

INSPECTION REPORT

AYRESOME PRIMARY SCHOOL

Middlesbrough

LEA area: Middlesbrough

Unique reference number: 133659

Headteacher: Mr Robert Fenton

Lead inspector: Mrs Joan Boden

Dates of inspection: 24th - 27th May 2004

Inspection number: 255398

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	572
School address:	Worcester Street/Parliament Road Middlesbrough
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Toase

Date of previous inspection: n/a

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ayresome Primary School is much bigger than most primary schools. It was opened in September 2002, following the amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools, and caters for 572 boys and girls aged from 3 to 11 years. It is situated in central Middlesbrough in a very socially deprived area, where there are very high levels of unemployment and very low numbers of adults with higher education. A third of the pupils are from ethnic minorities and a quarter are at an early stage of learning English and have extra support. Their main languages are Punjabi, Urdu and Arabic but other languages include Japanese, Mandarin and Tamil. Small numbers of pupils are recent refugees or are in public care. A much higher than usual proportion, over half, are entitled to free school meals. On entry to school, children have very low levels of attainment in all the areas of learning when compared to children of a similar age. The school has an above average number of pupils with special educational needs. Most of these are identified as having learning difficulties related to literacy. However, a small but significant minority also have behavioural difficulties. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls, although there are more girls than boys in the nursery. A large number of pupils do not start at the school at the usual time, either joining or leaving partway into their education. Pupils leave the school for a variety of reasons, including fleeing domestic violence or moving out of the area into better housing. In addition to this, a significant proportion of pupils change schools and then return, so their mobility does not show up in any statistics. Some ethnic minority pupils also have long absences as they return to their country of origin for extended holidays. This mobility has a significant effect on the life and work of the school. Class teachers have significant problems in terms of settling children and assessing levels of ability in a short space of time and also in dealing with often significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

During the two years leading up to the amalgamation, the school went through a period of considerable turbulence. Extensive rebuilding and refurbishment meant that some classes were moved temporarily to other schools, while others continued to work with the distraction going on around them. In the summer term of 2002, before the new school opened, the deputy of the junior school and the deputy of the infant school took over as joint acting headteachers. A second deputy was appointed along with the new headteacher. The school has had very strong support from the local education authority and is part of an Education Action Zone, Excellence in Cities and Leadership Development Strategy initiatives.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12301	Mrs J Boden	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Physical education
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30954	Mr B Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Music Special educational needs
12394	Mrs C May	Team inspector	Religious education English as an additional language
32347	Mrs J Brighthouse	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school. Despite its challenging circumstances and the recent upheaval of amalgamation, the school provides a satisfactory standard of education.

Most teaching enables pupils who attend regularly to achieve well over time in developing literacy and numeracy skills. The headteacher and his deputies, supported well by the governing body, work hard to overcome the many barriers to learning. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils are well looked after and feel secure;
- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT);
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- The headteacher and key staff seek constantly to drive up standards and this is beginning to pay off;
- Although standards are improving they are still too low, especially in literacy and numeracy;
- The school keeps a careful check on pupils' progress and attainment;
- The quality of teaching is not good enough in some classes and provision in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory because the curriculum is not appropriate to the needs of the children;
- The provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English is unsatisfactory;
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are poor.

This is the first inspection the school has had since it opened in 2002 following the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	n/a	n/a	E*	E
mathematics	n/a	n/a	E*	E
science	n/a	n/a	E*	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - in the bottom 5 per cent*

Similar schools are those that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Most pupils achieve at least at a satisfactory rate and sometimes better. Pupils achieve at a faster rate in Key Stage 1 because the teaching is better. In Key Stage 2, they achieve at a satisfactory rate. Standards in national tests in 2003 were well below average at age seven and in the bottom five per cent in the country at age 11. Test scores alone, however, do not give a true indication of the satisfactory and often good achievement of many pupils in the school. These results show the overall performance of all pupils, many of whom have only been at the school for a very short time. The high proportion of pupils with SEN and the large

numbers at the early stages of learning English distort the true picture. Pupils with SEN achieve well in relation to their abilities. Inspection findings match the test results but also indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising. Pupils achieve well in ICT. In most other subjects, where a judgement was possible, achievement is satisfactory and standards appear to be close to average. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve at an unsatisfactory rate overall. Although they get off to a good start in the nursery, they do not achieve as well as they could in reception in all the areas of learning because the curriculum does not meet their needs. By the end of their reception year, standards in all the areas are well below those that are expected of children of the same age.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. The behaviour and attitudes to work of most pupils are satisfactory, although a significant number of pupils, mostly boys, find it difficult to behave well. Moral and social development is nurtured well and the promotion of spiritual and cultural awareness is satisfactory. Despite the best efforts of the school, attendance is poor and pupils are persistently late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although it varies from excellent to poor. There are marked differences in Key Stage 2, with too many unsatisfactory lessons in some classes. Within each year group the quality is variable. Most adults are good at preventing the unacceptable behaviour of a few pupils interfering with learning in lessons. Learning is satisfactory overall. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning. However, there is not always enough support for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and this hinders their progress.

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage. The school uses visitors and visits to places of interest well to stimulate pupils and sustain their interest in their work. There is a satisfactory range of after school clubs that are helping to raise standards. The school takes good care of its pupils and has their best interests at heart.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are good. The headteacher has created effective teams dedicated to raising standards. Governance is good overall, but a weakness in governance is that the governors have not picked up on the unsatisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage. The school makes good use of any resources available to overcome the barriers to pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have positive views of the school. Parents are happy to approach the school about any concerns they may have but are less comfortable about taking up opportunities to come to school to extend their own knowledge and skills. Pupils are happy in school and believe their teachers treat them fairly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Continue to raise standards in literacy, numeracy and science;
- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage;
- Improve provision for pupils whose first language is not English;
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching where it is unsatisfactory;
- Continue to improve attendance rates.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are below average overall but achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils who attend school regularly achieve well in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science, although too low, are slowly improving;
- Standards in ICT are improving rapidly;
- Pupils with SEN achieve well in relation to their capabilities;
- Pupils at the early stages of learning English do not achieve as well as they could.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.8 (n/a)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.3 (n/a)	26.8 (26.7)
science	24.7 (n/a)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 71 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.2 (n/a)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.1 (n/a)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.8 (n/a)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 85 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Most children start in the nursery with low level skills and understanding in all areas of learning. High levels of social deprivation mean that they have very few learning experiences before they start school and their social skills are very poor. Although the provision in the nursery gets children off to a good start, the school's overall provision in the Foundation Stage is not good enough to take their learning forward at a satisfactory rate. Their achievement is unsatisfactory because they are not given enough relevant experiences in all the areas of learning.
2. The composition of the school's population presents enormous challenges to staff in terms of helping all the pupils to achieve their full potential. Apart from the recognised high number of pupils who join or leave the school part way through their education, a large number of pupils drift back and forth for a variety of social reasons. Their achievement is affected by their unsettled backgrounds. Despite the best efforts of the school, some children are persistently absent and this holds back their learning. Pupils from ethnic minorities who take extended holidays to their country of origin often forget what they have learnt, particularly spoken English. The time teachers spend helping all

these groups to catch up inevitably takes away time from the rest of the pupils. Despite the difficulties, the school does the best it can and helps most pupils to achieve at least satisfactorily. Assessment records show that pupils who attend on a regular basis achieve well, particularly in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

