

INSPECTION REPORT

CROOKHILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ryton

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108366

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Taylor

Lead inspector: Derek Watts

Dates of inspection: 14 to 16 June 2004

Inspection number: 255924

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:	4 to 11years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	175
School address:	Hexham Old Road Crookhill Ryton Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE40 3ES
Telephone number:	0191 4334066
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lone Rippeth
Date of previous inspection:	20 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Crookhill Community Primary School is situated in the large village of Ryton, about eight miles west of Gateshead. At the time of the inspection, the school had 175 pupils on roll from Reception to Year 6, making it a smaller than average primary school. Most of the pupils are from a white British background. The school does not have any pupils who speak English as an additional language. About 21 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above average. The school has a support base for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. This is known as the Crookhill Achievement Base and is referred to as CAB or the Base. It provides for 12 pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. The majority of the pupils who attend the Base travel each day by taxi from surrounding villages. All pupils in the Base have statements of special educational need; the school's proportion of pupils with statements is well above average. The socio-economic circumstances of the school's intake are below average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is below average. The current headteacher took up the post in January 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22092	Derek Watts	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology
1329	Kevern Oliver	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
14842	Stephanie Cook	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage Art and design Geography Physical education
23658	Stephen Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	English History Music
10668	David Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs Crookhill Achievement Base Design and technology Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Under the leadership of the new headteacher, Crookhill is a rapidly improving school. **The overall effectiveness is satisfactory at this stage of its development.** Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is below average. Much emphasis has been placed on improving teaching. Teaching and learning are now good, but improvements are too recent to have had a full impact on pupils' achievement throughout the school. The headteacher and staff have created an attractive and positive environment in which all pupils can learn. The partnership with parents is very good. The good improvements form a firm basis on which to raise pupils' achievement and standards further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Standards are below average in speaking across the school.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Reception.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well.
- Provision for pupils in the Crookhill Achievement Base (CAB) and for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Achievement is good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2.
- Links with the parents are very good.

Crookhill was last inspected in April 1998. The school has made good progress in addressing the recommended areas for improvement. School improvement planning is more sharply focused and the roles of the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators have been successfully clarified. While the deputy's role is now effective, some subject co-ordinators' roles are not sufficiently well developed. The school now has good procedures for assessing pupils' achievement and tracking their progress. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved considerably and, as a result, most pupils are achieving well in the subject. The quality of teaching and learning has improved from satisfactory to good. However, this is a recent improvement and so has not yet had a full impact on pupils' achievement from Years 3 to 6. The statutory requirements for the governors' annual report to parents are fulfilled. In addition to these improvements, there have been considerable improvements in the provision for children in Reception and in the partnership with parents. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is below average. Children achieve well because of the high quality teaching they receive. Most are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and most will exceed these in personal, social and emotional development.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The table shows that the school's results in the national tests for Year 6 have been consistently well below average in English, mathematics and science during the last three years. Comparison with similar schools indicates that the pupils have achieved poorly from their earlier attainment in Year 2. Pupils from the Crookhill Achievement Base have statements of educational need and are included in the test results, thus depressing the school's overall results. In the current Year 6, standards are below average in speaking and listening, but average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The current Year 6 has a lower proportion of pupils with special educational needs and statements. Most pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily from their earlier attainment in Year 2. In the national tests for Year 2, the school's results in 2003 were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. These were an improvement on the school's well below average results in all three areas in 2002. The recent drive to improve teaching and learning has led to further improvements. In the current Year 2, standards are below average in speaking and listening but average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils are achieving well. Pupils in the Crookhill Achievement Base are achieving well through the good teaching they receive.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are very good. Attendance and punctuality are both satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education provided is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is very good in Reception and good in all other areas of the school, including the Base. Teaching is well focused and teachers use a good range of methods. Pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to acquire and develop speaking skills. The quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory overall, and it is good in Reception. It is well enriched by additional activities. Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The partnership with parents is very good and links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has a very clear vision and has provided new direction for the school. Her enthusiasm and dynamic qualities have had a considerable influence on improving teaching, on extending the school's capacity to improve and on its partnership with parents. Staff and governors share the headteacher's vision of raising standards and providing high quality teaching. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, but some key subject leadership roles are not sufficiently developed, particularly in the monitoring of standards and teaching. Governance is good. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their individual expertise is used well. All statutory requirements are fulfilled.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold very positive views about the school and are very pleased with the recent improvements in the school's approachability, communication and teaching. One parent commented, 'The school has been completely transformed'. Pupils are also very pleased with their school and they describe the new headteacher as 'brilliant', 'excellent' and 'fantastic'. The inspection team agrees with the very positive views expressed by both parents and pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise pupils' achievement from satisfactory to good in Years 3 to 6.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop speaking and listening skills in order to raise standards further in English.
- Further develop the role of some subject leaders.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Teaching and learning have improved recently and are now good. While this has had a positive effect on achievement in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, it has not yet resulted in good achievement in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are below average throughout the school.
- Achievement is good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards and achievement have improved in ICT.
- Pupils in the Base achieve well.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is below average. Children achieve well in all areas of learning because of the very good teaching they receive. Most are on course to reach the expected Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development and creative development. No judgement was made about standards in knowledge and understanding of the world, as insufficient activities in this area were seen. Most children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.8 (13.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.9 (12.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.9 (14.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In the Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2003, the school's results were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, these results were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The 2003 results were an improvement on those of 2002, when they were well below average in all three areas. The new headteacher's drive to improve teaching and learning has resulted in further improvement. In the current Year 2, standards are below average in speaking and listening but average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, are achieving well. This is because they receive good teaching and tasks are well matched to pupils' attainment and needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (24.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.8 (25.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.1 (26.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In the 2003 National Curriculum test results for Year 6, the school's results were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with earlier attainment in Year 2, pupils' achievement from Year 2 to Year 6 has been poor. The school's test results include those of pupils with statements of educational needs from the Base. The Base provides for pupils between Years 3 and 6. In the 2003 Year 6 year group, ten per cent of pupils were from the Base and the year's overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs was above average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need was well above average. These factors contribute significantly to the school's low test results. The school's test results were average overall in 2000, when there was only one Year 6 pupil in the Base. In the 2004 cohort of Year 6 pupils, there are fewer pupils with special educational needs and fewer than usual pupils from the Base.

4. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average in speaking and listening. Standards in speaking and listening are below average across the school because there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to speak in pairs or groups or to give presentations to the whole class. The headteacher, who is also co-ordinating English, is aware of this and plans to raise the profile of language across the curriculum. Standards in reading and writing are broadly average. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in English and mathematics as they progress from Year 3 to Year 6. While the recent improvements in teaching and learning are having a positive effect on pupils' learning in lessons, they are not yet fully affecting their achievement throughout the school.

