number of pupils take the tests each year and so it is not uncommon for results to vary from year to year. This partly explains the high results in 2002 as there were few pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 class. However, the results were also achieved through well-focused extra teaching leading up to the tests. The school's own targets for success in the national tests were met. The trend of improvement over time at the end of Year 6 is close to the national average. The attainment of pupils in the present Year 6 is average in English and science, but above average in mathematics. The standards of pupils' work by the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Standards in English are on a par with expectations, although writing is better than average. Standards in mathematics are also average but pupils' attainment in science is below average. Over recent years, standards in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been lower than average but there was a distinct improvement this year, helped by the very small number of pupils with special educational needs. Children's attainment by the end of the Reception class is much as expected for children of their age in all areas of learning. This represents good achievement from when they enter the school, due to good quality teaching. Progress throughout the school is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, pupils move at a faster pace in Reception and Years 1, 5 and 6, where there is a higher proportion of good teaching. Standards by the end of Year 6 are at the levels expected in ICT (information and communication technology), physical education and design and technology. The standards in art and design, history and geography are below those expected because too little time is allocated to enable them to be taught in sufficient depth. Standards in music cannot be judged, since there was not enough musical activity during the inspection. However, all pupils sing hymns well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They are eager to learn and participate fully in lessons and other activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Good.</b> Pupils behave well in lessons and when playing together at break and lunch times.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils get on very well with one another and with adults. They are considerate and respectful, and support each other sensitively in lessons and around the school.
Attendance	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Attendance is below the national average.

Pupils are cheerful, friendly and confident and take a pride in their school. They are enthusiastic about learning and so concentrate hard in lessons to improve their skills and knowledge. They look after each other very thoughtfully, as when one of them is hurt in a lunchtime accident, and behave well because teachers make their expectations very clear. However, despite concerted efforts by the school, the level of attendance is not good



enough and has never been better than average in recent years. This is due mainly to family holidays during term-time and extended illnesses.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>

*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.*

In all classes, teachers develop strong relationships with the pupils. This ensures that pupils are relaxed and positive in lessons and keen to learn. It also makes for good behaviour. They liaise well with the teaching assistants, so that lower attaining pupils, especially those with special educational needs, benefit from close adult support when necessary. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is good. Teachers explain new skills effectively to pupils and give them ample opportunity to practise them. In this way, pupils develop well in spelling, punctuation and mental mathematics, for example. Teachers are not so good, however, in matching the level of work to the needs of all the pupils. Often, teachers provide the same work for pupils in classes which contain two year groups. This does little to motivate more able pupils, in particular, and help them achieve standards which should be within their grasp. Teachers are good at encouraging pupils to think for themselves in mathematics, where pupils can solve their own problems in a variety of ways. However, this is not always the case in other subjects. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have enough opportunity for independent work in science. In geography and history, throughout the school, pupils do not carry out their own research projects enough. Teachers have recently upgraded their own expertise in ICT which has helped strengthen pupils' ability to work with computers. Teaching is good throughout the school but it is more effective in Reception, Years 1, 5 and 6. In these classes, teachers are better organised and have higher expectations of their pupils. They have a clear picture of what their pupils know and can do, and so are able to plan work which will challenge and stimulate them.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Good.</b> There is suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is very well enriched by a very good range of activities and fruitful links with the local community. However, not enough time is given to some subjects to ensure a good coverage.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Good.</b> Although the work for pupils could be better targeted, the close support that the pupils receive means that they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	<b>Very good.</b> The school provides ample opportunity for pupils to reflect about the wider world and their own actions. It fosters a strong sense of right and wrong, and the importance of valuing other people. It does not acquaint pupils enough with the different cultures in Britain today.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Good.</b> The school places great importance on the well-being of its pupils. Teachers are very effective at promoting good behaviour. They are not so good at checking how well pupils do in their work over time. Although the systems for assessing progress are satisfactory, teachers do not use the results of tests skilfully enough in their planning.

The curriculum is good because of the varied experiences offered to pupils. The sense of community is particularly strong and teachers encourage pupils to learn of the wider world through in-depth studies of the local village. The community spirit is especially important within the school and it is the cornerstone of the school. The togetherness of the staff conveys a sense of harmony and confidence, which the pupils absorb. The school has very good links with parents and keeps them well informed of their children's progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	<b>Good.</b> The strong and enthusiastic leadership of the head teacher gives the school a clear direction and real sense of purpose. All staff work closely together in the development of the school. The management of subjects is satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Good.</b> The governing body has a good knowledge of what goes in the school and is fully involved in its development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The school has good systems in place to check how well it does. However, its evaluations are not always detailed enough and tend to focus on the good points. As a result, standards have not all improved as quickly as they might have.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Good.</b> The school's priorities are well funded through careful budgeting. The head teacher and governors work hard to make sure that they get good value for money.

There is a good match of staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Class sizes are smaller than average and there is a full-time teaching assistant in three of the four classes. The school has spent a lot of money on learning resources, with the result that most subjects now benefit from good resources. The recent improvements to the building are having a positive impact on life at the school, especially for pupils in Year 2 and in access to ICT. The subject co-ordinators are increasingly monitoring their subjects more thoroughly but not all evaluations of colleagues' teaching are rigorous enough.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Their children like school.</p> <p>Their children are making good progress in school.</p> <p>The school is helping their child become mature and responsible, and behave well.</p> <p>The teaching is good.</p> <p>The school is well led and managed.</p>	<p>A few parents would like to see the school work more closely with them and keep them better informed about how their children are getting on.</p> <p>A few parents would like to see a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.</p>

There is strong parental satisfaction with the school and the vast majority of views expressed were complimentary and supportive. The inspection team agrees with most of the parents' views. It agrees that the school could do more, within the pupils' annual reports, to tell parents precisely how well their children are doing in all subjects. However, it does not agree that the school does not work closely with parents. There are many occasions when parents and school work closely together, including the operation of the 'Walking Bus'. The team also finds that there is a good range of activities outside lessons throughout the year for a school of this size.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

1. Children enter school with levels of attainment which are mainly lower than average for their age. Their language and mathematics skills are below average and their knowledge of the world and creative development are under-developed. Children's physical development, however, and their personal, social and emotional development are much more typical for children of their age. All children are admitted to the Reception class in the September of their fifth year, which ensures that they benefit from a whole year's teaching. The good quality of teaching in the Reception class means that pupils make at least good progress through the year. By the time they enter Year 1, most children have skills which are typical for their age. Some children are capable of tackling Year 1 work towards the end of their time in Reception. This means that children have a positive start to their school career.
2. In the national tests in 2002, pupils at the end of Year 2 achieved standards that were below average in reading. Nevertheless, the results put the school above the standard of similar schools. Standards in writing and mathematics were well below average and below the standard of similar schools. Too few pupils attained the levels expected for their age and few were successful in gaining the higher levels; in writing no pupils reached the higher levels. Teachers' assessments showed that standards in science were very low compared to what is expected of pupils of this age. Results show that there has been a gentle but steady improvement since the time of the last inspection. However, the small number of pupils taking the tests each year means that comparisons with national data and the results of similar schools are not always reliable. The results in 2002 were also influenced by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In the past, girls have tended to do better than boys in all subjects, but this is much less of a problem now.
3. In the current Year 2, standards show an improvement on last year's test results. Fewer pupils have special educational needs and so there is less impact on standards. Standards in reading are as expected for pupils by the end of Year 2; this is because they have a good store of familiar words and they are gradually acquiring the skills to help them decipher new words. Higher attaining pupils already have these skills and so read with confidence and expression. Lower attaining pupils lack fluency even with simple sentences. Pupils' writing is good because nearly all pupils can sequence sentences to make a simple narrative. Pupils with special educational reach similar standards to the rest of the pupils but depend more on adult support. Standards in mathematics are average. Pupils have solid skills especially in their use of number. They know, for example, their numbers up to 100 and the addition and subtraction facts up to 10. However, only higher attaining pupils are skilful at using this knowledge in mental problems. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty recalling basic number facts and this undermines their calculations. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of shapes and measures. Standards in science are below average. Most pupils have an adequate knowledge but more able pupils do not gain the skills expected.
4. Pupils' attainment in ICT, design and technology, geography, history and physical education is as expected for the end of Year 2. In art and design, however, their attainment is below average because pupils do not develop their basic skills enough and they do not use a wide enough range of media. It was not possible to judge the quality of pupils' overall skills in music, although they sing well.
5. In the national tests of 2002, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards in English, mathematics and science that were well above average. This was very impressive. These results were achieved because all pupils achieved the expected level and many pupils achieved the higher level in the tests. Much of this success was due to the effective boost of focused teaching of these subjects in the months leading up to the tests. These results showed a very sharp rise from the previous year. Over time, results have been somewhat erratic but this is not untypical

of a school with a small number of pupils taking the national tests. However, the trend over recent years has been positive and has kept pace with the national trend. Compared to their attainment when they were at the end of Year 2, the pupils who took the tests last year made good progress over time.