3. The school has made good inroads into reading because of the strong emphasis on teaching pupils the sounds that letter combinations make. This gives them the confidence to tackle unknown words. In mathematics, the good emphasis on developing calculation skills, either through games or brisk mental warm up activities, is bringing rewards. Pupils are beginning to apply their knowledge to problem solving and they see the point of learning mathematics.
4. The school identifies an above average proportion of pupils as having SEN. The proportion of such pupils varies between classes but in some cases, it is 30 or 40 per cent of the class. The majority of these pupils have learning difficulties related to literacy but a significant minority have behavioural problems. These pupils, mostly boys, present very aggressive and challenging behaviour. Although the teachers are very good at managing behaviour and helping pupils to overcome their emotional difficulties, such behaviour is often a barrier to effective learning and achievement in lessons for these pupils. Pupils with SEN attain standards that, while being below average, represent good achievement from their low starting points.
5. The school's records show that most pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to the rest of the pupils. However, those who are at the early stages of learning English do not progress as well as they could, because the work they receive is not always matched well enough to their needs and sometimes they have insufficient support in lessons.
6. Where the school has identified specific areas for improvement, such as pupils' writing, pupils are achieving particularly well. The specific aim was to raise standards in boys' writing but the effect has been to raise standards generally. Standards in writing are now close to average. Through his monitoring of teaching and learning, the headteacher is aware of the variation in achievement and standards between classes and has put in place procedures to address this problem.
7. The school has quite rightly concentrated its efforts on improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour and driving up standards in literacy, mathematics, science and ICT. This has been a tall order given its complex difficulties but nonetheless they are beginning to see the fruits of their labour. Most striking are the rapidly improving standards in ICT. Pupils throughout the school are achieving really well. Despite the lack of facilities for two years due to major building work, pupils currently in Year 6 have made up a lot of ground and standards are only just below those expected at the age of 11.
8. In other subjects, although they were not all inspected in depth, pupils appear to be achieving at a satisfactory rate. Although underdeveloped reading and writing skills limit their ability to carry out independent research, they gain a lot of factual knowledge from discussions and from the Internet.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes towards school and their behaviour are satisfactory. Provision to foster their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Attendance and punctuality have been poor in the recent past but there are encouraging signs of improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are eager to learn when teachers motivate them;
- Staff set high expectations for pupils' conduct and work hard to achieve them;
- Pupils of different ages, abilities and ethnic heritages get on well together;
- Poor attendance and punctuality are barriers to learning for some pupils.

Commentary

9. Things are settling down nicely after the turbulence caused by the amalgamation. Staff have wisely given high priority to managing pupils' behaviour firmly yet fairly. This has helped to achieve a sound climate for learning.
10. Most pupils enjoy being at this school and feel that they work hard. They value their friends and the staff and are particularly fond of using the computers and art lessons. Pupils' attitudes are positive when lessons are interesting and relevant but they tend to lose concentration otherwise, which slows their learning.
11. Quite a number of parents and pupils have concerns about behaviour and bullying. Pupils are compliant on the whole and there is racial harmony. Lessons are rarely disrupted through misbehaviour because almost all staff adopt the school's effective approach to disciplining the pupils. Racism and bullying are not tolerated and are tackled well. Pupils generally get on well and play happily together. Anti social incidents that flare up on occasions are dealt with sensitively by discussing underlying causes, often enlisting the support of parents. Pupils with challenging behaviour or emotional difficulties are successfully helped by staff and outside agencies to cope with their anger and mood swings. There were no exclusions last year.
12. Morning playtimes, sensibly, are held at staggered times to enable pupils to have more space to play. Supervisors successfully encourage younger pupils to join in traditional playground games but older pupils tend to chase around, because they lack anything more constructive to do, and fallouts sometimes occur. At lunchtime the rather bleak playgrounds are cramped unless the superbly developed 'green space' is dry enough for use. Pupils of all ages, apart from nursery, can then intermingle in this 'park like' wooded area. Opportunities other than this for younger and older pupils to build friendships are relatively few but there are well established links between Year 1 and Year 6. These pupils benefit from active encouragement to share books and play mathematical games together.
13. Visits to churches and the mosque, and other multi-faith work in religious education lessons, effectively promote pupils' spiritual development and respect for others' beliefs and values. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good contributions to religious education lessons and are sometimes able to give additional information. For example, a Year 2 Muslim pupil was able to explain that not all Mosques are the same inside. Sometimes those who are less secure in speaking English work alongside a pupil who speaks his/her native language. This provides both pupils with mutual support. However, this does not happen often enough.
14. The school's council is enabling older pupils to have a say in its everyday life. Councillors have successfully organised a much enjoyed 'Stars in your Eyes' fundraising event and are now involved in promoting healthy lifestyles. Pupils are keen to accept responsibilities when these are offered.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

School data	7.4
National data	5.4

School data	unavailable
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

15. Measures taken by the staff to improve attendance and punctuality are having a positive impact. Attendance has risen considerably over the past year and more pupils are getting to school on time. Some, however, still miss large chunks of learning through absence or persistent lateness, which severely hinders their achievement. Helping them to catch up with their work inevitably lessens time available to support others who attend regularly and punctually. No unauthorised absence was recorded in Years 1 or 2 during 2002/03 but there was a high rate (1.7 per cent) in Years 3 to 6. A composite figure for the whole school is not available. Staff, the attendance officer and the educational social worker are trying hard to tackle absence that some parents condone when their child should be in school.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the curriculum is satisfactory overall, although it is unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Staff take good care of the pupils. There are satisfactory links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is a significant proportion that is good or better.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although teaching is particularly strong in one of the reception classes, teaching in the Foundation Stage is not strong enough overall;
- The teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall;
- The teaching of pupils with SEN is good throughout the school;
- Teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 use assessment information well to plan the next stages of learning;
- Teachers and support staff are generally good at managing the poor behaviour of a few pupils, so that they do not stop others from learning;
- The teaching of ICT is very good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 58 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (3)	11 (19)	14 (24)	24 (41)	6 (10)	1 (2)	0 (0)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

16. In the Foundation Stage, although the teaching seen was almost all at least satisfactory, the impact on children's learning is not good enough overall because the activities planned are not matched well enough to their needs. The teaching seen in one reception class was excellent. Although the work for all three classes was planned together, the teacher knew exactly what each child was capable of and adapted it to the children's needs. Children in this class are achieving well because they build on learning in small manageable steps. This approach needs to be picked up on in the other reception classes. In the nursery class, the teaching is better. The activities are relevant to the children's needs and the nursery assistants have a very good understanding of how very young children learn.

