

INSPECTION REPORT

DUNSTON ST PETER'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dunston, Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120520

Headteacher: Mr G Boyall

Lead inspector: Mrs J Moore

Dates of inspection: 6th – 7th October 2003

Inspection number: 256007

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	41
School address:	Back Lane Dunston Lincoln
Postcode:	LN4 2EH
Telephone number:	01526 320027
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Bannister
Date of previous inspection:	24 th November 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is much smaller than most other primary schools with 41 pupils on roll. It is situated in the small village of Dunston, near Lincoln. Pupils are from a wide range of backgrounds, many of them live in the village or surrounding area and a number of them travel some distance by car. When children join the reception class many of them have below average skills and understanding in all areas of learning. Very few families claim free school meals. All the pupils are white European. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is high. These pupils have moderate learning difficulties, autism or physical difficulties. Parents feel that they have every confidence in the new headteacher, and his staff, to do their very best for the pupils at Dunston St Peter's.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8710	Julie Moore	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, English as an additional language, personal, social, health education and citizenship, mathematics, science, art and design, design technology, music, physical education.
9352	Malcolm Weaver	Lay inspector	
30144	Edgar Hastings	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, information and communication technology, geography, history, religious education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Dunston St Peter's is an improving school that has started to move forward after a turbulent period involving many changes. The situation has now settled down with a new experienced headteacher and stable staff and governors, all of whom are determined to push up standards and to improve the quality of education offered by the school. Teaching is significantly better than it was, especially in Years 3 to 6 and pupils make good progress across the school. This was not the case in previous years when the turbulence was at its height. Standards were also lower than they should be and pupils did not achieve as well as they could. This situation has changed for the better. The new headteacher provides firm leadership of high quality. Standards are starting to pick up and pupils are rising to the challenges set for them. There is still some way to go but the future is bright. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The new headteacher provides very good leadership, giving a firm steer to all aspects of school life. Teamwork is strong, and everyone connected with the school – governors, staff, parents and pupils - are determined that the school and its pupils will do well.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are too low in Years 3 to 6.
- Good teaching is starting to have positive results, and learning is moving forward vigorously. Teaching assistants provide very good support that encourages pupils to achieve well.
- Because teaching is good pupils have positive attitudes, and they want to learn because they are interested. Their personal qualities are very good.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.
- There are no effective systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress and attainment.

All but one of the issues raised at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. Assessment and recording remain an issue and this is unsatisfactory. Portfolios of pupils' work are in place, and the governors now play an effective role in managing the school. Parents are fully integrated into the life and work of the school, all of which indicate satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The pace of change has quickened significantly with the appointment of the new headteacher and a stable staff. The school has the potential to move forward speedily.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	B	B
Mathematics	A	C	C	C
Science	C	C	E	E*

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

The very small numbers of pupils in most year groups means that one pupil more or less can make a significant difference to the overall standards in the school. These results must therefore be treated with caution. This year the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is very high in the Year 3 to 6 class. Pupils are taught in two classes, infants (YR/1/2) and juniors (Y3/4/5/6).

- Children get a good start in the reception class¹. Many of them are on course to attain their targets² by the end of the reception year. Last year the children achieved well and started in Year 1 with broadly average standards in the main subjects.

¹ This is known as the Foundation Stage.

² These are called the early learning goals. They are the targets children are expected to achieve by the end of the reception year.

- At the end of Year 2 standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Boys and girls are achieving well.
- In Years 3 to 6 many pupils have limited skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing and they are slow when working out problems in mathematics. That said, progress has speeded up markedly since the start of the term, and pupils are achieving well in lessons. Last year's work shows that pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory. This was due to the turbulence in school, which affected them directly, as well as having a number of teachers during the year.
- At the end of Year 6 standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. A very high percentage of the group have special educational needs.

Pupils' achievements are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. They are good in lessons for the pupils in Years 3 to 6. However, junior pupils' achievements have been unsatisfactory in the past for the reasons outlined above. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they get good support. Pupils' personal development is very good. They have responded very well to the new headteacher and new staff, always giving of their best in lessons and in other aspects of school life. Responsibilities are taken seriously. Behaviour is good. Pupils' moral and social development is good. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance was unsatisfactory last year, it is now improving.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory and improving. Teaching is good, with a number of strengths. Teachers work hard to make sure that all their pupils are fully engaged in learning, they are successful. However, pupils' learning slows from time to time in Years 3 to 6 because pupils are not used to sustaining their best work. Teachers have high expectations about this and the pupils are rising to the challenge successfully. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The curriculum is satisfactory. Everyone is included, and the school makes sure that every pupil has full access to the curriculum on offer. Pupils receive good care and support, and this has helped through the difficult times they experienced last year. Links with parents are satisfactory and improving. There are satisfactory links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The new headteacher provides very good leadership. The management is satisfactory and improving. Much has been achieved in a relatively short time. Importantly, the headteacher has the entire school community behind him. Everyone is very positive, and determined that the school will move forward speedily. Results are apparent. Pupils' learning is productive and they are starting to achieve well because teaching is consistently good in this very small school. Teamwork is very good and effective systems are being put in place so that the work of the school is analysed and checked. Governors hold the school to account. They are clear about what needs to be done and how to do it.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very well pleased with the new headteacher, who they respect and trust to do the best for their children. Pupils are also very pleased.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Boost standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- Put in place a whole school system for assessing and recording pupils' progress and achievements.
- Improve the level of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

General point. This is a very small school with only two classes, very small numbers in every year group, and a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, around one third of the school. One pupil more or less can make a significant difference to overall standards, and results must be treated with caution.