6. Standards in English are broadly average for pupils at the end of the current Year 6. Pupils achieve average standards in speaking, listening and writing. As pupils enjoy lessons, their concentration is good. This helps them to develop their understanding and encourages them to talk openly and confidently about issues, such as the chequered history of their own village. Pupils write effectively in a variety of styles, from instructions on how best to take a bath to a debate about the merits of wearing a school uniform. Many pupils are no better than satisfactory in reading because they do not enjoy a wide range of reading including non-fiction books and so their vocabulary is not as wide as it should be. Pupils' technical skills, which involve spelling, punctuation and handwriting, are all sound. In mathematics, pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils have a good grasp of number and this enables them to approach problems logically and confidently. It also helps them to set out their working efficiently. The standards of lower attaining pupils are below average because they are less secure in number and so deal with problems less successfully. Pupils' knowledge of space, shape and measure is good and they know how to present findings with informative graphs. In science, pupils' attainment is satisfactory and is increasingly more secure because they are given opportunities to carry out experiments for themselves. Pupils are likely to achieve the targets set by the school for 2003 in the national tests in English and mathematics.
7. Pupils' attainment in ICT, design and technology and physical education is at the level expected by the end of Year 6. However, their attainment in geography, history and art and design is unsatisfactory. In geography and history, pupils do not cover enough work during the year and so their knowledge is limited. They know a lot about local geography and history, for example, but not enough about map-work and other countries. They have some skills in research using resources but not enough understanding of change over time. In art and design, pupils do not have a wide enough knowledge of artistic techniques and influences. In addition, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to evaluate their work to see how it could be improved.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Although the targets in their individual plans for learning are not always specific enough, teachers plan lessons which allow for their abilities. They also make sure that teaching assistants are deployed to support them throughout lessons. This support is good and contributes strongly to the pupils' attainment and personal development.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils like coming to school. They are cheerful, friendly and confident and take a pride in their school and the improvements to the buildings and grounds. Many participate in the various extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm. Most pupils are keen to learn and respond very well to the good teaching and classroom management that the school provides. They behave well and often very well in lessons and assemblies, maintaining good levels of concentration and listening carefully to the teacher and each other so that they are ready to answer questions and participate constructively in discussions.
10. Children in the Reception class gain confidence and independence during their first year in school so that they are able to work in groups without supervision. They quickly develop very good relationships with each other and with staff, and respond well to the inclusive, small school atmosphere. Older pupils are encouraged to be good examples and they respond well to this expectation by offering to help when they see an opportunity and taking care of the younger children. At break times, older children willingly play with the younger ones. Play can become boisterous outside, which occasionally leads to accidents, but the smaller children have confidence in the care and friendship of older pupils and make full use of the playground.

New arrivals in school are welcomed warmly, and quickly integrated into the school community.

11. Pupils are thoughtful and able to put themselves in the place of others and imagine how others might feel in different circumstances. This means they can offer constructive suggestions in a personal, social and health education lesson as to how boisterous play occurs and how it could be avoided. Pupils do not regard bullying as a problem and are confident that staff will deal with it if it occurs. No pupils have been excluded from school in recent years. Pupils are enthusiastic about the reward system, understand it well and can explain how it works. They have great respect for the head teacher and enjoy showing her their work.
12. Attendance is below the national average. This can be explained to some extent by absence caused by a particularly virulent virus and other incidences of long-term illness but the number of families taking holidays in term time is also a factor. The school is very proactive in checking on pupils who have not arrived in school and maintains clear records of pupils' absence and the reasons given. The education welfare officer provides good support when needed. There is no unauthorised absence and pupils usually arrive at school on time.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

13. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Children benefit from a positive start to their school life because teaching is especially good in the Reception and Year 1 class. In this class, which contains two year groups, there is a positive learning environment and rich opportunities to inspire children. As a result, they make at least good progress. Teaching is at least satisfactory in Years 2 to 4 and often good, but is better in Years 5 and 6. This is because teachers' planning in Years 5 and 6 is better, staff are clear about what pupils need to do to improve and they match work more precisely to the different abilities of pupils. Consequently, pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 have been steadily rising over recent years.
14. This picture of teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection. The school has a systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching, closely linked to its priorities. For example, each term of the current year has seen a focus on English, mathematics and science. All the teachers responsible for these subjects have observed their colleagues teaching. However, in some cases, there has been too much emphasis on the strengths of the teaching and not enough identification of what could be improved.
15. A real strength of teaching lies in the rapport teachers develop with their pupils. Teachers insist on good levels of concentration and expect good levels of behaviour. As a result, pupils are respectful and have a positive attitude to learning. This is improved when teachers spice up the content of their lessons. In a Year 1 geography lesson about weather, the teacher produced two suitcases of different clothing. The pupils had to judge which of these was most suitable for hot or cold weather. Their excitement in doing this simply reinforced their learning. Teachers make good use of resources in most of their lessons. For example, the decoration on Grecian urns helped pupils in Years 3 and 4 to develop an eye for detail in an art and design lesson. The making of kites galvanised pupils in Years 5 and 6 into action in a design and technology lesson. Teachers use whiteboards and overhead projectors wisely to emphasise new learning and to focus the concentration of pupils.
16. Teachers structure their planning efficiently. They give every lesson a clear purpose and share this with the pupils so that they know exactly what they have to do. Teachers often give lucid explanations of new learning and back this up with plenty of examples. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson on punctuation, the teacher provided a long list of words for the pupils to practice adding commas. The pupils learned quickly from this. Teachers tend to keep lessons humming along and this keeps pupils on task. Teachers have a confident knowledge of most of the subjects they teach. This was evident, for example, in the whole-school hymn practice

and in mathematics work in Years 5 and 6. As a result, pupils were keen to learn and participated eagerly.

17. Where teaching is most effective, teachers ask very good questions of the pupils. Teachers recognise the different abilities of the pupils and vary their questions accordingly. As a consequence, all pupils feel fully involved and valued. Teaching is especially effective when teachers provide work that is stimulating and challenging but not too demanding. In the same Year 1/Reception lesson, the teacher insisted the pupils learned the proper scientific vocabulary. Therefore, they were proudly able to refer to stag beetles, aphids and antennae.
18. Throughout the school, the contribution by teaching assistants to pupils' learning is effective. There is very good communication between teachers and the teaching assistants and this helps the assistants to know what they should be doing in every lesson. During whole-class discussions, they sit with less confident pupils or those with special educational needs, quietly explaining issues if necessary or motivating restless pupils. This was especially important in a science lesson to ensure that all pupils in Year 3/4 could concentrate on their mini-beasts. Teaching assistants play a vital role in the good teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers plan suitable work but the good quality and availability of adult support are crucial to the pupils' good progress.
19. Although teaching is never less than satisfactory it is less effective when teachers do not match the planned work to suit the abilities of all the pupils. When work is planned for different abilities, teachers generally only provide it for average and lower attaining pupils and make no separate provision for higher attainers. In the Year 2 lesson on punctuation, it was obvious that some of the higher attaining pupils already knew not only that commas were necessary in a list of words but that 'and' was necessary between the last two words. The planning for pupils' different abilities is better in mathematics than in English and science, which is one reason why standards are better in mathematics. Teachers have high expectations but sometimes the level of challenge is simply too high. In a Year 3/4 English lesson, most pupils found it too hard to understand a text and then make their own suggestions of atmospheric words. Only higher attaining pupils came up with 'breezy' and 'dehydrated'. Mostly though, teachers' expectations of higher attaining pupils are too low.
20. Teachers do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to think and learn for themselves. In mathematics, teachers have worked hard to encourage mental agility. This has been successful. Opportunities have been far fewer in science, especially in Years 1 and 2, and in other subjects like geography and history throughout the school. In addition, teachers do not take enough advantage of all subjects to develop key skills in English, mathematics and ICT. For example, there is very little writing in history by older pupils. Computers are not used well enough to support work in other subjects. For example, in science pupils make limited use of computers to find information, to present their findings in graphs and tables or to monitor experiments.