17. In the infant classes, teaching is good overall and most pupils are achieving well, particularly in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Teaching in the lower junior classes is satisfactory overall. In the older classes it is patchy and ranges from very good to poor. The main feature of the weaker teaching is that the work is not always matched accurately to pupils' needs and they lose interest and switch off.
18. Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They support teachers very well in lessons. Most adults are skilled in handling difficult behaviour, so that in most lessons its negative impact on learning is lessened. The good, trusting relationships between the pupils and all adults mean that even the most challenging of pupils eventually calm down. Even though they may not take much active part in lessons, they sit quietly and let others get on.
19. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good overall. Good support is provided by staff and specialist services where necessary to ensure that these pupils have full access to the curriculum. Booster programmes, such as additional literacy and numeracy support, ensure that pupils achieve well and make good progress in relation to their abilities.
20. The teaching of pupils who are at the early stages in learning English as an additional language varies from class to class but overall it is unsatisfactory. While pupils are sometimes supported well by additional adults in lessons, in some cases there is no extra support and in these lessons the work is often not well enough matched to pupils needs. An able boy in a Year 5 English lesson, for example, was doing low level infant work sheets instead of being involved in the lesson. On another occasion, a Year 6 pupil was ignored completely for the whole lesson. Where pupils are withdrawn as a group the teaching and learning is generally satisfactory, because they are given sufficient opportunities to practise speaking in contexts that they can understand. However, in one lesson seen the structure needed for good and systematic progress to be made was lacking.
21. The support pupils receive from bilingual members of staff is good overall, but some teachers do not use these staff as well as they could. For example, in the nursery the teacher read a story to all 48 children with the bilingual support assistant observing instead of, perhaps, reading a dual text book to a small group of children new to English. As a result, these children got very little from the experience.
22. Despite isolated good practice in the Foundation Stage, teachers do not do enough to develop children's speaking and listening skills. In the infant classes, teachers do this well and pupils make up a lot of lost ground. In some junior classes, there is room for improvement. Although teachers provide opportunities for discussion, pupils often cannot join in because topics are beyond their understanding. Reading is taught well and opportunities are taken in all subjects to encourage pupils to practise their reading skills and see the purpose and importance of reading. Marking is good and includes points for improvement and targets. Pupils know exactly what their targets are and most work hard to achieve them.
23. Numeracy is taught consistently well in the infant classes but there is more variation in the junior classes. While there is some strong teaching that engages and inspires all the pupils to achieve well, there is too much that is more ordinary or unsatisfactory.

24. ICT is taught well throughout the school because teachers have good subject knowledge, which makes them confident to teach skills. It is particularly strong in Year 5, where the co-ordinator is deployed very effectively to teach all four classes. Pupils develop computer skills at a very good rate and gain an enormous sense of pleasure in their achievements. This boosts their self-esteem considerably, especially those with behavioural problems. Teachers capitalise on this, often appointing potential troublemakers as troubleshooters to help others when they encounter problems. This has a good spin off in terms of pupils' attitudes as they respect other pupils' capabilities.
25. Teachers use homework mainly to reinforce pupils' literacy and number skills. However, it is not always effective because not all pupils do it. The school could do more to raise the profile of homework and make more use of it to extend pupils' learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. The school's systematic programme to evaluate and review all aspects of the curriculum has impacted particularly well on accommodation and resources, assessment, personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE), SEN and curriculum innovation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for ICT is good;
- The school keeps a careful check on the curriculum to ensure that it is effective in raising standards;
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is unsatisfactory;
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good;
- Provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

26. In accordance with the targets in the school development plan, the focus has been very clearly on raising standards in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. These subjects have been given a high profile and standards are improving. Staff and governors also recognised that pupils' behaviour and attitudes were barriers to learning. In order to address this, a very effective programme for PSHCE is now in place. The success of this has contributed to the school's improving ethos and standards.
27. A weakness in provision is that raising standards at the end of both key stages has been at the expense of provision in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is unsatisfactory because it does not take their learning needs into account.
28. The curriculum does not adequately meet the needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English. Resources for these pupils are unsatisfactory. While there are some dual language books and some appropriate language games in the room used for group work, these are insufficient. In the classrooms, there are no appropriate dictionaries available for pupils who are literate in their own language. The support

pupils receive from bilingual members of staff is good overall but some teachers do not use these staff as well as they could, for example to support small groups or individuals.

29. The provision for pupils with SEN is good. Pupils' needs are identified early and individual education plans, containing clear and achievable targets, address the learning needs of the pupils effectively. This ensures that these pupils are fully included in the lessons and other aspects of the curriculum. Close links with relevant outside agencies enhance the provision.
30. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. The informal lunchtime ICT sessions provided by the ICT co-ordinator are helping to increase achievement and raise standards. These sessions are much appreciated by the pupils. Planned visits, such as the residential experience for Year 5 at an outdoor activity centre, and visitors to the school enhance the learning because pupils enjoy and appreciate them. The benefits of the school's recent involvement with an artist in residence are clear in the work produced.

31. The school has benefited from an extensive and imaginative refurbishment that has resulted in the linking of two previously separate buildings and vast improvements to the fabric of the buildings and the resources they contain. The accommodation is now good overall. A weakness is the lack of a readily accessible outdoor learning area in the Foundation Stage. The resources for English, mathematics, science and ICT are good and the benefit of the school's investment is paying off.

Care, guidance and support

Staff take good care of the pupils and support and guide their personal and academic development well. They actively seek to involve pupils in the life and work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The considerable time, energy and enthusiasm that senior staff invest in helping vulnerable pupils is very worthwhile;
- Pupils with SEN receive well targeted support;
- Pupils really value the trusting relationships that they establish with the staff;
- Initiatives to improve attendance and punctuality are working, although the school's system for checking attendance patterns closely is rather unmanageable.