5. Standards in science are average at the end of Year 6. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily from their prior attainment in Year 2. The school is now placing more emphasis on an investigative approach to science and this is having a positive effect on the development of scientific skills.

6. Since the last inspection there have been considerable improvements in the teaching and resourcing of ICT. All pupils receive good teaching on a regular basis in a well-equipped computer suite. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below expectations by Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils were making unsatisfactory progress. Standards are now average in Year 2 and in Year 6 and most pupils are achieving well in this subject. Pupils use ICT satisfactorily to aid their learning in other subjects.

7. In religious education, standards are in line with those set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily.

8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving satisfactorily. In the Base, pupils' standards are generally well below average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, most are achieving well from their low starting point and, in many cases, their low self-esteem. The good teaching, effective support from learning assistants and very positive classroom climate account for this good achievement. All pupils are successfully integrated into whole-school activities. They play a full part in school life and are included in all its aspects, joining school assemblies, playtimes, lunchtimes and clubs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual development is good overall. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and their learning.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils.
- Behaviour is very good and the 'buddy' system works well.
- Pupils appreciate and respect others' backgrounds, abilities and values.
- Pupils respond very well to responsibilities they are given.

Commentary

9. The school has a good ethos and climate for learning, in which pupils thrive and develop. Pupils quickly realise that everyone in the school is valued through recognition of their achievement and a wide-ranging system of rewards. Pupils enjoy coming to school, like their teachers and try hard to please them because of the very good relationships they have with staff. Pupils' personal development is effective because the school works hard to promote it. The great care and attention provided by the teacher and the Nursery nurse in the Reception class ensures that all children reach the expected goals for personal, social and emotional development well before they enter Year 1.

10. Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. The good insistence on moral values by staff, the adherence to the school's code of conduct and the pupils' appreciation of the rewards received all have a very positive effect on behaviour. Consequently, pupils are polite, respectful, friendly and work hard. Pupils say the school is free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment and are confident that, should an incident occur, they would turn to adults for help. The school's playground 'buddy' system is highly thought of by the pupils, and younger pupils testify that it works very successfully. The Year 5 'buddies' ensure that pupils who have no one to play with are included swiftly into a game or are befriended. During the inspection, pupils played and socialised with each other extremely well at breaktimes.

11. Pupils in the Crookhill Achievement Base have very good relationships with their teacher and learning support assistant and generally value the assistance they receive. Good behaviour is expected as the norm. Staff provide very good role models and encourage pupils to behave similarly. They are not disappointed. There is an underlying ethos of hard work and good relationships. Exercise books are well presented and marked and exhibit a commitment to high standards. All pupils join the appropriate mainstream class for music, physical education, swimming and games, and are cheerfully accepted as equals. They are confident and friendly. Teachers are watchful and ensure that they are fully and effectively included.

12. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and appreciate the impact of their actions on others. Lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education contribute effectively to pupils' personal growth. Staff develop caring attitudes and moral values in pupils through the work they provide. Pupils write notes on their 'tree of wishes'; for example, that they wish 'a cure could be found for brain cancer' or 'I worry about the war in Iraq'. A wide range of visits and visitors to the school broadens pupils' social and cultural horizons. Sporting tournaments and opportunities to participate in out-of-school activities aid social development well. Pupils' appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions is encouraged well through art and music and by visits of artists, dancers and others from China, Africa and India. Spiritual development is well developed, particularly through assemblies, when pupils have good opportunities to reflect on 'being myself' and 'being special'.

13. Pupils learn quickly how to make sensible decisions about their own lives and to be responsible members of the school community. The school council has a very positive effect in developing pupils as citizens. Pupils are proud that they and their classmates put forward ideas that result in changes that will benefit themselves and others. For instance, they have been involved in the repainting of the toilets. When considering new proposals from other pupils, Year 6 pupils take a mature view of which suggestions are feasible and those that are not practical. Pupils, including those from the Base, who help run the tuck shop at break-times, take their responsibilities very seriously and carry out monitoring jobs or answer the office telephone to the best of their ability.

14. The school's levels of attendance and pupils' punctuality are both satisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.6%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0%	School data	0.4%
National data	5.4%	National data	0.4%

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good overall. The quality of teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is satisfactory and there are good enrichment activities. Care, guidance and support of pupils are very good. The school has very good partnerships with parents and good links with the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved recently.
- Teaching and learning are very good in Reception.
- Pupils are very well managed.
- Opportunities to develop and practise pupils' speaking skills are insufficient.
- Tasks are well matched to pupils' attainment in English and mathematics but less well so in some other subjects such as history and religious education.

Commentary

15. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is very good in the Reception class and children have a very good start in the school. Teaching in the Base is never less than good and is sometimes very good. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2. It is also good in Years 3 to 6 but is less consistent and varies from satisfactory to very good. At the time of the last inspection, teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	12 (32%)	20 (53%)	6 (32%)	0	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 where 30 or more lessons are seen.

16. The quality of teaching at Crookhill has improved significantly under the leadership of the new headteacher. Soon after her appointment, she monitored teaching and learning, with the help of a local education authority advisor. This effective monitoring revealed some weaknesses in the teaching and identified that too few lessons were good or better. Through continuous monitoring, constructive feedback to staff on their performance and some 'in-house' training, the headteacher and staff have successfully improved teaching through:

- ensuring that lessons are clearly focused and structured into three parts;
- raising the expectations of what pupils can achieve;
- creating attractive and stimulating classrooms for learning;
- matching tasks to pupils' different attainment and needs;
- using the ends of lessons well to review and reinforce learning.

17. Weaknesses in teaching have been effectively addressed and teaching is now good. The improvements in teaching are resulting in children achieving well in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. As the improvements to teaching are so recent, they have not yet had a full impact on pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6, where achievement is satisfactory overall rather than good.

18. Teachers have a good command of the Foundation Stage areas of learning, the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Lessons are well planned and clear learning objectives are identified. These are effectively shared with the class, so that pupils know what they are to learn. Planning in subjects such as English, mathematics and ICT takes good account of the different levels of attainment within a class. As a result, all pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are appropriately challenged and make good progress in their learning.

19. Teachers use a good range of methods and techniques well to achieve good learning. Explanations, instruction and demonstration are all clear and informative. Pupils are attentive and show a very keen interest in learning. They participate well in the activities and advance well in knowledge and understanding. Teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding before moving them on. The ends of lessons are used well to review learning, share successes and to clarify pupils' misunderstandings. As a result, most show a clear understanding of their learning and know what they need to do to improve.