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

21. The school provides a good curriculum, enriched very effectively by a good range of extra-curricular activities and very good links with partner schools, and has an excellent standing in the community. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well organised to meet the requirements of national guidance for this age group and gives the children a good start in school. The school has rightly made its key priority the development of literacy and numeracy. Adhering closely to the national guidelines, teachers ensure that pupils acquire the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. However, there are too few opportunities to use these skills in other subjects such as history, geography and science. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection in the opportunities for independent learning in mathematics. This has effectively raised standards in investigational mathematics. The school is still

working towards the adoption of a structured planning scheme for science. Problems in finding a permanent co-ordinator to manage this subject have delayed this.

22. Teachers have developed suitable work schemes for all other subjects, based on termly plans. As a result, the curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. Each subject is planned for separately but then often linked with a wider topic. The time allocated to some subjects, such as art and design, is less than in many schools. This means that pupils have less chance to achieve a real depth of study. The school is looking at ways of making links between subjects to alleviate this situation. Teachers have started to include in their planning different levels of tasks to match the varying abilities of their pupils. On occasion this works well. For instance, in a Year 5/6 technology lesson, the pupils extended their mathematics skills of scale and proportion by transferring their measurements to large scale kites. At other times some of the skills needed in science or geography, for instance, are not always in place in time.
23. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Teachers work together to produce comprehensive individual learning plans for these pupils. There is good information about the needs of the pupils and often their targets for improving are few and well focused. For example, some pupils have to learn to spell a set number of key words. However, in many cases, the list of targets is too long and not easily achievable for pupils in the short term. A target for one pupil was 'to be aware of different strategies when reading', and this was one of nine targets. Support and planning for lower ability groups are usually very good. However, the matching of tasks to middle and higher ability groups is not always as accurate as it might be.
24. The curriculum includes a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. Appropriate attention is given to sex education within the planning for science. The school takes a positive stance on bringing to pupils' attention the dangers of drug abuse. The school is able to provide a much wider range of extra-curricular activities for its pupils than most other schools of a similar size. The very good links with many partner institutions benefit the pupils by easing their transfer into secondary education. The links with the community are excellent, a strength of the school. The head teacher has worked hard to make the school more widely known and to secure its place at the heart of a wider catchment. Many of the links serve a valuable educational purpose. For instance, the lessons supported by members of the local history group and local radio station brought the pupils' history learning to life.
25. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The head teacher's vision, shared by the staff, is to develop confident, considerate pupils, aware of the consequences of their actions. To this end, the arrangements for the pupils' wider education are well planned to have a dramatic influence on pupils' lives from the earliest years in school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
26. The provision for spiritual development is very good. The strength of the spiritual provision lies in the opportunities provided by the staff. As well as regular teaching about spiritual matters in religious education lessons, the staff plan assembly themes to develop ideas further. Staff seize opportunities that build on pupils' sense of awe and wonder at the things they see or hear in lessons, as they arise. For instance, in a Year 5/6 lesson the teacher used the surprise of pupils at the difference in the rate of fall of parachutes to teach them important scientific principles. Teachers give pupils plenty of time for reflection. All teachers stress that pupils need to think about what they are saying so that they can give clear opinions.
27. The arrangements for pupils' moral development are very good. In lessons, the teachers encourage pupils to develop a willingness to listen to each other's ideas and an openness to cultures and faiths different from their own. In class discussions, teachers promote fair turns and open up debate about moral issues like pollution and care for the environment. Teachers demonstrate how the rules are vital to the happy and calm atmosphere of the school. Older pupils maintain the positive code of what is right and what is wrong, and show this in their concern for the younger pupils, based on the good model they see presented by the staff. Assembly themes effectively introduce pupils to the impact of moral issues. A particularly

important area is the training in telling the truth. Pupils are taught that mistakes are part of living and learning.

28. Provision for social development is very good. Sensitive relationships permeate the school. From the first days in the Reception class, teachers provide very good social training. This is continued throughout the school, with many opportunities for pupils to work together in harmony, discussing their work and reaching conclusions. Older pupils are given jobs which enable them to become responsible and independent, but there are few opportunities to help pupils to develop their own initiative. The staff work hard to earn the respect of the pupils, and this is what gives the school its distinct ethos of tolerance and good manners. The opportunities given by the many after-school clubs show how the school is sensitive to the social needs of the community. Pupils learn generosity by supporting many charities during the school year, often linking the school to the wider, global, community.
29. The arrangements to promote the cultural development of pupils are satisfactory overall. Teachers raise pupils' awareness of culture through the curriculum, in art, music, dance, literature, history and geography. The nature of the timetable means that these are not pursued deeply or rigorously enough. The school introduces pupils to some of the different groups in our society, but not to the full range or richness of the cultures now resident in modern Britain.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

30. The school is very caring; this is demonstrated by all members of staff. Teachers know their pupils very well, have a good understanding of their needs and treat them with respect and kindness. As a result, pupils feel safe in school, have confidence in their teachers and feel able to go to them with work-related or other problems such as bullying. The school has very good systems to monitor pupils' attendance and behaviour, and class teachers use their knowledge of individual pupils to promote and monitor their personal development.
31. The school has made very good provision for the health and safety of pupils and staff. There is a strong governor involvement in the monitoring of the building and grounds for hazards, for example. There are very well organised and well-established routines for the beginning and end of the school day, and mid-morning and lunch breaks, which promote a safe, calm and orderly atmosphere. A good example of this is the 'Walking Bus'. This is a system organised by parents which meets pupils and returns them to a nearby car park where parents can drop them off or collect them safely. A parallel initiative by the school has led to traffic calming measures and provision of a pavement to improve safety when alighting from cars and the service bus. There are good procedures to promote child protection with regular training for staff. The school is working towards the Healthy Schools award and one successful initiative has been to encourage pupils to bring only healthy snacks to school. Many pupils bring small containers of fruit, which they eat with enjoyment at break time.
32. The school does good work in encouraging attendance. There are rewards that highlight the class with the highest level of attendance each month and pupils who have achieved 100 per cent attendance. This information is on display in the entrance lobby so that parents are reminded of the importance the school attaches to good attendance. A letter is sent to parents each year asking them not to take their children for holidays in term time. However, levels of absence are still above the national average and further efforts may be needed to overcome this problem.
33. The school promotes good behaviour through the school. Teachers use a reward system that is effective and helps to deter any bullying. When problems arise with behaviour, the school is proactive in finding an appropriate solution. For example, once the new playground was completed, the old yard was designated as an area for supervised football at lunchtime. This reduced potential problems caused by boisterous behaviour, whilst giving pupils a constructive outlet for their energy. The school keeps good records of all incidents. Parents are pleased



with the provision for behaviour and discipline in the school, and the school consults and involves them if their children's behaviour gives cause for concern.