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, both in lessons and over time. Achievements in Years 3 to 6 were unsatisfactory last year, due to the significant turbulence experienced by this class. Things are much more settled now, with a new headteacher and stable staff. Boys and girls are making good progress in lessons and they are achieving well. The future looks bright. In Years 1 and 2 standards are average in the main subjects. They are below average in Years 4 to 6, and average in Year 3.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving, but they could be better for the pupils in Years 4 to 6. Boys and girls are achieving well in lessons. Pupils in the Year 3 to 6 class did not achieve as well as they could last year.
- When children join the reception class many of them have limited skills. They get a good start, and many of them are on course to achieve their targets by the end of the reception year. Last year, the children made good progress during the year.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they get good support from their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Realistic targets are in place for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics, as they are for pupils in the other year groups as well. Pupils and staff know what they are aiming for and this is speeding up progress all round.

Commentary

1. Standards at the last inspection were broadly average, and the year groups were very small, as they are now. In 2003, standards held up in Year 2, which is satisfactory, and they have declined in Year 6, which is unsatisfactory. The reason for this stems from the school experiencing severe turbulence and sudden shock during 2003, and this directly affected the Year 3 to 6 pupils, culminating in their class having a number of teachers during the year. Standards were much lower than expected in the national tests for the eleven-year-olds, and were well below average in English, mathematics and science. They were average in the 2002 tests, and when compared to standards in similar schools,³ were average in English, below average in mathematics and in the lowest five percent in the country in science.
2. The seven year-olds attained broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2003 tests as they were less directly affected by the turbulent events. Across the school, trends in standards over time are broadly the same as those in other schools in the country. Standards are starting to pick up due to the positive impact of the new headteacher and new staff. Progress is speeding up and pupils are achieving well in lessons.
3. The current reception group is very small, with five children, all of whom have settled well. Starting points are below average in all areas of learning⁴ for many children. Higher, average and lower attaining children are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are making satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy

³ Schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

⁴ This is the name given to the curriculum for children in the reception class, known as the Foundation Stage.

and in mathematical development. The appointment of a teaching assistant has improved the overall provision for the youngest children in the school, with strong indications of future good achievement.

4. Pupils with special educational needs, of which there are many, make good progress towards their targets. This includes those pupils who have a statement of special educational need as well. High quality support from the teaching assistants means that pupils' learning is effective. They are developing their literacy and numeracy skills successfully, and improving their behaviour. Effective day-to-day assessment enables pupils' steps in learning to be tracked and analysed by the staff, so that they can plan challenging tasks for the pupils. Boys and girls are achieving well.
5. Literacy sessions are enjoyed, and pupils work hard and talk enthusiastically, especially in Years 1 and 2. These pupils make good use of a range of vocabulary when writing their individual stories. Sentences are constructed successfully, and are based on pupils' own writing plans; work is presented well. Staff are adept at developing pupils' own speaking skills, and this has a positive impact on their writing. By the end of Year 2 pupils' reading standards are average. They always have a go at identifying words they don't know, they understand their reading and enjoy it. Standards in mathematics and science are average at the end of Year 2.
6. Many pupils in the junior class – but not Year 3 – have limited competence in reading, writing and in speaking and listening. Their progress and their achievements have been unsatisfactory over time because of the number of teachers they have had, as well as all the turbulence that has been discussed earlier in this report. Reading standards are currently below average in Year 6. Pupils have limited knowledge of contemporary authors and their library skills fall short of expectations. Pupils' previous written work from last year indicates unsatisfactory standards. Not enough work had been covered and pupils had worked too slowly. They had little pride in presenting their work well, and both spelling and presentation were not good enough.
7. This situation has improved significantly. Year 6 pupils, as well as all the others, are achieving well because of better teaching. Progress is speeding up, and pupils readily include similes and adjectives in their written work, which is wide ranging and varied. There are very good improvements all round. Pupils are using correct spellings, and the punctuation, content and presentation of work is much better than it was. Pupils eagerly contribute their ideas in class discussions, and they are actively involved in extending their learning, which results in improving standards.
8. A similar situation exists in mathematics and science. Standards in Year 3 are broadly average, they are below average in Years 4 to 6. Pupils' grasp of number facts is weak, and this slows them down. Staff, parents and pupils are working hard to overcome this, but it is early days and pupils have much ground to cover. Current work shows significant gains in the rate of progress, especially when pupils are using higher numbers, as in a measuring activity with Years 5 and 6. An activity in which pupils measured the effect of exercise on their pulse rate really stretched the Year 6 pupils, who needed much adult support to record their findings. They have limited understanding of 'fair testing' in science, and their inadequate numeracy skills hold back their learning.
9. It was not possible to make accurate judgements standards and achievements in the other subjects. Discussions with older pupils, and looking at their present and past work, shows that in religious education (RE) they have a secure body of knowledge about Christianity and other religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are able to identify similarities and differences between celebrations, festivals and religious symbols. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to support learning across the board. Pupils have been exposed to a good range of ICT experiences, and they are knowledgeable about its use.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good in Foundation Stage and infant and junior classes. Their relationships are also very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with good elements in moral and social development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The behaviour system is effective and enables most pupils to develop good attitudes to learning.
- The pastoral care and support for pupils leads to positive relationships throughout the school.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development contributes well to the learning environment.