20. In the main, teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to acquire and develop language skills. Very rarely do pupils discuss in pairs or small groups and this contributes to the below average speaking skills across the school. Furthermore, pupils' application of writing skills and their ability to carry out independent study in other subjects is underdeveloped. The school has recently increased opportunities for investigation and problem solving in mathematics and science. Pupils frequently work collaboratively in a range of subjects, such as mathematics, science and ICT, and this contributes to their social and team-building skills.

21. Teachers throughout the school and in the Base have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and pupils respond well. Teachers and support staff have created a positive learning climate for all pupils and have established good relationships based on mutual respect. Pupils are managed very well, so that valuable learning time is rarely lost through inappropriate behaviour. The management of pupils and the very good relationships established are particular strengths of the teaching at Crookhill. Learning support assistants are well used and deployed. They make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs, making sure that all pupils are able to participate in the full curriculum and in the learning activities offered.

22. Teaching and learning in the Crookhill Achievement Base is always good and frequently very good. Pupils are challenged consistently to do their best, and work is carefully structured to aid their learning. Pupils' needs are identified early and they have individual programmes of work planned for them. This is especially so in reading, where a variety of skills, including a stress on the use of phonics, is employed to enable them to succeed.

23. The assessment and recording of pupils' attainment are good overall, with particular strengths in English, mathematics and ICT. Pupils' progress is effectively tracked in English and mathematics as they move through the school. This enables teachers to set learning targets and predict likely attainment by the end of the year. The results of assessments are used effectively to plan future teaching and learning, particularly in English and mathematics. As a result, tasks are usually well matched to pupils' different attainment, so that all are suitably challenged. However, the matching of tasks to previous attainment and current needs is less effective in science, history and religious education. The Base has good assessment procedures, using a published scheme that enables pupils' progress to be tracked over time. Similarly, a software programme helps to produce well-ordered targets so that learning builds systematically, piece by piece. Individual education plans are reviewed and updated regularly.

24. Pupils' work is marked on a regular basis and teachers provide comments of praise and encouragement for good work. However, comments offering guidance on how pupils can improve are less evident.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good for children in Reception and satisfactory overall. Learning is enriched through a good range of out-of-class activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for the Reception class.
- Coverage of some subjects is not well balanced.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Opportunities to develop language and literacy skills through other subjects are insufficient.
- Teachers' specialist subject knowledge is used well.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Commentary

25. There is a good curriculum for pupils in Reception, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory. All areas of learning are planned and given appropriate attention. An interesting and stimulating range of learning activities is provided. There is a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those directed by adults. Children have good opportunities to explore and experiment with a variety of materials and equipment. Children have free access to materials and resources, but the cramped accommodation and limited hard surface area outside restrict the activities which they can choose for themselves.

26. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Planning for all subjects is based on national guidance and weaknesses in the scheme of work for ICT have been corrected. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are followed closely, after a recent review of provision. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) has developed well and is now good. Topics include sex education and drug awareness, and a range of visitors develops pupils' understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship. Involvement in the Healthy Schools scheme is reflected well in the life of the school. A course in French is a good addition in Year 6, taught each week by a language specialist from the local secondary school. A literacy project begun in Year 6 is continued after transfer to the secondary school. Overall, pupils are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.

27. Opportunities to develop numeracy and ICT skills are evident in planning for other subjects, but more could be done to develop skills in reading and writing through the curriculum. Coverage of topics in geography, history and religious education is inconsistent through the school. Less work is produced in some years than in others, and the time allowed for each subject is in need of review in order to satisfy the needs of the subject.

28. The curriculum is extended well. There is a good range of after-class activities, including clubs for drama and gardening. The school choir sings well and performs within the community. A well planned multi-cultural arts project runs over several weeks and makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of other cultures. Pupils join with others from the area in many cultural and sporting activities. There is a substantial programme of visitors, including representatives from the church, social services and performing arts.

29. Overall, planning is satisfactory in ensuring that pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school provides good opportunities for all pupils with special educational needs to have equal access to all facets of its work and to achieve their best. The teachers identify pupils' special educational needs and, together with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), an

individual education plan is created. The parents and pupils are involved, so that the principles of the Code of Practice are met. These plans are well written and are effectively implemented. As a consequence, pupils with special educational needs make at least sound progress. The school ensures that all pupils may be involved in all aspects of school life.

30. The curriculum in the Crookhill Achievement Base is broad and balanced. It is adapted to be highly relevant to the needs of the pupils, but at the same time mirrors that of the mainstream classes, so that pupils can be included in other lessons when appropriate. All pupils join their mainstream peers for music and physical activities, and plans are in place for this to be extended more readily where pupils have specific interests and skills.

31. Planning usually takes account of the range of ability within each class, with tasks adjusted so that all pupils achieve successfully. However, such adjustments are not consistent in the Year 3 to 6 classes. Instances were noted in science, history, geography and religious education where all pupils were often set the same work. As a result, not all pupils, particularly higher attainers, are sufficiently challenged.

32. The school is well staffed, with class sizes below average. Some teachers regularly exchange classes so that they can teach their specialist subjects, and a visiting specialist teaches music to all classes. The school has very few teaching assistants, but they play a valuable role in helping groups of pupils, particularly those with lower attainment in Years 1 and 2.

33. The library is short of reference books, though more have been ordered. The extensive grounds are used well for teaching purposes. There have been good improvements to playground facilities, with thoughtful use of pupils' suggestions. Resources for ICT have been developed considerably since the previous inspection, providing a good basis for raising standards.

34. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, though children in Reception have limited space in their classroom and outdoors. This limits the range of activities offered, though there are plans to move the Reception class to a different part of the school. Attractive displays create a bright and stimulating background for learning and celebrate pupils' achievements well.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The monitoring of pupils' achievements and personal development is good. There are very good arrangements for involving pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good child protection procedures.
- Great attention is paid to ensuring that the school is a healthy and safe place.
- The school monitors all aspects of pupils' progress carefully.
- Induction procedures for new pupils are very good.
- The school seeks and acts on pupils' views very well.

Commentary

35. The school provides pupils with a happy, secure and caring environment which encourages them to learn and grow into mature, responsible members of the community. The headteacher is in charge of the very good child protection procedures, which include links with all the relevant local agencies.

36. Health and safety arrangements are very good. There are regular and thorough safety and security inspections of the whole site. The very good risk assessment system covers all in-school

activities and trips off-site. First aid provision is very good because a number of staff are fully trained first-aiders. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day. Their health and general wellbeing is promoted through the PSHE programme.