34. The school has satisfactory procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Since the previous inspection, and with the guidance of the local education authority, the school has discontinued the cumbersome range of procedures that had built up. The staff are pleased with the new systems because they can see more relevance in them. The school makes effective provision for the national standardised tests. Information from these tests at the end of Year 2 enables the teachers to predict likely outcomes at Year 6. There are, however, insufficient tracking points between these ages. The absence of such information means that teachers are not able to monitor the pupils' academic progress with the rigour that they need to apply for this monitoring to be effective. However, teachers know their pupils well informally and frequently discuss their progress with them.
35. The new system involves the staff in discussions about standards, in order to reach agreement about the quality of work needed at each level of attainment for all subjects. This information is beginning to be used to create targets for pupils in English, mathematics and science. The targets are not consistently linked to National Curriculum levels. They work best when they are linked, and when pupils can see how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. In English, in Year 6, pupils have a clear idea of how to develop their writing, but do not have a similar awareness for reading. Teachers use assessment information satisfactorily to identify groupings within the classes. On occasion, however, they do not use this information to help them match the work of middle or higher ability groups closely enough. The lack of assessment procedures for most other subjects means that teachers have only a general, not a precise, picture of pupils' progress in these subjects.
36. The assessment of the progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Their individual learning plans are reviewed informally every half term by the whole staff working together, and formally once a term. However, there is little evidence, for example, that targets alter as pupils reach them perhaps during a term. Teachers do not write their opinion on the learning plans of how well pupils have progressed, although this does influence the targets for the new learning plans. In addition, teachers do not analyse sufficiently how well pupils with special educational needs progress over time in standard tests.
37. The staff in the Foundation Stage use assessment procedures well. Information from nursery feeder schools is checked early in the Reception year by means of a profile of children's attainment when they start school. The performance of children in the Reception year is monitored regularly, to ensure that they make appropriate progress in the six areas of learning. Similarly, the school analyses the standard tests given to the pupils in Years 2 and 6. This helped staff to realise, for instance, that the writing skills of pupils in Year 6 needed attention. The analysis is not, however, of sufficient depth to show exactly which components of writing were weak and what form of development was needed. Therefore, pupils' standards in writing do not improve fast enough.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

38. Parents are rightly very pleased with the school and the education it provides for their children. In particular, parents are confident that the school expects pupils to work hard and will help them grow up to be mature and responsible. They like the positive atmosphere of care and the quality of teaching and discipline, and feel that their children make good progress in their learning. A few parents would like to see the school work more closely with them as well as providing a more interesting range of activities outside. This was not borne out by the inspection findings. However, the inspectors do agree with a few parents who feel that the school does not keep them sufficiently informed about how their children are getting on.
39. The school welcomes parents in school and regards them as partners in the education of their children. It provides good information for parents through a well-presented brochure and early

years booklet, notice-boards, and regular newsletters. In addition the school arranges meetings to inform parents on a range of issues covering health, residential visits, the curriculum and how they can help their children at home. Courses are also arranged, sometimes run by parents, such as one recently on using computers. There are good opportunities for parents to meet teachers to discuss their children's progress. However, written information for parents on pupils' progress is not as good, because annual reports are not personal to the child for all subjects. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the annual reviews of their child's progress.

40. The school make good provision for parents of children about to start school. Parents are given the chance to look around the school and meetings are arranged to provide them with further information. Opportunities are provided for the children to become familiar with the school. Parents are welcome to come into school if they have queries or concerns and nearly all are happy to do this. Pupils take home a reading diary through which parents can communicate with teachers. Parents support their children's learning well through hearing them read regularly and helping with homework.
41. A few parents help regularly in school, for example, with the library and with extra-curricular activities. Parents played an important role in securing the improvements to the road outside the school gates and setting up and running the 'Walking Bus'. Many are willing to help when they can; they support fund-raising events very generously and overall make a significant contribution to the work of the school.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

42. The leadership by the head teacher, key staff and governing body is good. There is a shared commitment to promoting good standards of learning, strongly supported by a religious ethos and sense of community. The school has a warm, caring, family atmosphere, in which all members of all the school are valued equally. The head teacher has a clear vision of what the school needs to do to develop, and her enthusiasm and hard work inspire her colleagues to share this sense of purpose. As a result, the school is steadily improving and there is considerable potential to improve further.
43. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The teachers' planning of the curriculum is now based on good national guidelines. This has contributed to raise standards especially in English and mathematics. The school has created more opportunities for pupils to learn independently, especially in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in science. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are now above those expected by the time pupils transfer to secondary school. Teachers who manage subjects have more responsibility in monitoring the quality of teaching and lesson planning. They do a good job but there is still room for improvement. For example, teachers usually praise the good elements of teaching in a lesson but do not always spotlight the weaknesses. Teachers know how well pupils do in formal tests but do not analyse results enough to see precisely which areas of learning need attention.
44. The school's plans for improvement are straightforward. There is good communication between the head teacher, staff and the governing body before deciding upon what would be best for the school. The current plans include the creation of a computer suite, developing teachers' skills in the teaching of literacy and in the management of subjects. All these have mostly been successfully dealt with and the school is now in a good position to move forward with new plans.
45. The management of the school is satisfactory. The head teacher works closely with the teacher who is second-in-charge and with all staff to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school. All staff meet regularly throughout the week and discuss issues formally and informally. Staff support one another very well and this has been especially important for teachers who are new to the school. However, the head teacher and subject co-ordinators are

not yet objective or rigorous enough in checking on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. For example, although there are guidelines for all subjects for each year, the head teacher does not make sure that all elements of them are taught, as in art and design, geography and history.

46. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. All these pupils are given special plans for learning which contain a number of suitable targets. However, there can be up to nine targets and these can be either very specific or very broad in definition. For example, a pupil will know exactly what he has to do to improve if he has to learn the four, six and seven times tables. It will be much less obvious if the target is to improve reading comprehension. In addition, targets can last for several terms, sometimes years, and this does little to spur pupils to achieve their targets. The learning plans do contain a large amount of information about the needs of each pupil, which is regularly updated, and this is helpful for teachers and teaching assistants.
47. The governing body of the school is effective. Governors are not only very supportive of the school but they work hard and are a strong force in developing it. Governors have regular contact with the school and provide valuable expertise. One of the governors, for example, who is a builder, was able to help oversee the recent building work at the school. Another has termly meetings with the headteacher to double-check that all health and safety issues are met. The governors have a clear view of the kind of school they want and give a clear lead. For example, they have instigated much of the improvements to the building and have fought to establish safe routes to school with traffic calming measures and the creation of the 'Walking Bus'.
48. The governors keep a close eye on how the school progresses. They are kept well informed of developments by the head teacher at frequent meetings and are involved in school activities, such as the coaching and refereeing of football matches. The chairman of the governors is passionate about the school and very active. She is in constant touch with the head teacher and staff, and helps with issues when she can. For instance, she has been in talks with the catering company in order to improve the lunches for the pupils. However, the governors are not as critical as they should be. For example, although they have been well aware of standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in recent years, they have not done enough to enquire why they have been lower than average.
49. The school handles its budget very well. There has been a reasonable surplus in recent years, despite the constant programme of refurbishment. This is mainly because the diocese has been very supportive and also because the school has a very high income per pupil. The school allocates its funds to reflect its needs. For example, a lot of money was spent last year on English books and the new computer suite. This is likely to have a positive impact on pupils' learning in time. The school also uses additional funds to good effect. Last year, as in previous years, the extra money provided to help pupils in Year 6 to boost their national tests was spent on providing special teaching. As a result, the test results were the highest they had been for many years. A recent audit showed that the school's systems of financial control are sound.
50. The school has a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the pupils. Class sizes, except the Year 5/6 class, are relatively small and all classes, except Year 2, have the benefit of a full-time teaching assistant. Although the school does not spend a lot of money on staff development, it nevertheless manages to ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, benefit from regular training. All staff, for example, receive training in child protection issues. The head teacher holds termly meetings with all members of staff to discuss their progress and professional needs, following a lesson observation. The resulting information is used satisfactorily to direct teachers' own development. Recent developments to the school building have been beneficial to the school. For example, pupils in Year 2 are now taught in their own room and not at one end of the hall. There is a new playground and refurbished offices. Shortly, the kitchen will be updated and a wildlife area will be recreated. Outside, the

grounds are good for environmental studies but not so good for sports as the field has a sharp slope which makes competitive games more demanding. There are ample learning resources of good quality.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. The head teacher, staff and governors should now:

1. raise standards in
  - a) science by the end of Year 2, by ensuring that higher attaining pupils receive work that is appropriate to their abilities (paragraphs 3, 75, 77, 78, 79)
  - b) geography and history by the end of Year 6, by ensuring that pupils benefit from a broader curriculum, and that there are enough opportunities for independent research (paragraphs 7, 88, 90, 91)
  - c) art and design throughout the school by ensuring that all pupils develop their skills systematically and that pupils are more able to evaluate their own work (paragraphs 7, 80, 81, 82, 83)
2. ensure a more rigorous approach to identifying what is effective in the school by
  - a) analysing pupils' tests results and daily work more thoroughly to identify what teachers need to do to improve pupils' learning (paragraphs 19, 23, 68, 74, 78)
  - b) being more objective when evaluating the quality of teaching in lessons (paragraphs 14, 43, 45, 69, 79)
  - c) checking whether all subjects have enough coverage over the school year (paragraphs 21, 22, 82, 91)

In addition, as a minor issue, the school should:

take every opportunity of improving pupils' experiences of the other cultures that exist in Britain and around the world  
(paragraphs 29, 80, 82)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

25

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

30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	10	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	28	40	32	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	92
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

YR– Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	30

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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	9	6	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (75)	60 (75)	73 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	11	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (75)	73 (88)	60 (88)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

\* Because fewer than ten boys or girls took the tests in 2002, only the total figures are shown, in line with the governors reporting arrangements to parents.

### 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	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (63)	91 (75)	91 (88)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	8	7	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (81)	64 (81)	82 (88)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

\* Because fewer than ten boys or girls took the tests in 2002, only the total figures are shown, in line with the governors reporting arrangements to parents

**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	92	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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



### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4
Average class size	23

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	300541
Total expenditure	290168
Expenditure per pupil	3154
Balance brought forward from previous year	21740
Balance carried forward to next year	32113

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
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	92
Number of questionnaires returned	53

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	58	32	4	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	45	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	57	9	0	4
The teaching is good.	55	42	0	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	53	9	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	34	4	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	36	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	42	9	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	66	28	0	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	34	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	58	13	2	2

\* Figures may not equate to 100% due to rounding

## **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**

52. Children are admitted to the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. A sensitive starting procedure means that they settle quickly and happily. The arrangements for children's learning in the Foundation Stage are a strength of the school. Since the previous inspection, the quality of both the teaching and the curriculum has improved, and is now good overall. This ensures a good level of progress in the Reception class. The management of the Foundation Stage is effective, and has put in place good long-term planning, securely linked to the national guidance that identifies the early learning goals identified for children of this age. The staff continue to provide a wide range of interesting and appropriate activities. The high expectations from the staff succeed in motivating the children, encouraging their concentration and developing their thinking response in activities that they themselves choose.
53. There is now a more detailed system to measure children's attainment when they enter the Reception class. This shows that overall the children's attainment is below the average expected for their age. The teacher's records track the children's progress closely over the year. They show that the children make good progress and most are ready to start on the National Curriculum programme of study by the end of the Reception year. The good teamwork between the class teacher and support staff creates a purposeful learning environment. The children flourish in the brightly decorated classroom. The teaching is particularly effective in gaining the children's attention, and extending their interest and concentration.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

54. The children start the Reception class with personal, social and emotional development at a level appropriate to their age. They socialise well, mix appropriately with older pupils and have a confident sense of belonging to the school community. Well-planned routines train the children in polite behaviour. The staff encourage independence, and require the children to tidy up after activities. They make good progress, and are soon able to line up to go to the hall as sensibly as the older pupils. In assemblies they sit quietly and pay attention. The staff promote confidence during outdoor play sessions using adventurous equipment. In lessons the children often form into pairs or small groups, which enables them to share ideas and experiences. They are given jobs to do in and around the classroom, such as taking the register to the secretary, that prepare them for greater responsibility later. The staff keep a detailed record of social development. The teaching is good, especially in promoting positive attitudes to learning and ensuring good behaviour.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

55. The children start the Reception class with below average skills of communication, language and literacy. Children are reluctant writers at first. The teaching is good and the children make good progress in language work. The strength of the teaching lies in the way all the elements of speaking, listening, reading and writing are fused together, each one reinforcing the others. The lessons are taught in a lively way so that the children develop satisfactory listening skills. The teacher encourages all the children to have a turn at answering the questions. This means all are practising and extending their speaking skills. However, their speech remains below average because their vocabulary is quite limited. The teacher uses the 'big books' well. As the children look at these, they are developing their reading by recognising simple, everyday words. Pupils' writing is satisfactory because they are learning to use letter sounds to write individual words. The teacher tries to include a real experience in every language

activity, underpinned by a systematic approach to learning basic phonic sounds. The strong focus on children speaking is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. This is particularly effective for the children who have special educational needs; they receive a good level of support. Most of this class will achieve the standards expected for their age and a few children are likely to be working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum by the time they reach the end of the Reception year.

### **Mathematical development**

56. Children start the Reception class with underdeveloped mathematical skills. In the longer lessons the teacher builds in good practical activities to give the children the hands-on experience which is at the heart of the early learning goals identified for this age group. This experience supports children's mathematical development particularly effectively, as the children use apparatus for sorting, ordering and making patterns and counting. They also practise using numbers in their heads and can subtract, for example  $6 - 2$ . The teacher employs an effective mixture of learning styles. For some children the attraction lies in memorable rhyming songs and number jingles, for others the key is counting physical objects. The challenge is always there to go further and higher, and the children respond well. All the children share in celebrating each new success. Adult support is always available to guide them to extract important basic skills from the resources. This is good teaching and promotes good progress. Most children are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year, with a few children already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

57. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world are lower than the level expected at the start of a Reception year. However, the children make good progress in a stimulating learning environment filled with objects to engage their curiosity and interest. For example, they learn how to recognise and identify mini-beasts, such as earwigs and caterpillars. The teacher succeeds in encouraging the children to rely on their senses as they explore the real objects and situations provided for them. They learn about the world in and around the school by looking at and discussing the different areas and classrooms. They gain a reasonable idea about the passage of time by comparing earlier and later, morning and afternoon. They make good progress in acquiring mouse and keyboard skills, recognising letters and making shapes through their play on the computer. They know how to operate a remote control robot to give them the feel of direction and distance.
58. The children extend their scientific knowledge of living things by looking closely at a range of resources the teacher provides. They know, for example, how animals vary in size from insects to whales. They are encouraged to experiment by designing a variety of small models. Enlarging their horizons in this way reflects the good teaching in this area of learning. The staff track the children through the stepping stones to learning, to ensure they are making good progress. By the end of Reception year a few children are likely to be reaching the expected level for their age, but overall the standard is still below average.

### **Physical development**

59. The children's physical development is average when they enter the Reception class. Most children play confidently with the larger apparatus, but a few do not yet have well-developed skills which require fine finger control, for instance when handling scissors. The Reception teacher has a useful programme for developing the children's precision in handling small objects and tools. Activities such as handling brushes in art and design, handling pencils in English, handling the keyboard in ICT, or with a variety of materials in technology, all contribute to the children's growing dexterity. By the end of the Reception year they are likely to confidently reach the expected level of early learning goals.

60. The programme for expanding the children's experience with larger play apparatus, particularly outdoors, is satisfactory. Children also learn how to use their bodies to interpret movements like the wriggling of a worm. For part of the time, the children share the learning of music and movement in the school hall. The example of the older pupils is a good stimulus for the younger ones. The good teaching means that most children are likely to reach the average expected level for their age by the end of the Reception year.

### **Creative development**

61. The children's creative abilities are underdeveloped at the start of the Reception class. Through the well-structured curriculum, and with the good teaching and encouragement of the staff, the children develop enthusiasm and confidence to explore their own ideas. A few children remain hesitant and need the support of the teacher's suggestions, but many more are willing to explore different media and try out their own ideas. In art and design, for example, they learn to use basic skills of colour mixing and extend this to painting in pairs. In music they learn quickly the words of new songs, or create new words to songs they already know. They are given good opportunities to explore the playing of instruments, and interpreting music in dance. They are becoming more confident in role-play when using the home corner, and the small world play materials also enable them to play, talk and extend their imagination. Overall the good progress made raises the children's attainment over the year to at least the expected levels.