Commentary

32. Staff are good at listening to pupils and doing all they can to help them with their problems and difficulties. Pupils appreciate having these adults to turn to if they have any worries. The deputy headteacher with responsibility for pastoral care and assessing pupils' progress is passionate about helping them to succeed in life, whatever their backgrounds or abilities. His role is wide ranging and extremely important, helped by long experience of serving this community and building trust with the families. Welfare issues, for example, are taken very seriously by the staff who work hard to safeguard the children from harm of all kinds in conjunction with appropriate agencies.
33. Pastoral care, support and guidance for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and for refugee pupils are generally good. The senior management team has developed good relationships with the local community and the pastoral deputy headteacher works closely with the local authority's support worker for refugees. The support worker keeps the school informed of the specific circumstances and requirements of refugee pupils. Bilingual support workers help children with little spoken English to settle in.
34. Pupils in public care are sensitively supported and counselled by the staff. Provision for pupils with SEN is good and helps them to meet their academic or behaviour targets. Support for pupils who enter school with little or no spoken English is rather thinly spread, something the school has been trying to redress for a while. Academic support and guidance is unsatisfactory, because the staff lack the knowledge and skills needed to assess and support these pupils or to make the fullest use of what help is available.
35. Parents appreciate the good arrangements that nursery staff make to help their children settle in when they first start school. These include visits by nursery staff to their

homes to establish relationships, pass on information and enable any concerns to be shared.

36. Pupils rightly feel that the staff treat them fairly. Teachers and assistants throughout the school manage pupils' behaviour effectively on the whole, helped by training and structured procedures for dealing with incidents that arise. As their skills have developed, the necessity for senior staff to get involved in behavioural issues has lessened for all but the most intransigent pupils.

37. Well liked rewards for attendance and punctuality, along with other initiatives, are spurring on improvements for classes and individuals. The 'walking bus' gets pupils to school on time from part of the locality and learning mentors collect pupils from homes where children's very poor attendance impacts hugely on their achievement. The attendance officer and educational social worker are involved with the most vulnerable families and hold regular review meetings with the staff. The popular breakfast club encourages a large number of pupils to get to school early and provides a suitably nourished start to the day.
38. The school's system for monitoring attendance levels is time consuming and cumbersome. Complexity of accessing information from the database is not helping staff to keep a close enough eye on patterns of authorised and unauthorised absence.
39. Staff are good at highly involving Year 6 pupils in assessing how well they are getting on in English and mathematics. These pupils have very specific targets for development. Teachers throughout the school use an effective 'traffic light' system when marking pupils' books to indicate clearly and simply whether their work matches expectations. The school council successfully enables pupils in Years 3 to 6 to influence decision making processes but there is no such forum for younger pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents and the wider community is satisfactory. Good links are established with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Home visits and approachable staff help to establish good relationships with parents;
- Parents support special events in the school's calendar extremely well;
- Information to enable parents to get involved in their children's learning is rather sparse;
- Productive links with local schools and colleges benefit both staff and pupils;
- Local facilities are used well to bring learning alive for the pupils.

Commentary

40. In the short time since the amalgamation, staff have laid firm foundations for the new school's partnership with parents. The school is popular and parents are pleased with its provision for their children. Staff now need to build upon this success by finding ways to involve parents more in their children's learning.
41. Nursery staff establish effective early links with parents by visiting the homes of children who are about to start school. A former nursery teacher is now the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) who, through such visits in the recent past, has gained parents' trust and knowledge of the families. This makes it easier to involve them in helping their children to make small steps towards their personal and academic targets.
42. Parents are reasonably satisfied with the information that the school provides about their children's progress. They are very supportive of concerts, fundraising events, sports day and educational visits. They hold dear the 'gold book' assemblies when they

are specially invited into school to celebrate their children's achievements. Parents' positive responses to home/school agreements and the homework policy have also been most encouraging. However, there is still a long way to go to ensure that all parents and pupils appreciate the value of homework.

43. For pupils with English as an additional language, the links with parents and other educational services are satisfactory. Bilingual teaching assistants are able to translate information for parents speaking Punjabi, Urdu and Arabic. Help with translation into other languages is available from the local education authority. The refugee support worker acts as a go between for pupils from these families.
44. The headteacher and senior staff have established trusting relationships with parents who are welcome at any time to discuss issues or queries that arise. They are particularly good at enlisting the support of parents over behaviour problems.
45. Parents are less comfortable about coming into school to get involved in their children's learning. Family learning programmes, for example, tried on more than one occasion, have gained little interest from them. More recent literacy and numeracy meetings for Year 2 and Year 6 parents were better attended and staff are planning to offer similar sessions to other year groups. Few parents volunteer to help in school on a regular basis and there is no parents and friends association.
46. The school works closely with local high schools to ensure smooth transition for its pupils. Year 6, along with others in neighbouring schools, undertake work during their final half term that is especially designed to help this process. Year 5 pupils benefit from links that enliven their science lessons through drama. Staff develop professionally through sharing good practice with other schools and pupils work with students from a local university.
47. Educational visits to local amenities broaden pupils' learning and personal development effectively. Visits to the park, the theatre, museums, the garden centre, churches and a mosque, for example, are used well to enrich the curriculum. An artist in residence has enabled pupils to undertake large scale collaborative artwork of a high standard. Members of the community support the school but rarely use its facilities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good. Governance is good. The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body have made an effective evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are united in their vision for future improvements. They have put into place appropriate strategies to achieve them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and key staff give a good steer to the work of the school; they are bringing about improvement;
- Both the deputies fulfil a crucial role in raising standards. Their time is very well spent in reviewing and evaluating pupils' progress and dealing with the many complex issues that create barriers to learning;
- The governors provide good support and fulfil their role as 'critical friend' well;
- The school rigorously checks its own performance and pupils' progress and is committed to providing a continually improving quality of education;
- The needs of pupils who have just started to speak English are not being adequately addressed because the school is finding it difficult to recruit a suitably qualified teacher;
- Senior members of staff do not understand the Foundation Stage curriculum well enough to fully evaluate its strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

48. The headteacher together with the two deputies, is leading the school effectively. They share the workload and provide very good role models for the rest of the staff. They are working hard to unite the staff from the infant and junior schools to create an effective single primary school with a common goal and shared sense of purpose. They have put into place effective strategies to raise standards and the quality of teaching and learning. These are beginning to have a positive effect, although there is some way to go before the school attains its long-term vision. The headteacher and both deputies use their time very efficiently to ensure the smooth running of the school. They keep a stringent check on pupils' performance and deal with the many complex issues that affect pupils' learning. This provides very valuable support for teachers and enables them to get on with teaching.
49. The school has had very good support from the local education authority to carefully evaluate its performance and draw up a detailed and well focused plan for school improvement. Strategic planning is concerned with raising standards and the employment and retention of effective members of staff. As part of this strategy, the school makes very positive use of performance management procedures and has begun to put into place the government's initiatives for improving working conditions. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher is well aware of the weaknesses in teaching and, with the support of the governors, he has taken appropriate steps to address the issues. For example, several teachers are receiving good support in the form of performance enhancement programmes.
50. An important aspect of the strategy to raise standards is the tracking of pupils' progress. There are effective systems for monitoring the standards and progress in English and mathematics. The same procedures have been implemented recently for science and ICT. Leadership and management of these important subjects is good overall because these have been the major focus of the school development plan. As a result, there are signs that standards in these subjects are beginning to rise.
51. The leadership and organisation of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. The senior management team and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator have insufficient knowledge of the curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes. The curriculum provided for these children does not meet their needs, mainly because the activities are not planned well enough. This slows the progress made by the youngest children and has an adverse effect on standards.
52. Provision for pupils whose first language is not English is unsatisfactory overall. Through an evaluation of teaching and learning, senior managers are aware that the needs of pupils who are new to English are not being adequately addressed. However, recent attempts to employ a specialist were unsuccessful and the school is now committed to training an existing member of staff to lead and manage this important aspect of the school's work.
53. The school's provision for pupils with SEN is led and managed well. The high proportion of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties make this a more demanding role than in many schools. The co-ordinator gives good support to teachers and keeps a careful check on pupils' progress in meeting their individual targets.