37. Teachers know their pupils well. They and the support staff are sensitive to their pupils' needs and provide good help and guidance. Formal and informal arrangements for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress are good and, therefore, help teachers decide what they need to do next in order to help individuals and groups of pupils to learn. Pupils who have special educational needs are given the support and guidance which they need in order to make good progress.

38. The school really values pupils' ideas and the contribution which they can make to school life. The findings of a recent survey of parents' and pupils' views are contributing to the school's improvement plans. The well-established school council has had a major impact on the environment. Its suggestions have led to major improvements in the playground and the lavatories, and the building of a delightful quiet area.

39. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice, with good provision for pupils identified with special educational needs. The SENCO and teachers work effectively to meet the needs of all pupils with special educational needs and to monitor their progress in relation to the targets on their individual education plans

40. The teacher and learning support assistant in the Crookhill Achievement Base know the pupils very well. This ensures that they are able to help the pupils to achieve to the best of their ability in both academic and personal development. Progress is assessed well against the targets on their individual education plans and the national guidelines for attainment.

41. The arrangements for bringing pupils into the Reception class are very good. They include home visits, 'taster' sessions and briefings for parents. As a result, children feel secure and settle quickly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is very good. Its links with other schools, colleges and the local community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have full confidence in the ability of the new headteacher.
- Parents are made very welcome and kept well informed about the school and their children's standards and progress.
- Pupils benefit from the school's good links with local schools and colleges.
- The school takes effective action to ensure that pupils have a happy and well-planned transfer to their secondary schools.
- Only a small number of parents come regularly into school to help in classrooms.

Commentary

42. Parents are absolutely delighted with the ways in which the new headteacher is reaching out to the community and encouraging them to become more involved in school life and their children's education. They are pleased that the headteacher listens to their views and deals promptly with their concerns. The findings of a recent in-depth survey of parents' views and needs have already been included in the school's improvement plans. Communication with parents is now very good.

43. Parents are kept well informed of their pupils' progress and targets through consultation meetings and an end of year report. Teachers and support staff 'meet and greet' parents at the beginning and the end of the school day. The result is a relaxed family atmosphere in which all can chat about children's needs and progress. A good prospectus, weekly newsletters and an up-to-

date website, which contains information about homework, keep parents in touch with what is going on in the school.

44. Very few parents at present come regularly into school to help with lessons, but those that do make an important contribution. Parents are keen to help their children learn and the majority are pleased with the level of homework set. A computer course, which is designed to help parents improve their skills so that they can help their children, is proving to be very popular. One-off events and celebrations of major festivals are always well supported and there is never a shortage of volunteers to help with educational visits.

45. The school liaises well with parents whose children have special educational needs. Procedures for annual reviews for pupils with a statement of educational need meet statutory requirements and targets are agreed with the parents. Pupils usually make a statement. Parents of pupils with individual education plans are given a copy and details of any further targets as they are reviewed and updated.

46. Procedures for admitting pupils into the Crookhill Achievement Base and ensuring that parents feel positive about their child's placement are good. Similarly, the transfer between the Base and secondary education is sensitively managed. This includes at least one visit to the new school. Parents are given regular updates on their child's progress and may make use of the school's 'meet and greet' policy at any time. They are fully involved in the annual review of their children's individual education plans and statements of special educational needs.

47. The school works with local colleges and schools to ensure that it keeps its expertise up to date and makes the best possible use of staff and resources. It also provides placements for trainee teachers and support staff. All Year 6 pupils take part in 'transition week', which, through a programme of visits, talks, discussions and activities, prepares them very well for their move into their secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction. The governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher is very good and has taken highly effective action to bring about improvements.
- The deputy headteacher complements the headteacher effectively.
- Some subject leaders' roles are not sufficiently well developed.
- Governors have a good range of skills and expertise.

Commentary

48. The governing body are committed to and interested in the school. They have shown considerable vision and astuteness in the recent appointment of the new headteacher. The members of the governing body possess a wide range of expertise and the school uses this very well. For example, a fire officer has influenced the school's very good procedures for health and safety and a chartered accountant has provided good financial advice. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They share the headteacher's vision for raising standards through high quality provision. All statutory duties are fulfilled.

49. The new headteacher has dynamic and inspirational qualities and provides very good leadership. She has had a powerful impact on the school in a short period of time. Her very clear vision and new direction for the school is very well focused on raising standards, providing high

quality teaching and creating an attractive and positive climate for learning. The headteacher has taken swift and highly effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the partnership with parents. She articulates her vision with commitment and infectious enthusiasm and she has gained considerable confidence and respect from pupils, staff, parents and governors.

50. The headteacher has motivated the staff and created effective teamwork. There is a clear commitment to school improvement among the staff. The roles of the deputy headteacher and subject leaders have been successfully clarified. However, some subject leader roles, such as in mathematics and science, are insufficiently well developed in the monitoring of standards and in data analysis. The deputy headteacher's role has been extended and he complements and supports the headteacher well in leading and managing the school. He leads by example in the classroom by providing very good teaching and is effectively leading assessment. He also provides very good mentoring and support for a newly qualified teacher.

51. The provision for special educational needs is managed well by the special educational needs co-ordinator, who also leads the Crookhill Achievement Base. She is very committed to both aspects of the school and has a clear picture of the needs both within the school and the Base. She is well helped by the headteacher and mainstream teachers.

52. The headteacher undertook a rigorous evaluation of the whole school as soon as she was appointed. She quickly established an effective partnership with the local education authority and involved advisors in the process. Teaching has been effectively monitored and highly effective action has been taken to address weaknesses and achieve good teaching throughout the school. The school conducted a parental survey in the spring in order to assess parents' level of satisfaction and to identify concerns and unmet needs. One parent at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection commented on how impressed he was that he received a personal response to comments on the questionnaire within hours. The findings of the survey were used well to take effective action and parents are delighted, reporting improvements in the school's approachability, communication and in their involvement in their child's learning. Performance data is carefully analysed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. However, some key subject leaders are not sufficiently well trained in the use of this data.

53. Financial planning and management are good. With a falling roll, the reduced budget is tight and the school and governors have taken the decision to retain single age classes and the current level of teachers. This has resulted in a reduction of teaching assistants and the effect of this will be carefully monitored. The school has recently bought into the local educational authority's financial services to enable the headteacher to focus on standards and teaching. This has been a wise decision. The principles of best value have been applied well in the tendering for the modification of the Reception accommodation.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	495,041
Total expenditure	502,035
Expenditure per pupil	2,678

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	16,475
Balance carried forward to the next	23,469

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

54. Provision for Reception children is very good overall, and has improved since the last inspection. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average. Children achieve well and most will reach the goals set for them in most of the areas of learning, because the teaching is very good overall. A small number of higher attaining children exceed the goals expected of them and are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Children with special educational needs and those who have speech difficulties are well provided for, well integrated into the activities and also achieve well. Children's attainment and progress are carefully assessed and monitored. There are good arrangements for induction and for children to transfer to the next class. The accommodation is cramped and the outside area is not large, but the staff make the best possible use of what is available. Next year the school plans to relocate the class in much better accommodation.

55. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The teacher and Nursery nurse work very well together as a team to provide a carefully planned range of interesting activities for children that are very well matched to children's individual needs. The teaching is thorough and enables children to build up their skills in small steps. Children respond very well to the teaching because of the warm relationships they have with staff. One of the consistently good features of all lessons is the way the teacher shares with children what they are to learn and discusses with children what they have achieved at the end of the lesson.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher and Nursery nurse know every child very well and work hard to ensure that each individual's needs are met.
- Achievement is good because teaching is focused on raising children's confidence and making them independent learners.
- Children have very positive attitudes to all the activities offered and are very well behaved at all times.

Commentary

56. Most children exceed the goals set for them because of the high quality experiences they receive. The warm and calm manner used by staff is apparent in every lesson and they provide very good role models for children. Very rarely do children need reminding to be polite or well behaved because staff have such high expectations of them. When eating their fruit at snack-time they say 'please' and 'thank you' readily. Children are always praised for their good manners. All children are encouraged to tidy up after working, and they do this willingly and to the best of their ability. Children show enthusiasm for their tasks and are just as well behaved and work as hard when working independently as when working with an adult. Children confidently and sensibly choose their own activities and the range of materials on offer. Children try their best at all times.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's language skills through carefully planned activities.
- The role-play area provides an exciting area for children to talk to each other and to write independently.
- The shared reading sessions, where children read in a group with a teacher, are very good.

Commentary

57. The teaching is very good. The teacher uses stories as a basis for much of the work in other areas of learning, which extends children's understanding of literature effectively. A strong emphasis is put on children speaking and listening and, as a consequence, children become more confident in expressing themselves. Letter sounds and blends are taught very well and children enthusiastically write vowel combinations such as 'ai' on their individual whiteboards. This practice provides the teacher with a good assessment of the children's attainment in forming their letters and their knowledge of words. The teacher is skilled in teaching the children to read. She ensures that children pay full attention to the text and uses good questions to make children think about the story the pictures tell. The teacher highlights how clues from the text will help children guess what new or unfamiliar words may say. Consequently, many children know all their letter sounds, read simple sentences and higher attaining children read more demanding text with fluency. The 'jungle' is well resourced to encourage children to talk to each other. 'Get the binoculars, an elephant's coming' said one child excitedly to two others as they rushed to the tent for the binoculars. Because the 'jungle' area is provided with clipboards for children to record what they 'see', children are encouraged to be imaginative and to write short sentences about the animals that live in a jungle. The direct teaching of writing is very good. The writing tasks are always geared towards children's individual needs and the teacher and Nursery nurse give good support to individual children. Most children are on course to reach the expected Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mathematical development is very good, so that children gain a secure understanding of numbers.
- Tasks are well matched to children's needs.

Commentary

58. By the end of the Reception year, children reach the expected standards. Their achievement is good because the teacher organises a wide range of opportunities for children to gain confidence in mathematics. Lessons for the children begin with whole-class sessions, with interesting counting activities that reinforce key skills very well. The teacher is skilled in extending children's understanding of numbers by asking questions in different ways. This means that children have to think carefully and are helped to achieve. Children respond enthusiastically to the very good direct teaching and enjoy the good provision in other areas of learning, such as the sand and water. One of the main features of the teaching is the careful way in which staff match the work to the needs of the children, making sure that the tasks are relevant to all their needs. Children's knowledge and understanding of mathematics are built upon systematically and are based on motivating practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

59. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this wide area, but the work and the teaching seen indicates that children achieve well. Curriculum plans show that the teacher provides an interesting range of experiences and visits. Children often choose to work on the computer in the classroom, and they have weekly lessons in the computer suite. In one lesson they enjoyed the challenge of programming a turtle to move across the screen, while another group worked with the teacher, using a programmable toy. Children achieved well, particularly those engaged with the programmable toy, as the teacher kept introducing a new challenge for the children to overcome. By the end of the session the children could program the toy to move a certain distance and turn around.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The physical education lessons in the hall enable children to achieve well.
- Although the paved outside area is small, staff make good efforts to overcome its limitations.

Commentary

60. Children move confidently on the large climbing apparatus, climbing, balancing and sliding with reasonable agility. They use bats, balls, bean bags and hoops with developing control and pedal wheeled toys round the 'roadway', stopping at the 'traffic lights' for others to cross. Staff are on hand to offer help and encourage road safety principles. The teaching of the indoor games lesson was good. Children stopped immediately on command and knew why they needed to warm up their bodies. 'Exercise is good for you' said one child in response to a question. The teacher set the children challenges and gave them plenty of time to practise and improve. The children enjoyed the lesson and all improved their skills considerably. Children are taught to manipulate tools and small equipment such as scissors and do so with growing dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop their creativity overall.
- The accommodation is cramped and does not allow for a full range of experiences to be on offer permanently.

Commentary

61. Teaching is good and as a result most children make good progress and achieve well. Most children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. There are daily chances for children to develop their creativity and skills. There is access to a good range of materials, with children able to choose whether to paint, draw, make models or use dough to mould and roll. As a result, children handle scissors and paintbrushes carefully, enjoy being creative and produce pleasing results. Each area allows children to make their own choices and the teacher also

encourages children to produce work that is in some way linked to the current story. Children take notice of the invitations to paint a train or make a paper collage. The creative role-play area is very popular with both boys and girls, and the play is particularly meaningful when the Nursery nurse interacts with the children. Children sing tunefully and with gusto when they choose their favourite song, 'She'll be coming round the mountain'. Children have the chance to play musical instruments but there is no space in the classroom for these to be permanently set up, which limits children's experiences. Additionally, only two children at a time can be accommodated at the dough or painting tables. The cramped accommodation restricts the number of activities on offer each day.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking are below average.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are good.
- Interest in reading is high through the school.

Commentary

62. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average at the previous inspection. However, results in the national tests fell sharply from 2001 onwards to well below the national average. The Year 2 results improved in 2003 to average when compared with those of similar schools, though they were below the national average. The Year 6 results, though, remained well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. However, the Year 6 results are depressed by the inclusion of pupils from the special educational needs base in the overall figures.