### **ENGLISH**

62. Standards are broadly average throughout the school. By the age of seven, pupils' speaking, listening and reading are as expected for pupils of their age. Their writing, though, is better than average. These standards show a clear improvement from recent years and are due especially to the low proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 2. By the age of eleven, pupils' speaking, listening and writing are in line with the standards expected for their age but their reading is below expected levels. This is because not enough higher attaining pupils reach the expected standards by the age of eleven. Standards have fallen since last year, because of the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6. However, pupils' standards have been steadily improving over time.
63. By the age of seven, pupils have satisfactory skills in speaking and listening. Pupils concentrate hard in lessons because teachers make lessons interesting and they explain new learning clearly. As a result, pupils readily understand new ideas and what they must do to learn them. In a Year 1 lesson, for instance, pupils quickly improved their spelling of words like 'pot' and 'seed' by listening to the sound of the first letter. Although a small minority of pupils do not speak very distinctly, most pupils speak clearly and use a satisfactory range of vocabulary. Teachers have high expectations of this. In a Year 2 lesson, all pupils were required to give reasons for the use of commas in a list. One pupil explained: "You need a break, so you put in a comma." By the age of eleven, pupils are capable of listening intently and speaking confidently, particularly when teachers provide rich experiences. For example, in a history lesson, pupils in the Year 5/6 class were spellbound by the reminiscences of a local man who had written a book about the history of the local community. They soon understood how life had changed upon the arrival of the colliery and how the village had been drastically altered after its closure. Such experiences also prompt competent speaking. One pupil declared that his grandfather had worked for a now defunct local ice-cream company.
64. Pupils' reading is satisfactory by the age of seven. They read simple sentences correctly, comfortable with words they have met before like 'pattern'. They are not able to tackle long unfamiliar words confidently and therefore are not yet expressive. Lower attaining pupils can read familiar words but struggle to read sentences properly. They have few word building skills

to help them tackle new words. Higher attaining pupils have such skills, which enable them to read with fluency and expression. By the age of eleven, pupils are not as good at reading as they should be. Most readers have satisfactory skills and can read fluently and accurately. They can give reasons as to why they enjoy fiction like *Harry Potter*. However, pupils do not use reference books effectively enough because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for independent learning. Pupils are not helped to develop a very rich vocabulary through literature because they do not experience a wide enough range of reading material. This is particularly true for higher attaining pupils. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, do not have the fluency and expression of other pupils.

65. Pupils write well by the age of seven. They produce simple stories or retell familiar ones like the tale of Aladdin. They can give short descriptions of, for example, their pets. Many pupils are beginning to sequence their sentences to ensure a flow to their writing. Most of their sentences are quite brief but, increasingly, pupils are lengthening them with 'ands' and 'buts'. Spelling and punctuation are sound but pupils' handwriting is not always correctly formed. This is particularly true for lower attaining pupils who also are limited to using short sentences. Higher attaining pupils use more complex sentences as when describing a visit to Debenham's, for example, although their handwriting is not joined. By the age of eleven, pupils' writing is satisfactory. They write at length and expressively in a variety of styles. They can put forward a sensible opinion, such as, "Black is a good colour for football boots but not very attractive." They plan stories well and increasingly use paragraphs to separate sections of action. They use convincing dialogue in short play-scripts. "That's all I need!" declared one character in a play when about to be pulled over by the police. Spelling, punctuation and handwriting are all satisfactory. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, tend to write simplistic storylines with less mature expression. Higher attaining pupils, on the other hand, like to experiment with expression. "Adrenalin was flushing through my body like a toilet," wrote one pupil to demonstrate a tense moment in an adventure.
66. The teaching of English is good. It is especially good in Year 1, where expectations of the pupils are higher and there is a broad range of opportunities. One of the main strengths of the teaching throughout the school is the relationship between teachers and pupils. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and value the pupils' contributions to lessons. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and sustain concentration. Even the youngest pupils are able to work on their own without constant supervision. Teachers plan lessons carefully to make sure that they introduce new skills progressively. Teaching is especially effective when teachers plan work to match the abilities of all pupils. In Years 1 and 2, for example, lower attaining pupils are given extra adult help to spell out individual words like 'brick', while higher attaining pupils are expected to write proper sentences, correctly spelled. Teachers are skilful at questioning pupils so that pupils of all abilities can answer and show how much they understand.
67. One major strength of teaching is the deployment and quality of the teaching assistants. In most classes, teachers liaise closely and regularly with teaching assistants so that they know which pupils require targeted support. Teaching assistants work throughout lessons, sensitively reinforcing the learning of individual pupils. In one lesson, the teaching assistant worked hard to motivate several boys, who have a limited concentration span, to contribute to class discussions. In another lesson, a teaching assistant made sure a visually impaired pupil could read the same text as the other pupils.
68. Teaching is less effective when teachers do not match the work to the abilities of all the pupils. Too often, teachers provide similar work for most pupils, even in classes with two year groups. This means that lower attaining pupils in Year 3, for example, may be given the same work as the higher attaining pupils of Year 4. Usually, teachers allow for lower attaining pupils, if only through extra support, but higher attaining pupils do not have challenging enough work. This has a direct impact on the standards of the school. For example, the similar work in comprehension in Year 6 for all pupils does little to help higher attaining pupils achieve higher standards. Sometimes, the level of challenge is very high and this suits the needs of higher attaining pupils but it frustrates those who are less secure. In a Year 3/4 lesson, many pupils

did not understand words like 'forbidding' and 'rocky peaks' and so struggled to appreciate the atmospheric language of a passage. Sometimes, too, teachers do not maximise opportunities for developing literacy through other subjects. Pupils word-process their work on computer efficiently but not frequently. Too little written work is expected in subjects like geography and history and so there are few opportunities for pupils to reinforce their literacy skills.

69. The co-ordination of English is satisfactory. The school checks the progress of its pupils systematically and takes action on any emerging weaknesses. Realising last year that pupils' writing was not good enough, a whole-school emphasis has had some impact. However, there was not enough detailed analysis as to why writing was not good enough and to pinpoint exact areas for improvement. Similarly, the school sensibly tests pupils formally every year but does not analyse the results sharply enough and draw conclusions. This helps to explain why the quality of teaching is not the same throughout the school. There is a good programme of monitoring teaching and the feedback is balanced and constructive. In time, this is likely to strengthen teaching. The school has a well-stocked library but it is not used enough as a source of reference. Other resources are good and help to inspire learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70. Pupils' attainment is average by the age of seven but above average by the age of eleven. Pupils have a strong grasp of number and older pupils are increasingly effective at solving problems mentally. This enables a good number of pupils in Year 6 to achieve the higher levels in the national tests. Standards in the infants have been well below average in recent years. However, this year's results are likely to be better, because of the very small number of pupils with special educational needs. The standards of pupils in Year 6 have tended to be above average over time. The National Strategy for Numeracy was established earlier than in many schools, and this has contributed to the success of the older pupils, in particular. Mathematics has improved since the previous inspection because the work scheme for it is now clearly laid out and the targets for pupils in each year group have been identified. The scheme includes more opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics, often working independently. The management of the subject is stronger and the co-ordinator has a clearer overview through the monitoring of teaching and learning. As a consequence, standards are good again this year. Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their below average skills when they start school.
71. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2, although the expectations for pupils in Year 2 are not quite so challenging as in the juniors. Teachers' planning is thorough, and sensibly follow the guidelines of the National Strategy for Numeracy. However, the planning does not always extend the higher attaining pupils enough, and even some of the tasks for average pupils are not always well matched to their ability. The lesson activities are not always sufficiently practical. In some question and answer sessions, the teachers do not require the pupils to explain their thinking and strategies sufficiently. The lessons are busy and harmonious and pupils concentrate well.
72. The quality of teaching in the juniors is good, and often very good in Year 6. The teachers plan particularly well. They have very clear aims for what they want pupils to learn. They share these with the pupils, so that they clearly understand what they are going to learn and see the links with previous work. Although the work is challenging, the teachers' weekly planning is in small steps. Consequently pupils can follow the rapid pace of the work through the lessons and through the week. The teachers make sure that all activities are 'hands-on'. This makes for very good learning opportunities, as pupils have to think hard to solve the problems set. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class, for instance, used baths full of water and measuring jugs to help them sort out the relationship between whole and part litres. By persevering, they solved the problem of how many bottles would be needed to supply drinks for a class of 20. Year 6 pupils had to rely on previous learning about probability and frequency tables to work out how to record the test results. To increase the challenge, the teachers gave pupils minimum information and pupils responded enthusiastically to solve the problems set.