54. The school manages its finances and other resources very well. Expenditure is directly linked to the school improvement plan. The school monitors its spending closely and evaluates the impact, particularly of large spending decisions. A prime example of this is the decision to provide each teacher with a laptop computer. The impact of this has been significant. Teachers are now much more competent and confident to deliver lively lessons. As a result, standards are improving rapidly. Good systems are in place to ensure that goods and services are provided at the best price.

55. The governors fulfil most of their duties well. They are very knowledgeable and give good support to the senior management team, for example when they are faced with difficult decisions such as staff disciplinary matters. They play a full part in drawing up the school development plan and check carefully on the school's progress towards its targets. Their knowledge and involvement with the local community puts them in a strong position to act as 'critical friend' and to hold the school to account for its performance. A weakness in this aspect has been their failure to ensure that the leadership has established an appropriate curriculum in the Foundation Stage.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,411,179
Total expenditure	1,446,835
Expenditure per pupil	2,516

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	123,732
Balance carried forward to the next	88,076

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. Provision in the nursery is satisfactory. However, overall provision in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory and the statutory requirement to deliver an appropriate curriculum is not met. There are 96 children in the nursery who attend part-time for either mornings or afternoons. Children may be admitted immediately after their third birthday. They transfer to reception in the September following their fourth birthday. There are 78 children split between three reception classes. Most of the children in reception have attended the school's nursery. Nearly half the children in the nursery are from homes where the first language is not English and 15 per cent start unable to speak any English. In reception, nearly a third of children come from homes where the first language is not English. At the time of the inspection, one boy who arrived recently did not speak any English. On entry to the nursery the children's attainment is low. Many have poor social skills and their speaking and listening skills are weak. Their limited experiences mean that they have very little knowledge and understanding of the world.
57. The school's desire to drive up standards at the end of Key Stage 1 has led to an inappropriate curriculum in the reception classes. The work in language and mathematical development is based on the National Curriculum programmes of study, rather than on the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Given that children start in the nursery with such low levels of ability, they are not ready for the formal approach that is the norm in reception. The work in other areas is not planned well enough to take learning forward. Leadership in this key stage is unsatisfactory. The Foundation Stage does not work effectively as a unit because of the assumption that reception is part of Key Stage 1. The co-ordinator does not have the necessary knowledge and skills to manage this important key stage successfully and does not have enough influence over reception practice.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The support and encouragement of adults helps children in the nursery to settle quickly;
- Relationships between the adults and children are good;
- There should be a more consistent approach to behaviour management in the reception classes;
- Children in the reception classes need more guidance in independent activities.

Commentary

58. Good induction arrangements and the warm relationships between the adults and children in the nursery help the children to overcome their concerns about starting school. They are happy and secure and are confident in leaving their parents and carers at the start of the session. There is a good partnership with parents and they are encouraged to stay with their children to settle them in. Children at the early stages of

learning English settle quickly because of the good support from the bilingual nursery assistant. Behaviour in the nursery is good because the children are supported well by the adults and are learning to get on well together as they play. Before children transfer to reception, parents are invited into school so that they are familiar with the more formal set-up as their children begin full-time education.

59. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Behaviour in reception is satisfactory overall but it is too variable between classes. In one class, where the teacher insists on high standards, behaviour is very good. In the other classes children are well behaved when they are being taught directly, but they do not play well together or share resources in unsupervised activities. Routines such as raising hands to answer questions are not sufficiently reinforced. This leads to a lot of calling out and makes it impossible for the teacher to judge which children have understood. Children have free access to a wide choice of activities. They are not guided in these because the adults are fully occupied with teaching groups. The activities are not planned with specific learning objectives. This means that the children drift from one to another, are not encouraged to stick at a task until they complete it and learning opportunities are missed. The vast majority are unlikely to reach the goals expected for their age by the end of their reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall in reception, children do not have enough opportunities to improve their speaking skills because there is not enough interaction with adults;
- The teaching of reading and writing skills is too formal for many children to cope with and the work is not matched well enough to their needs.

Commentary

60. Although the teaching of small groups during the inspection was satisfactory, the impact of teaching on children's learning over time is unsatisfactory. Children do not achieve as well as they could because the work is not matched well enough to their needs. Standards are well below those expected for children of the same age and it is unlikely that any will reach the learning goal in this area by the end of their reception year. Given that children have such poor skills, teachers do not give enough attention to developing and promoting their speaking and listening skills. With the notable exception of one reception class, teachers do not take sufficient time to reinforce listening skills by insisting that children do not call out. They do not frame questions, for example, in story time that require more than a one-word answer and they are too quick to supply answers when children hesitate.
61. Better use could be made of the classroom environment to promote language skills. Children do not choose to engage in independent language activities because there is no encouragement to do so. There are no inviting areas where children can explore books or do their own independent writing. Although there is a listening station, this was not used during the inspection. Displays are not labelled in such a way as to reinforce word recognition or provide a good model for writing. This means that unless children are being taught directly they are not building up their early language experiences. The formal teaching of reading and writing is inappropriate and does little to move on the learning of the majority. Although teachers make regular assessments, they do not use the information gained to plan the next steps in learning. Children at the early stages of learning English have regular targeted support but this is not linked closely enough to the work they do in the classroom. These children do not have enough ongoing support, for example through a variety of writing in their home

languages as well as English, including books, notices and labels. Most children can copy words written by the teacher and a small minority can write a few words independently. Often, however, children simply write words dictated by the teacher but do not always remember what they have written. Good attention is paid to teaching letter sounds and a few of the higher attainers can use their knowledge to tackle some of the words they have heard in stories.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are used well to reinforce number recognition and counting skills;
- Higher attainers could achieve more;
- Children need more opportunities to reinforce their learning through structured play activities.