63. The new headteacher, as subject leader, is leading staff in taking determined action to raise standards. Notable steps taken include: monitoring planning and teaching rigorously to ensure that the National Literacy Strategy is followed closely in all classes, introducing a programme of reading instruction in Year 1 and boosting book stocks throughout the school. Support programmes for lower attaining pupils have been initiated, setting clear targets for classes and individual pupils and carefully monitoring their progress.

64. There are signs of improvement as a result of this very good leadership and management. Early indications are that pupils' performance has improved in this year's national tests. In the broader range of work outside the tests, the inspection found that standards are average in reading and writing in Years 2 and 6, but speaking skills are below average throughout the school. In the main, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their speaking skills. Nevertheless, pupils in all classes listen well. They have very good attitudes to the subject and are keen to learn in class and at home. Homework makes a good contribution to their learning. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

65. Standards on entry to the school are below average overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in learning basic skills and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all class activities. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because they are given tasks clearly matched to their needs and are often helped to succeed by a teaching assistant. There is little additional help available in Years 3 to 6, but teachers plan work carefully so that these pupils make satisfactory progress. At times, the tasks set for pupils with the potential for higher

attainment are too limited. In general, though, pupils in the junior classes achieve satisfactory results for their age and were making good progress in the lessons seen.

66. By Year 2, pupils take an active part in discussions, but few speak clearly. Generally, their quiet, brief answers indicate lack of confidence. They are lively when talking to friends, but in class most have difficulty in explaining their ideas at length in formal language. Year 6 pupils are restrained in discussions. Some do not speak clearly enough and need more specific practice. In the best lessons, teachers help pupils develop ideas by talking with a partner or making notes before whole-class discussions. Overall, pupils have insufficient regular opportunities to take the lead in speaking at length to the class. There have been recent improvements. Drama is now included in the programme of study and is offered as an after-school club. A checklist for assessing standards is already in use.

67. Pupils are generally keen on reading fiction. Year 2 pupils know how to sound out words they do not recognise on sight, and a new reading programme guides their progress in this skill. They understand what they read, though their explanations are limited. Similarly, even higher attaining pupils in Year 6 find difficulty in explaining key features of books and making comparisons. Most Year 6 pupils are reading books at the level of difficulty expected for their age, but they have less experience of non-fiction than is generally found. This reflects the small library stock of information books, though new books have been ordered. A local authority initiative involving Year 6 pupils in reviewing modern fiction has been very successful in stimulating their interest. They are also enjoying the study of a particular author that is to be continued in the high school.

68. Handwriting, spelling and punctuation are taught well. Teachers have consistently high expectations and so standards of accuracy are good. Much written work is planned and developed in rough first, so finished pieces are usually well structured and presented. Pupils in Year 2 successfully write stories and accounts for different purposes. Regular creative writing in all classes results in many good examples of rich vocabulary, appealing images and dramatic dialogue. This is a good feature of writing in Year 6. Their factual accounts in all subjects are weaker, reflecting their lack of experience in speaking formally. Ideas are usually clearly expressed and organised, using paragraphs, but pupils tend to use simple sentence structures and an informal style.

69. The overall quality of teaching is good, with very good teaching seen in Year 2 and Year 6. Targets for each lesson are well focused and clearly explained to the class at the outset, so there is a strong sense of purpose. Study texts hold pupils' interest well, and teachers use these examples effectively to develop understanding of language features. In the very good lessons, instruction is very well focused and persistent, drawing all pupils into practising new skills. Tasks are generally adjusted carefully to match the abilities of different pupils. At times, though, pupils with the potential for higher attainment are given too much direction, reducing the possibility of using their own initiative. Teachers' marking does well in praising successful features and telling pupils how to improve, but teachers rarely help them to do this by then setting tasks aimed at correcting their weaknesses. Teaching assistants have been trained to support selected pupils. Notably, groups of lower attaining Year 3 pupils are withdrawn for intensive instruction, following an officially recommended programme that is well taught by a teaching assistant.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. Pupils learn the appropriate technical terms in all subjects, but opportunities to develop reading and writing skills through other subjects in the curriculum are not sufficiently planned. All pupils in the class often complete the same worksheet, particularly in history, geography and religious education. Generally such worksheets are not challenging, particularly for higher attainers. As a result, opportunities are lost for pupils to read for information and set out their ideas logically, using formal language.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Tasks are generally well matched to pupils' ability.

Commentary

71. In the current Year 2, standards are broadly average and most pupils are achieving well from their attainment on entry to the school. This is because they receive good teaching. Standards in the current Year 6 are also average. Although the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is now good, assessment data indicates that pupils have achieved satisfactorily from their earlier attainment in Year 2. Recent improvements to teaching have not yet led to good achievement in Years 3 to 6. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.

72. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to very good. Lessons are well planned and structured with clear learning objectives identified. Lessons begin with brisk oral work to sharpen pupils' mental skills. In the main, tasks in mathematics are well matched to pupils' attainment and needs. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils were totalling numbers and rounding them to the nearest 10. The teacher's explanations and demonstrations on the board were clear and informative. Pupils were attentive and understood the principle of rounding well. The teacher checked pupils' understanding with some very good questioning. Pupils were also given good opportunities to discuss and explain the rules of rounding numbers. For the main task, pupils were organised into groups of similar ability. Interesting and practical tasks were well matched to pupils' attainment and need, and so all pupils were challenged appropriately. These tasks were productive and sustained their interest. Most pupils demonstrated that they could work well both collaboratively and independently. The end of the lesson was used very well to share learning and assess to what extent the learning objectives had been attained.

73. The school has recently placed more emphasis on investigation and problem solving in mathematics. For example, pupils in a very good Year 6 lesson were solving number problems by extracting data from charts and tables. The teacher used a computer and digital projector very well to outline the purpose of the lesson and to demonstrate how to interpret data from charts. Problems were challenging and well matched to pupils' needs. Most pupils used a variety of strategies to solve number problems. Lower attaining pupils used suitable addition and subtraction methods, while higher attainers made predictions before solving problems and used all four operations. They checked that their answers were reasonable.

74. Where teaching is occasionally satisfactory rather than good or very good, the pace of the lesson is less brisk and questioning and the tasks set are not sufficiently well adapted to pupils' different levels of attainment. There is also a lack of reinforcement of the lesson's learning. Pupils therefore make satisfactory, rather than good, gains in acquiring new knowledge and skills.

75. The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. Planning is appropriately based on the National Numeracy Strategy. The school has a good system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment. Assessment data is generally used well to inform future planning and to predict pupils' future attainment. The headteacher and local education authority adviser have effectively monitored teaching. The subject leader has also begun monitoring teaching. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Pupils apply and develop their numeracy skills satisfactorily across the curriculum, with some good examples in science. In Year 2, pupils produce tally charts of their favourite food and present this information as a clear bar chart. In Year 6 science, pupils produce a line graph to show the cooling down of hot water in three differently insulated vessels. Time and temperature are measured competently.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning seen was good.
- Pupils' achievement is good in Years 1 and 2.
- Tasks and activities are not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' attainment.