73. The staff plan for and support the pupils who have special educational needs particularly well. These pupils are doing challenging work but at a simpler level. The pupils in the Year 3/4 class did a lot of observation of whole litres, halves and quarters. The pupils in the Year 5/6 class generated their own smaller numbers by rolling dice. They needed considerable concentration to put these numbers in a table. Several pupils asked to use the computers to convert this data into a graph. The support assistants made this possible, but did not provide all the answers, enabling the pupils to think for themselves. This is good use of ICT within mathematics, but was only used on a limited number of occasions.
74. The co-ordination of mathematics is good. The school is keen to develop numeracy through other subjects, such as geography and design and technology. However, there is no whole-school plan to chart these links. Situations arise, therefore, where skills needed have not been taught in time. For instance, pupils in Year 6 are not yet confident enough to record data in graphs to help work out their science conclusions. A new assessment scheme is giving teachers a clearer picture of standards of all the pupils, and this influences the targets set for individual pupils. However, the data is not organised to track pupils' progress. The school analyses the results of standard tests to identify general trends and areas to improve. It does not define weaker areas in detail, so that adjustments to the curriculum are not as precise as they might be. Otherwise, pupils' attainment might be even better.

## SCIENCE

75. Pupils' attainment is average by the age of eleven. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Over recent years, the attainment of pupils has fluctuated and it was well above average last year. This was due to a small percentage of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, the school has worked hard to develop the level of independent learning and investigation for junior pupils, as recommended in the previous inspection. Pupils are becoming better at experimenting and investigating for themselves. Consequently they make good progress and achieve well. This emphasis has not been as successful in the infants where standards are below those expected by the age of seven. The curriculum is based on acquiring knowledge and the more able pupils are not encouraged to proceed at a faster pace. Pupils make only satisfactory progress and do not achieve as well as those in the juniors. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because teachers and support staff give them a great deal of help.
76. Teaching is at least satisfactory. Where teaching is good, teachers make full use of resources, and encourage pupils to suggest how the resources might be used and what they expect to learn from them. For instance, pupils in the Year 5/6 class were given a minimum of instructions, and were expected to organise themselves and plan a parachute experiment from beginning to end. The pupils enjoyed this challenge and discussed the work animatedly, but sensibly, in small groups. This helped them clarify their ideas and plan a logical order for conducting the experiment of testing what size of parachute would fall fastest. They were motivated and so the pupils were determined to complete the work and were able to reach a sensible conclusion. They used literacy skills well to help them record their observations but their technical language was not strong enough to enable them to report confidently and clearly to the whole class. Their numeracy skills were also not used effectively enough. The pupils did not know enough about sorting information to display a line graph to help them prove their conclusions.
77. Teachers' knowledge of science is not consistent throughout the school. Some topics, therefore, are not covered in enough depth and in others, inappropriate equipment is used. For instance, pupils in the Year 3/4 class used thick measuring and storage containers in their mini-beast hunt. This made the collection of the small creatures difficult. The teacher in the Year 2 class had provided a good range of equipment for an experiment into shadows, but presented the work as a series of instructions. As they did not have the opportunity to proceed independently, pupils missed the chance to see that the lengthening of shadows depended on



not only the distance, but also the height of the torches used. The more able pupils, therefore, were not able to strengthen their knowledge of fair testing or develop a good format for recording their observations.

78. All teachers explain the aims of their lessons very clearly. This helps pupils to understand what is required of them and what they are expected to learn. Few teachers, however, extend this by letting pupils know how well they are progressing during the year. The marking in books is not particularly informative, so pupils have little idea of what level they are working at or what they need to do to improve. The computer is not used sufficiently to support learning, either as a tool or as a source of information.
79. The co-ordination of science is satisfactory. The school is committed to develop links between the subjects of the curriculum, but there is no master plan to show when the various skills should be taught, to fit in effectively with the needs of the subject. The new co-ordinator is committed to overhauling every aspect of science and has plans to review these issues. These include building up a more detailed assessment system to track the progress of individual pupils. The monitoring of teaching by the senior management is not yet ensuring consistency of teaching throughout the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

80. Pupils' attainment is below that expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils do not have a wide enough knowledge of artistic influences and techniques. Consequently, pupils are not confident to talk about an artist's style and intention, or to evaluate each other's work critically. This represents a drop in standards since the last inspection.
81. Teaching is satisfactory, but not challenging enough to enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers concentrate on teaching basic skills, but the work scheme is not helpful as it does not break down these skills in sufficient detail. Pupils in Year 2, for example, were encouraged to use careful observation in their study of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. Their work was careful and precise, but their painting did not use the skill of colour mixing. The work by pupils in the Year 1 class, linked to the techniques of Kandinsky, was more effective because they were able to explore and discuss ideas. The pupils' attitude to art and design is good. They put a lot of thought and care into their work. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good quality support and feedback about their work, and make satisfactory progress in relation to their ability.
82. The time allocated to art and design is less than is found in many schools. Several Year 6 pupils stated that art and design is their favourite subject but that regretfully they do not do as much as they would like. This means that the curriculum cannot provide the range and depth needed for good progress. The school has introduced a new plan of work for each year group, which uses links with other subjects effectively. For instance, in a rigorous topic on the life and style of L S Lowry, pupils in the Year 5/6 class had to read in depth about the artist and then write their findings clearly in a well-organised display. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class used art and design skills effectively to illustrate their learning about the ancient Greeks. This was little evidence of other areas of art and design, such as three-dimensional work, observational drawing and printing, but these are planned for in the two-year programme.
83. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader monitors teaching, but the feedback to staff is not yet achieving consistency in teaching. The work scheme does not show what each year group should achieve, and does not ensure a smooth progression of skills in mixed-age classes. Assessment of pupils' attainment has not developed since the previous inspection, as the school finds this difficult to do effectively.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

84. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is at the expected level for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting

point on entry to school. Pupils who have special educational needs particularly enjoy design and technology sessions and benefit from the support of the teachers and support assistant. These pupils often produce results as good as, and at times better than, their classmates.

85. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers prepare and use resources well, including the computer, for designing. Teachers plan well from a work scheme that is based on termly plans. This includes interesting and sometimes exciting projects where skills from several subjects are brought together. Year 2 pupils, for instance, added to their science learning about forces by seeing how wheels and axles fitted together to enable their model vehicles to move.
86. A strong feature of the teaching is the encouragement given to pupils to select their own materials. Year 6 pupils showed considerable concentration as they studied the materials for their kites, to decide which was best for the purpose they had in mind. Pupils use and apply their mathematics skills effectively because the teachers provide good opportunities for this. Year 2 pupils achieved clean lines and straight edges for their vehicles because of careful measurement. Design and technology lessons provide good learning opportunities, particularly when pupils have the chance to make most of the decisions for themselves. Year 6 pupils, for instance, had to adopt a problem-solving approach to planning and constructing their kites. They worked very sensibly and independently, thinking each step through carefully. They used what they knew about scale and proportion to make their small scale plan fit on the large size plastic. "We don't want spoon-feeding," they said. The pupils' literacy skills are well used in preparing designs, labelling diagrams and discussing the outcomes.
87. There is a suitable curriculum, which includes mechanisms and structures, food and textile technology. Although teachers do not vary the work for pupils of different ages in the same class, the teachers' expertise is sufficient to make adjustments as they go along. Management and leadership of the subject are sound. Although the co-ordinator's action plan includes a more detailed approach to the teaching of skills together and stronger links with other subjects, these are not yet fully in place. The present system of assessing pupils does not include procedures that allow pupils to be more aware of their own progress. However, there are useful plans to ensure these are developed.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