Commentary

62. The quality of teaching is variable across classes but overall the impact on children's learning is satisfactory. While an outstanding lesson was seen in one reception class, the teaching seen in the other classes was just satisfactory. In the outstanding lesson, the teacher showed a detailed knowledge of the attainments of each child. She tailored questions at just the right level to challenge children of all abilities. She was mindful, particularly, of those children at the early stages of learning English, making sure that they understood the difference between 18 and 80. Such was the pace and pitch of the lesson that the children were positively buzzing with excitement because they were having so much fun.
63. Teachers generally use resources effectively to support children's learning when they are engaged in direct teaching. Number lines, for example, are used to reinforce children's understanding of ordering numbers, and activities such as threading beads develop their counting skills. Although overall children achieve at a satisfactory rate, higher attaining children could be stretched to achieve better than they do. Too often they work at the same level as the rest of the class.
64. However, as is the case with language, teachers do not always make the best use of their classrooms to promote mathematical skills. Opportunities are missed to develop calculation skills and mathematical language development when children are not being taught directly. Children can play in the sand or water, for example, but there is no identified learning objective to encourage early ideas of weighing and measuring. Although role play areas are set up as 'McDonalds' and the prices are displayed, there is no encouragement for the children to calculate the cost of items. Standards overall are well below the levels expected of children of the same age, although in one reception class a small proportion of children are on course to meet the standard expected. It is unlikely that any children in the other two classes will reach the early learning goal in this area by the end of reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's computer skills are developing well;
- Children do not have enough opportunities to explore and find things out for themselves.

Commentary

65. Good teaching of computer skills enables children of all abilities to achieve very well in this aspect of knowledge and understanding of the world. Teachers and support assistants are very knowledgeable and this gives them confidence in their delivery of lessons in the computer suite. As a result, more than half of the children have well above average skills for their age. Most can log on and navigate their way through programs successfully. Children whose first language is not English pick up the skills very well by watching others.
66. The overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Children do not achieve as well as they could in other aspects because they do not have enough opportunities to explore, investigate and thus find things out for themselves. The classrooms are not organised and planned to encourage independent learning. For example, there are no areas where children are invited to explore materials by making junk models and experimenting with a range of tools and joining methods. There is a very formal approach to the teaching of science. Teachers use stories such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' effectively to get facts across. However, this is not always suitable, especially for children with learning difficulties and those who speak little or no English. The teaching methods are not relevant to the needs of very young children. In the past fortnight, the children have 'learnt' about the life cycle of the frog and the life cycle of the butterfly. It was clear from the question and answer session in one class that the children remembered very little. As is the case in other areas of learning, teachers do not match work well enough to the differing needs and abilities of the children.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make a judgement on provision for physical development as only one lesson was seen.

Commentary

67. The weakness in provision for outdoor play hinders children's progress in this area of learning. Children in the nursery have timetabled access to the outdoor area but they are not guided sufficiently to help them to refine their skills. Children in the reception classes do not have access to the outdoor learning area. Their only playtimes are taken with the rest of the school. This is partly compensated for by formal physical education sessions in the hall. However, this cannot make up for the development of larger scale movements, such as balancing, climbing and swinging. Children could achieve more in finer movements and dexterity if they had more opportunities to use a wider range of tools in the classroom.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make a judgement on provision in the area of creative development as no lessons were seen.

Commentary

68. There is very little artwork on display. The work seen indicates that children use a limited range of materials and appears to be very teacher directed. Children enjoy

singing and join in enthusiastically, particularly when singing number songs. In the role play area children tend to play in isolation. There is not enough adult interaction to help children to be creative and play together.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are well below average throughout the school but they are improving;
- The subject is very well led and managed;
- Some teaching is very good;
- Pupils' achievement is good in Key Stage 1;
- The use of assessment information is having a positive impact on pupils' progress;
- Pupils need more opportunities to practise their literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

69. An analysis of the test results for last year shows that standards are well below average in both key stages when compared with all schools. The picture is better in Key Stage 1, particularly in reading, when results were above average compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds. The school has earmarked the subject as a major priority for improvement and the work done to raise standards of teaching and learning is beginning to take effect. The achievement of most pupils is at least satisfactory. SEN pupils achieve well. Pupils at the early stages of learning English do not achieve as well as they could because they do not have enough support. The lack of a co-ordinator in this area hampers their provision and progress. The erratic attendance of many pupils hampers their progress and they do not achieve as well as they could. Some pupils who speak English as an additional language take extended holidays to their home countries and often forget what they have learnt.
70. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to practise and develop their speaking and listening skills. In Key Stage 1, pupils generally have limited skills in this area but most are now aware of the conventions of group discussion and listen well to their teachers and each other. Their speaking skills are also being developed and they respond enthusiastically to questions and in discussion. While most are restricted to using simple words and phrases, a few have higher skills. In a Year 2 class, a few pupils spoke confidently and fluently about making their writing 'stimulating' and 'exciting'. In Key Stage 2, standards are more varied. Most pupils are attentive and contribute to discussion but only a few are able to verbalise their thoughts beyond a superficial level.
71. Reading skills are below average overall but are improving. All classrooms have a reading scheme and very good selections of general books. As well as opportunities for reading within literacy lessons, the timetable provides for additional guided and independent reading throughout the week in both key stages. The few higher ability pupils in the school read fluently and with confidence. They are at ease with fiction and non-fiction and show good comprehension skills. There are a large number of pupils with below average ability but most are making good progress, particularly in Key Stage 1 and at the top of Key Stage 2. The assessment, recording and monitoring of progress in reading is good.

72. The school has made improvement in writing standards across the school its major priority and there has been impressive progress over the last year. Pupils' writing is well organised in both key stages, with different exercise books for the range of writing covered. Curriculum coverage is extensive and varied. The technical aspects of writing are covered well across the school but the improvements in extended and continuous writing are the most pronounced. The school has concentrated on this area with the specific aim of raising standards in boys' writing but the effect has been to raise standards generally. Standards in writing have moved significantly nearer the average over the year. There are many good examples of the use of ICT to inform the content and presentation of pupils' writing across the school. Specially targeted support programmes, funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative, have been effective in raising standards.
73. Although some unsatisfactory teaching was seen, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and occasionally good or very good. Lessons are generally well planned, with work set to meet the individual needs of pupils. Teaching is lively and the content interesting. Stimulating resources are used well to capture pupils' interest. This was the case in a Year 2 class where the use of direct speech punctuation was brought to life by the teacher's lively and original use of dialogue from 'George's Marvellous Medicine', the current class novel. In a Year 6 class where pupils were preparing for a visit to Beamish Museum, a well planned lesson involved elements of discussion, reading, writing and role play, as well as direct links to the history curriculum. Pupils were involved and motivated and gained new insights into types of questions to be used in research. In an unsatisfactory lesson, the work was too difficult for the vast majority of the pupils. They could not understand the written text and so they got very little out of the lesson. A pupil at the early stages of learning English was not included in the lesson and spent his time completing unrelated worksheets.
74. Pupils are generally well behaved and keen to learn, although a significant number become distracted easily or lack the necessary concentration skills to make a sustained effort. Most teachers manage this behaviour well but when the work is not matched well enough to their needs, pupils become bored and switch off.
75. The school has introduced very good systems for checking on pupils' progress and attainment. There has been extensive whole school training in this area. Whole school writing tasks are set and analysed every half term and the results used to plan the next steps in learning. The progress of individuals and groups in terms of achievement and value added is monitored and evaluated. Day-to-day assessment centres around the 'going for green' scheme, which provides pupils with detailed information on their targets and their progress towards them. It has proved a very useful tool in empowering, engaging and motivating pupils of all abilities and is significant in raising standards. Marking is thorough and detailed for the most part, with good comments offering praise and suggestions for development.
76. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator works with the senior management team to ensure that teaching and learning are monitored effectively. The comprehensive professional development programme she has put in place is very effective. The rooms dedicated to literacy development for pupils and staff and her provision and organisation of resources are making a real impact on standards. The development plan shows clear and detailed strategic planning and an ambitious, yet realistic, vision for future improvements. The quality and range of resources in this