Commentary

77. Standards are average in the current Year 2 and pupils are achieving well from their level of attainment on entry to the school. Standards are average in the current Year 6 and pupils' achievement from their prior attainment in Year 2 is satisfactory. While the quality of teaching seen in Years 3 to 6 was good, the study of pupils' work indicates that pupils' achievement has been satisfactory rather than good. Improvements to teaching and the increased opportunities for investigative work are too recent to have had a significant impact on achievement. Standards and achievement are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

78. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good, so that pupils acquired and applied new knowledge and skills well. Lessons were well planned with clear learning objectives identified. These were effectively shared with the class so that pupils knew what they were expected to learn. The school has recently placed more emphasis on an investigative approach to science. This is beginning to have a positive effect on the development and application of pupils' scientific skills. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were acquiring the skills of classifying and sorting. The teacher used a computer program with a digital projector very well and pupils sorted fictional creatures called 'Furbles' according to their colour, shape and number of eyes. The teacher's explanations were clear and informative and questioning was used well to check pupils' understanding. The pupils then suggested different features or criteria for sorting people in the class. They suggested gender, eye colour and hair colour. The pupils participated well in the lesson and learned to classify skills. Pupils in a good Year 6 lesson were creating electrical circuits with switches to solve problems concerning a doorbell or a burglar alarm. They constructed circuits to light a lamp or sound a buzzer and added a self-made switch. Pupils showed interest and high levels of concentration. They drew diagrams of their circuits, using electrical symbols correctly. Pupils made good progress in applying their knowledge to solve practical problems. The study of pupils' work indicates that activities and tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to the different levels of attainment. Where this happens, not all pupils are challenged appropriately. Lower attaining pupils do not always complete the task while higher attainers are not sufficiently extended.

79. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The planning of the curriculum is appropriately based on national guidelines. The role of the subject leader is not sufficiently well developed in monitoring standards and provision, and in analysing performance data. As a result, the co-ordinator does not have a sufficiently clear overview of standards and provision across the school. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Standards, achievement and provision have improved since the last inspection.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

80. Throughout the school, pupils are achieving well because they receive good teaching and regular opportunities to acquire and practise ICT skills in a well-equipped computer suite. In the current Year 2 and Year 6, standards are average. This represents considerable improvement since the last inspection, when standards across the school were below national expectations and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory.

81. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching was unsatisfactory doing the last inspection, as many teachers had an insecure command of the subject. All staff have received training and the school has appointed teachers with good expertise. Most teachers are now confident with ICT and use it effectively for planning and report writing. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives identified, which are shared effectively with the class. Pupils know what they are expected to learn. Planning takes good account of the different levels of attainment within the class. Teachers' explanations, instruction and demonstrations are clear and informative. Pupils watch and listen well and show a keen interest in their learning. Teachers use a digital projector well in the computer suite to demonstrate techniques and procedures with different programs. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise and apply skills. The school has a good system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment.

82. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils used binary trees well to identify common fruits or three-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils moved on to designing a binary tree to identify five different mammals. Pupils made very good progress due to the teacher's high expectations, very clear exposition and effective matching of activities to the pupils' abilities. In a very good Year 6 lesson, one group of pupils were developing control skills. They created a set of instructions to control lights and buzzers on models. Higher attaining pupils created instructions using inputs, outputs and sensors to set time intervals for different procedures. Another group used the Internet to find information about Britain since 1950.

83. The leadership and management of ICT are effective and are shared between the deputy headteacher and a newly qualified teacher. This arrangement is a good example of providing development and training from an experienced teacher. The ICT curriculum is well planned and implemented and schemes of work are appropriately based on national guidance. The school set up a computer suite three years ago with 17 computers. In addition, there is a computer in each classroom. All computers have access to the Internet. Facilities and resources for ICT are now good and there are clear plans for further improvements. The school has established an attractive and informative website. Overall, the school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects is satisfactory and developing well. For example, pupils in Year 2 in science used CD ROMs to find information and illustrations of different animals. In Year 5 pupils examined Indian cave paintings from the Internet in art and design. They used this to inspire their own paintings.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history were sampled. Religious education was inspected in full.

Geography

85. Only one geography lesson was seen, in Year 2. It is therefore not possible to form a judgement about provision in the subject. Except in Year 2, little work was in evidence across the school and this is partly because work is taught in blocked periods of time. It has been a long time since geography was taught in some classes. This means that skills are not built up systematically and, although teachers' planning shows coverage of the National Curriculum, work does not appear to be covered in sufficient depth in some year groups. In Year 2, standards are at least average in pupils' books and their attainment in the one lesson observed was above average. Pupils in this lesson achieved well and learned the difference between the physical features of a landscape and those made by man. Through skilled questioning and by extending pupils' answers, the teacher helped pupils to compare their own village of Crookhill with the 'Isle of Struay', an imaginary island from a storybook. The work was well matched to pupils' individual needs and good opportunities were provided for pupils to discuss issues. The co-ordinator of geography is new but keen and enthusiastic. She sets a good example in her teaching, but her role in monitoring of the subject is at an early stage of development.

History

86. No history lessons were seen. A sample of pupils' past work indicates that the curriculum is soundly based on national guidance. In Years 1 and 2, pupils accurately record key facts about changes in family life, the lives of famous people and events such as the Great Fire of London. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to find evidence of change through pictures, objects and accounts of times past. The quality and quantity of work produced in each year varies considerably. At best, a range of topics is studied within a historical period to give pupils a broad base of understanding. Pupils of all abilities are included well through a variety of tasks, including charts, labelled diagrams and detailed accounts. It is notable that pupils achieve well in imaginative writing, where they see events through the eyes of someone of that time. In some year groups, this range of work is drawn together effectively in well-presented project folders. However, coverage of different historical periods is very uneven, with little recorded work in some units of study. At times, all pupils complete the same worksheet. Generally, such worksheets are best suited to the needs of lower attaining pupils, so that others are not adequately challenged. There is no evidence that pupils are consistently trained to find information in reference books or to write formal accounts of their findings. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' cultural development but not enough to the development of their literacy skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use a practical approach to help pupils understand new ideas.
- There are some good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, but limited opportunities for extended writing.
- Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Commentary

87. Pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of both Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the religious education curriculum. Much of the work in lessons centres round discussion. As a consequence, there was limited written work to examine. Nevertheless, inspection evidence obtained by talking to pupils, looking at their work, talking to teachers and examining their planning, supports the judgement that the pupils' achievement is sound. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

88. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lesson planning clearly indicates what pupils are expected to learn and do. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils, so that they are aware of what they are expected to do, and pupils' positive attitudes to learning result in satisfactory achievement. There are good opportunities for pupils to undertake focused discussion, develop speaking and listening skills, and develop their personal and social skills. In one Year 3 lesson, groups of pupils devised little playlets to show how they had understood the word 'faith', focusing on the story of Abraham. Use is made of the Internet to engage the pupils' interest. For example, a Year 2 class compared pictures of a church on the Internet with those taken on a visit in an earlier lesson to the local church, recording similarities and differences. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 show they are beginning to link religious teaching with everyday life. They were particularly impressed to have seen the chancel of the local church filled with fruit and other food for the school's Harvest Festival thanksgiving. Many recording activities include pictures or require the completion of worksheets with one word or short sentences as answers and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their ideas in written form.