88. Pupils' attainment in both subjects is average by the time they are seven. However, by the age of eleven, pupils do not reach the attainment that is expected of them. They lack a thorough knowledge of a range of topics and do not have good enough skills to carry out independent research and draw conclusions from this. This represents a decrease in standards since the last inspection. The school has simply not placed enough emphasis on these subjects recently.
89. By the age of seven, pupils appreciate the key features of their own locality. They know that there are different kinds of houses, some built of stone, others of brick, that there are no shops but that there is at least one pub. They know things that naturally exist, such as grass, and what is man-made such as buildings. They recognise how landscape is different at the seaside, where rocks and sand replace roads and fields. Pupils are able to highlight differences in seaside holidays over the years. They know, for example, that people used to dress up in their finery to visit a resort like Scarborough and that the same is not so true of the present. They are aware of the various kinds of transport nowadays that take people on holiday and how these have changed over time. For some, the horse and cart has been replaced by four-wheel drive vehicles. Pupils' presentation of facts is fairly basic as much of their work is carried out in discussions.
90. By the age of eleven, pupils do not have a good enough factual knowledge in both subjects. They have a good understanding of their own area, however. They are well aware of how the village has undergone massive changes in former and recent times. They know of the cramped and tough lives of local families even at the height of the coal production and how

most housing was torn down when the coal seams were no longer viable. They know fascinating facts: "The Cosy Cinema used to be the Methodist church but closed down some years ago." Pupils in Year 3/4 know a good deal about life in ancient Egypt, such as the importance of the Nile flooding, the making and wearing of jewellery and the basics of building a pyramid. Pupils do not have enough skills in history to help them to make the best use of resources and artefacts and, in geography, to help them read maps effectively and draw comparisons with overseas' locations.

91. The quality of teaching overall, therefore, is unsatisfactory. There are pockets of good teaching, such as the work on ancient Greece in the Year 3/4 class. Teaching can be very good when teachers provide rich experiences like the visiting expert on the locality who talked to pupils in Year 5/6. However, teachers do not devote enough time to cover all that is required. They do not promote either subject enough through the other subjects they teach. For example, pupils are not encouraged to write lengthy historical accounts or develop art and design through images of countries overseas. Sometimes, teachers do not plan lessons carefully enough. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were required to compare differences in photographs of the Victorian seaside with a modern day resort, but they were given so many photocopies that they struggled to be accurate. There is too little display of geography or history to celebrate pupils' achievements and reinforce their understanding. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The school is not doing enough to raise pupils' attainment.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

92. Pupils' attainment is average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are competent at using computers to word-process their work, to access the Internet and as a research tool. They are less experienced in using computer technology in other applications, such as simulation exercises or simple programming. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
93. By the age of seven, pupils know how to use a computer to type in simple text. They write sentences, punctuate and change letter size and colour, although they often require guidance from an adult. In a study of the locality, pupils in Year 1 typed captions like: "The Jolly Postman delivers the post." They can print their work but only higher attaining pupils understand how to save data, as well as access programs for themselves. Pupils use paint programs to draw colourful pictures of characters in stories like *The Big Bad Wolf* or in real life. "I put my mum with curly hair," said one pupil. They can play games on the computer but not usually games to support learning. They have some idea of how to program a simple floor robot but are not confident about doing so independently.
94. By the age of eleven, pupils work with some confidence on computers and other hardware. They word-process effectively, although lower attaining pupils still tend to hunt for letters on the keyboard. They edit text well by varying fonts, colours, letter sizes and embellish their writing with decorative borders and pictures transferred from *clip-art* or digital cameras. They word-process all kinds of messages. One pupil wrote to Father Christmas, "my good deeds are helping kids when they fall over," then requested, "I want a new bed." Pupils send messages via e-mail and use the Internet to find information for their work. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class discovered interesting snippets of information about the life of L S Lowry in an art and design study. Pupils use scanners to transfer text and digital cameras to highlight their studies of, for example, flowers in science. They have linked a microscope to a computer in order to record their information on insects more easily. However, their knowledge of other areas of ICT is not so strong. Pupils do not know how to produce a simple multi-media presentation. They are inexperienced in basic programming, although they do explore computer simulations.
95. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are comfortable with their own computer skills and so are able to ensure that pupils learn the essential skills. Pupils are encouraged to use computers as a tool for learning so that they can produce graphs to show findings in mathematics, for example, or create their own Christmas cards. However, teachers do not

develop ICT enough through other subjects. A few pupils in Year 5/6, for instance, word-processed a geography project on the local community but most did not. The school now benefits from a new computer suite. Although the suite is too small for whole-class work, it is used sensibly by groups of pupils supervised effectively by teaching assistants. Older pupils benefit from occasional visits to the computer facilities of a nearby secondary school. Teachers check informally to see how well pupils progress but the school does not have a systematic approach to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The school has an effective system to safeguard pupils' use of the Internet.

## **MUSIC**

96. It was not possible during the inspection to judge how well pupils attain in all areas of music. It was only possible to observe one hymn practice involving the whole school from Reception to Year 6. However, it was evident from this that the pupils sing well. They sing familiar songs confidently and tunefully. They sing well together, sustaining a good rhythm and dwelling naturally on notes at the end of phrases. With a more upbeat song, they clap enthusiastically to the pulse of the music and their singing becomes lustier. However, they are less sensitive when the music is quieter and needs more interpretation. Pupils also sing songs well as a round in two parts, listening closely to one another. In addition, there is a recorder club and older pupils have the chance to play the recorder in class.
97. There were no opportunities to judge how skilful pupils are at listening to and appreciating different kinds of music, or how well they compose their own music. There is little time set aside for regular music lessons. Teaching tends to be done in blocks of time as a part of other subjects. This certainly puts music in context but it is not clear how well this process enables musical skills to be developed progressively over time. However, teachers' planning is based on a good national framework. The school runs a choir periodically but it does not take advantage of every opportunity to strengthen pupils' skills. For example, pupils do not sing in all assemblies and teachers do not always draw attention to the music playing in the background. The lack of structure in the teaching of music is a weakness and, as such, is unlikely to lead to good standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

98. Attainment is in line with what is expected of pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in movement and dance, athletics and games. Most pupils are able to swim 25 metres by the age of eleven. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall.
99. The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. Where the teachers' subject expertise is good then teaching is also good. Teachers always plan well and conduct lessons at a suitable pace. They manage the pupils well so that lessons are always orderly, and give clear instructions so that pupils know what they have to do. The teachers start the lessons with appropriate warm-up activities so that the pupils learn about the importance of exercise for health and circulation. Teachers use resources well, and pupils learn well when handling large and small apparatus suited to the purpose of the activities.
100. Teachers know their pupils well. They start lessons at a suitable skill level and build up the skills in steps throughout the lesson. Pupils, therefore, use the skills they have learned in the early part of the lessons to extend their ability in the later parts. For instance, pupils in the Year 5/6 class used some of the techniques of discus throwing to extend their skill with the javelin. Similarly, Year 1 pupils used the movement skills from the 'Wiggly worm' dance to explore more adventurous sequences on the apparatus set out. In the best lessons, pupils learn most effectively by exploring their own ideas and potential. Teachers do not, however, give pupils enough opportunities to observe and evaluate each other's performance. As a result, pupils do not learn to voice their impressions and suggest ideas for improvement.

101. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but the school is good at organising out-of-school events. However, it is not so good at making sure that teaching is equally strong throughout the school. At present there is no system to develop consistently good teaching, and seeing what needs to be done to improve it further. The co-ordinator's action plan does, however, include the development of a system to track pupils' attainment and progress more effectively. The curriculum for physical education is enriched by many out-of-school coaching and practice sessions, in football and rugby for example. All activities are available to boys and girls alike, and most age groups are represented. The school teams are noted for their sportsmanship and good behaviour. They are well motivated and offer a serious challenge to much larger schools.