subject is impressive in terms of texts, stimulus material and audio-visual and ICT resources. These are used well by teachers.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

77. In ICT, pupils practise and develop their literacy skills through word processing and researching information. In Year 6, direct links were made to history in some lessons observed but generally this is an area that requires development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average throughout the school;
- Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 but could be improved in Key Stage 2;
- The school provides well for pupils with SEN;
- The arrangement of pupils into groups of similar ability is having a positive effect in Key Stage 1;
- The subject is well led and managed to bring about improvements.

Commentary

78. Standards are below average at both key stages. However, in Key Stage 1 pupils achieve well from their low starting point. Good teaching is ensuring that pupils are appropriately challenged and good quality support is provided for those who need it. Pupils do not achieve as well in Key Stage 2 because of the more ordinary teaching. Strategies have been introduced to remedy this. There are now more frequent opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems, and more emphasis is being placed on mental arithmetic. After the recent period of severe disruption, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 2, there are now pleasing signs that standards are set to rise throughout the school.
79. In the tests taken in 2003, Key Stage 1 results were well below the national average but, when compared to similar schools, were in line. The number of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) was well above the national average when compared to similar schools. Key Stage 2 results were in the bottom 5 per cent when compared to the national average, and when compared to similar schools they were well below average. Inspection evidence, and the school's very detailed tracking system, indicates that there is likely to be significant improvement on the results obtained this year.
80. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Those pupils with SEN achieve well in relation to their abilities. Work is planned at the right level for them and effective use is made of the national 'catch up' programmes to boost progress. Teachers and teaching assistants pay attention to the individual targets for these pupils. Their confidence is developed because the main teaching points of the lesson are reinforced in their group activities when pupils carry out tasks practically. Those pupils with English as an additional language achieve well in Key Stage 1 and at a satisfactory rate in Key Stage 2.
81. There is a strong emphasis on developing the pupils' knowledge of number. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to explain how they have calculated their answers. For example, in a very good lesson seen in Year 6 when pupils were multiplying two and three digit numbers by a single digit during the mental part, a child said 'I partitioned the number first, then multiplied and then added them together again. This made it easier for me!' This shows that pupils understand the strategies.

82. The school is working hard to raise standards. The setting arrangement, where pupils of similar abilities are taught together, is working well in Year 2. In Key Stage 1, the teaching overall is good. Teachers involve the pupils and expect them to work hard and behave well. Lessons proceed at a good pace, with well planned activities that interest the pupils. For example, in a good lesson in Year 1 pupils were learning practically as they all played a game of 'Three in a row' on the classroom floor. This reinforced their knowledge of position and direction. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In some lessons, work is not always matched to the ability of the groups and progress is slowed because the task is either too difficult or too easy for some pupils. The time at the end of some lessons is not used well to give the pupils the opportunity to reflect on what has been learnt and then to develop the learning further.
83. Two very good lessons were observed, one by the team leader in Year 1 and one by the co-ordinator in Year 6. They showed very good knowledge of how best to teach mathematics. Features of this very good teaching were:
- challenging and interesting activities in which all the pupils wanted to be involved;
 - very good questioning that kept the pupils on their toes by making them think beyond their first answer and apply what they knew to other situations;
 - clear learning objectives which were carefully planned and explained to the pupils;
 - time was used well and not a moment wasted;
 - the time at the end of the lesson was used very effectively for the pupils to reflect on what they had learnt.
84. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Work, test results and teaching are carefully monitored to see where improvements can be made. As a result, greater attention is now placed on problem solving activities and mental mathematics. Very effective systems are in place for assessing, analysing and tracking pupils' progress. These initiatives are beginning to pay off and standards are rising.

Mathematics across the curriculum

85. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in other subjects, particularly in ICT. In a good lesson seen in Year 5, pupils used computers well to investigate perimeter and area. In other lessons pupils use computer programs to support their learning. In science, they produce charts and 'tree' diagrams. They practise their measuring skills in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average;
- Achievement is at least satisfactory and sometimes better;
- The new initiatives and enrichment to support teaching and learning are beginning to bear fruit;
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

86. In 2003, standards were well below average at the age of 7 and in the lowest 5 per cent in the country at the age of 11. The picture was much better when results were compared to those of pupils from similar backgrounds.
87. Standards in the present Year 2 and Year 6 are still below average but the evidence of the inspection is that standards are improving. Most pupils achieve at least at a satisfactory rate and often better, considering their low starting point. Standards are significantly affected by the high level of pupils with SEN and the high proportion who move into or from the school during their years of primary education. Some pupils arrive speaking little or no English. Although they can manage practical work, they often have difficulty getting their ideas across in words.

88. The quality of teaching is variable but satisfactory overall. During the inspection teaching observed at Key Stage 1 was good while at Key Stage 2 it ranged from good to poor. In a Year 2 lesson the well focused teaching offered suitable activities to challenge pupils of all abilities. The pupils extended their learning about the similarities and differences of living things and practised their mathematical skills as they transferred their findings onto a bar chart or Venn diagram. A Year 4 lesson was cleverly linked to a recent visit to Hardwick Hall. Higher ability pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of transient populations and adaptation when questioned. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils carried out a scientific investigation into the effect of temperature on the fizziness of drinks. They used prior knowledge effectively and showed a good understanding of the principles of fair testing. Where teaching is less successful, lessons lack pace and teachers' explanations are not clear. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in their learning because so many are inattentive when such teaching fails to motivate them.
89. The subject is well led and managed. Good strategies for improvement are beginning to impact on standards. A well planned curriculum framework is in place, with a structured programme to develop pupils' investigative skills. Assessment arrangements have been improved and, through this new system, pupils are now more aware of what they need to do to improve their own work. The co-ordinator worked hard to extend staff expertise through organised training and by giving teachers support in developing practical and investigative work throughout the school. This has been particularly successful and teachers are now more confident in planning and executing experimental and investigative work for their pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are below average at the age of 11, they are rising fast and are at least average in the rest of the school;
- Good teaching inspires pupils and makes them eager to learn;
- ICT is used well to reinforce learning in other subjects.