89. The leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory. The subject leader monitors teachers' planning and samples pupils' work. Display promotes the subject well, both in classrooms and other areas, such as the library and hall. Good use is made of the local church and vicar, who is well known by the pupils, and this is supplemented by visits to places of worship used by those of other faiths to widen the pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding. The subject action plan includes the greater use of ICT, especially the Internet, in lessons and the improvement of the range of artefacts to support the teaching of other faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled, as insufficient lessons were seen to inspect these subjects in full.

Art and design

90. Although only one lesson was observed, it is evident that standards across the school are broadly average. Examples of good work are seen in displays around the school and in pupils' sketchbooks. For example, portraits of pupils are of a good standard and the fabric collages from the Base are well executed. These collages show a very good level of care and attention to detail. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use a reasonable range of materials to develop their skills in different artistic techniques. However, work in three dimensions, particularly in the use of clay, is not much in evidence. In the lesson observed, teaching was good, with the teacher providing a good exposition and opportunities for pupils to explore different experimental and abstract techniques. The teacher's own good subject knowledge was used well to aid pupils in their work and pupils responded enthusiastically. A good feature of the lesson was the way in which pupils were invited to move round the room to look at each other's work. Pupils were helpful in their comments to each other and often interested in what was to follow: 'Are you going to cover all the painting like that?' one intrigued pupil asked of another. A shortcoming of the lesson was the lack of encouragement for pupils to discuss their feelings about the pictures the teacher showed them. In each class pupils have sketchbooks and in the front of these is a list of the drawings from first-hand observation that pupils have completed. This is an effective system for providing a record of pupils' specific drawing as they move through the school. The displays and paintings on the walls with murals show imagination and dedication to making the school a vibrant and visually exciting school.

Pupils, staff and parents have worked hard to paint the many nooks and crannies of the school. For example, one of the porch areas has been transformed with paintings of wizards, witches and dragons and pupils are very proud of being involved in its creation.

Design and technology

91. Standards in design and technology were below average by the end of Year 2 and 6 at the time of the last inspection and pupils were making unsatisfactory progress. No lessons could be seen but discussions were held with pupils and staff and teachers' planning and pupils' work was examined. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and by Year 6 standards are average. Good emphasis is given to designing, making, evaluating and amending, when necessary. Pupils are successfully encouraged to carry out research before beginning their design project. This was particularly apparent when talking to Year 6 pupils about a fairground model they had made. They described ways in which different materials had been used to best meet the purpose of the construction. They evaluate the effectiveness of what they make and see if they can improve it. Pupils are very well aware that things may not go well the first time and think hard about ways to improve designs and outcomes. For example, one group made a Ferris wheel. The original design was circular, as in their photograph of the Newcastle fair. However, they could not imitate this, but imaginatively and successfully re-designed it in an octagonal shape. The collaboration between pupils in this subject, particularly in the Base, makes an effective contribution to pupils' social development. Effective leadership has contributed to the good improvement. There are good links with science, as pupils use electricity to power a torch in Year 4 and its use in Year 6 to enhance and power their fairground models is inspired. Good use is made of ICT, especially digital photography.

Music

92. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in Years 2 and 6 met national expectations. The quality of teaching was good in the two lessons seen in Year 4 and Year 6. The lessons were well structured and the teacher showed high expectations for accurate and sensitive performance. Good use was made of a tape-recorder to motivate pupils to concentrate on the quality of their music making and to evaluate that of other groups. Pupils in Year 6 reached the expected standards in singing and in playing percussion instruments in their group compositions. Their singing is accurate and clearly projected, but restrained. They have a sound understanding of musical terms and notation. The junior choir sings well, confidently performing songs in two parts for the whole school. Pupils of all years show enjoyment in singing together in school assemblies, and have a good repertoire of actions to accompany their favourite hymns and songs. The co-ordinator has specialist subject knowledge and teaches all classes through the school. She and another member of staff set a good example by playing instruments to accompany singing in assemblies. Pupils also benefit from regular lessons led by a visiting teacher who specialises in percussion. Music from other cultures is well represented in the programme of study and makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Physical education

93. Only two lessons were seen, one in Year 2 and one in Year 6. Teaching and learning were good in both lessons and pupils make good progress in the development of physical skills. The standards attained in both lessons were broadly average. In Year 2, pupils were developing ball skills leading to basketball. They had good opportunities to practise dribbling, catching and passing. Pupil demonstrations were used well as a model to others. The pupils enjoyed applying their skills to a game situation. In a Year 6 cricket lesson, pupils were practising bowling and batting skills. The teacher provided very good demonstrations and then enabled the pupils to practise and refine their skills. Effective coaching by the teacher was provided as pupils were practising. Pupils demonstrated good sporting attitudes and the relationships between pupils were very good. Pupils from the Base were included very well in the cricket activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

94. Personal, social and health education has a high profile in the curriculum and throughout the life of the school. The scheme of work covers all required elements, taught in separate lessons or within other subjects, notably science and religious education. It includes citizenship education, linked to themes of assemblies and the programme of visitors. Sex education and drug awareness are included for older pupils. Current displays draw together the personal responses of pupils of all ages to their worries and their wishes for the world. All classes have regular opportunities to discuss matters of concern, and drama techniques are used to help them explore such issues as trusting others. Overall, pupils are offered a good curriculum.

95. Staff are good role models as responsible and caring citizens. They create good opportunities for pupils to take initiatives in the wider life of the school. Pupils have decided on improvements to the playground. They learn about the democratic process when they vote for school council members through whom they can make their views known. Older pupils act as 'playground buddies' to help younger pupils. Such opportunities make a very good contribution to their personal development and attitudes towards school.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).