Commentary

90. In the short time the school has been open, the development of ICT has been very successful in raising standards and boosting pupils' achievement. This has come about because:
- teaching is good overall. Teaching staff and assistants are confident because they have good subject knowledge;
 - the two computer suites are well equipped and used effectively;
 - skills are taught in a systematic way and learning builds well on what has gone before.
91. Children get off to a really good start in the Foundation Stage and this is built on very effectively in the rest of the school. Pupils throughout the school achieve well. By age seven, standards are in line with national expectations. A significant number of higher

attaining pupils have above average skills in using computers and navigating their way through programs. Such is their ability that they are, for the most part, able to work independently once tasks have been explained to them. They remember the procedures for accessing a very good range of programs and use these to support their learning in other areas. In science, for example, they use binary trees to sort and classify information. They understand well that questions have to be framed requiring a 'yes' or 'no' answer for this to work.

92. The below average standards at the age of 11 have been brought about by the general disruption to the school during rebuilding work, when the computer suite was out of action for two years. During this time, pupils had very little access to computers. Since the work was completed, the school has made great strides in raising standards and in some aspects pupils in Year 6 have reached average standards. For example, in one lesson pupils showed good skills in combining text, graphics and sound in presenting information about themselves. There are very encouraging signs that pupils currently in Year 5 will attain the standards expected for their age by the time they are 11. They are gaining a good grasp of the usefulness of computers in design, such as when they re-designed the library so that it would accommodate two more work stations. In the lesson seen, pupils were made to think hard, not only about the best positions of furniture but also about power point access and lighting.
93. The high mobility factor and poor attendance affect the learning and achievement of many pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support in lessons and make good progress. However, they forget some of what they have learnt when they take extended holidays and this undermines their progress.
94. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has identified key areas for improvement and the plan to bring these about is paying off.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. Overall there is satisfactory use of ICT in other subjects. Good links are made with geography and history, as pupils research information on the Internet. They use specific programs to enhance their understanding of areas of mathematics and science. However, while these are very positive features, pupils do not make enough use of computers independently as a tool for learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

During the inspection only one **history** lesson was observed and no lessons were observed in **geography**. Therefore these subjects, although sampled, were not examined in detail.

96. Pupils achieve at a patchy but satisfactory rate overall in history and standards are broadly in line with those expected at 7 and 11 years. The reason they make such gains is that much of the work is centred on discussion. Higher attaining pupils could achieve more if they were encouraged to follow their own lines of enquiry.
97. There was not enough evidence to make a clear judgement on standards in geography. There was very little work in pupils' books and no displays around the school. The main focus during the inspection on standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT meant that there was insufficient time available to talk to pupils about geography.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils generally achieve well;

- The behaviour of some pupils in Years 3 to 6 occasionally makes teaching and learning difficult;
- The curriculum is well thought out and addresses the locally agreed syllabus well;
- Learning from and about other religions is an integral part of the curriculum and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- Visits to other places of worship and visitors to school enhance the curriculum well.

Commentary

98. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 generally exhibit positive attitudes in lessons, but the behaviour of some older pupils sometimes makes teaching difficult and spoils the lesson for the whole class.
99. Teaching is variable but satisfactory overall. Pupils achieve well because the curriculum is planned so that all aspects are systematically addressed. Individual lesson plans are of variable quality at present and this aspect of planning is to be a focus of the school development plan in the forthcoming academic year. In a good lesson seen in Year 6 the whole lesson was matched well to the needs of the pupils and helped them to relate the ideas taught to every day life. Conversely, an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 5 began with the difficult subject of ancient texts, including the Book of Kells, but the activity planned lacked challenge and the behaviour of many pupils spoiled the lesson.
100. The curriculum is planned well and addresses all the required aspects in a systematic way. The religions taught are the main ones found in the locality and good use is made of visits to places of worship and visiting speakers to support the curriculum. Pupils also bring their knowledge of religions to lessons and as a result the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
101. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator and the governor who supports the subject are both very knowledgeable and committed. The school development plan identifies the subject for in depth development from next September.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology, music and physical education

102. Design and technology, music and physical education were sampled, not examined in detail. Examination of teachers' planning shows that the curriculum is satisfactory. The indications are that achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with those expected.
103. In **design and technology**, the school follows national guidelines adapted to the needs of the school. Pupils gain experience of using a range of materials and techniques to design and make a variety of products.
104. In **music**, pupils were heard singing in assembly and in singing practice. They are confident performers and particularly enjoy combining actions with the music. In the one lesson seen in Year 4, the pupils sang tunefully and joined in enthusiastically. They achieved at a satisfactory rate and the quality of their work was in line with

expectations. They worked in groups, using a variety of tuned instruments to compose a piece of music to describe a picture that they had seen.

105. In **physical education**, there is a suitable range of sporting activities to enhance pupils' learning. Observation of pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes reveals that achievement is at least satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, pupils have good hand-eye co-ordination, which they use to advantage when playing ball games. In Key Stage 2, boys and girls show good levels of ball control and accuracy in passing. Most pupils can swim at least 25 metres at the age of 11.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' experience a wide range of media;
- Links between art and other subjects are good.

Commentary

106. The subject is well led and managed. The school places a high value on art. This is demonstrated in the very good displays around the school. These displays indicate that pupils' experiences in art are wide and varied, ranging from colour mixing to creating shade and pattern, collage work, pencil drawing, texture work, printing and modelling with clay.
107. Improvement in the subject has been a priority of the school development plan and the steps taken to bring about improvement have been very successful. For the past year, an artist in residence has worked with the children and this has paid off. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are achieving at a satisfactory rate and standards are in line with those expected at ages 7 and 11. The quality of teaching seen is satisfactory with some significant strengths. In a good lesson seen, pupils used a good variety of media and they were encouraged to make choices about their application. Teachers make good links between art and other subjects.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were seen in **personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE)** and so no judgements are made about overall provision.

108. The school places great importance upon promoting pupils' personal and social development and encouraging them to keep safe and well. Discussion times in lessons throughout the school enable pupils to consider lifestyle options and to relate moral issues to their own lives. The trusting relationships established between pupils and staff are vital to the success of these sessions. The school is working towards gaining national recognition as a healthy establishment. Pupils volunteer, for example, to get to school early to help wash the fresh fruit that they distribute daily as healthy snacks. The school council gives Years 3 to 6 pupils a real taste of democracy through their election speeches and vote. These pupils are actively involved in conducting a survey of the food they consume in their quest to raise awareness of healthy eating.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	n/a
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	6
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).