Commentary

10. The children in the reception class had only been in school for a short time when the inspection started, but they had settled in very quickly to the new routines. They are keen to explore the satisfactory range of resources set out for them, and the welcoming atmosphere promotes their confidence and self-esteem. The teacher encourages the children to try their best, to which children respond well. Very good relationships and high expectations for behaviour ensure that the children feel safe and enable them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Children learn to be polite, take turns and observe the class rules.
11. Pupils behave well in and around the school. They value their friendships with adults and other pupils that enable them to develop good personal qualities. In lessons, most pupils listen carefully to others, work well in twos and threes, and share resources appropriately. The very good relationships that teachers have with pupils are positive and encourage pupils to apply themselves well to their work. From discussion with pupils, they believe that teachers support them well and that they have an adult they can talk to if concerned or upset.
12. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Teachers are good role models and pupils are taught right from wrong and are given clear moral direction by all staff that encourages good behaviour. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop personal responsibility and to make the right choices such as through their fulfilling several roles of responsibility in the school. More recent is the introduction of the school council where pupils are beginning to realise the importance and place of democracy in the school as a community. Praise is frequently used to improve the pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils respect the class rules and respond appropriately to teachers' expectations as well as the school's code of conduct. Pupils have a responsible attitude, demonstrating an ownership for developing the school.
13. The good range of extra-curricular activities, in which almost all pupils are involved, promotes good social and moral development. The bi-annual residential visit to a Norfolk Education Centre is a real strength for pupils in Years 5 and 6, enabling them to mature and develop their personal qualities and social skills.
14. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils work well together in pairs, supporting and encouraging each other. These are strengths in improving the quality of learning. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is principally fostered through collective worship where time is given for some reflection and prayer. Good links are held with the adjacent church, and church representatives regularly lead school worship. Some links have been developed in subjects to provide pupils with a greater awareness of spirituality through poetry and the universe. Pupils' cultural development is also satisfactory. It is supported adequately by staff who select text work, artefacts, and Western European art and design and music, to give pupils an awareness of different cultures. Pupils also develop an awareness of other cultures through religious education, but their awareness of living in a multi-cultural society is not yet sufficiently developed.

Attendance

Pupils' attendance at school was below the national average, although it has improved significantly this year, and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance levels were too low.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they arrive in good time.

Commentary

15. Attendance is well monitored, the school taking a responsible attitude for pupils' welfare. First day contact is made with parents in the event of pupils not arriving at school and appropriate links are in place with the educational welfare service. The school informs parents of the need to ensure their children attend school and this has been satisfactorily supported by parents following the requirements when requesting holidays in term time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.1
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	1.0
National data:	0.5

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

Exclusions

16. No pupils have been excluded within the last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall. Learning moves forward at a good pace for higher, average and lower attaining pupils, as well as for those with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and pitched at the right level for all pupils in both the infant and junior classes. This means that their learning is effective.
- Classes are well managed. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that the pupils are fully engaged in learning, and this includes those pupils with special educational needs as well. No time is wasted.
- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage for pupils' personal, social and emotional development. It is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development
- Teachers' high expectations about the amount of work pupils' produce is having a positive impact on pupils in Year 3 to 6. In the past, limited amounts of work were judged acceptable, and this held back their achievements.
- There is some effective on-going assessment in every lesson, and this drives standards upwards. What is missing is a consistent whole school approach to tracking and recording pupils' progress and achievements.

Commentary

17. Teaching has returned to the level seen at the last inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' past work indicates that there have been times when teaching was unsatisfactory in the Year 3 to 6 class. The high level of staff turnover, and the significant turbulence experienced by this class in the Spring of 2003, have been barriers to effective teaching in the past. This is no longer the case. The new headteacher, and a stable, well experienced staff, have successfully changed the climate for learning. Pupils of all capabilities are achieving well. The next stage is to develop a cohesive system for tracking how well pupils are doing. This was an issue at the last inspection, and not enough has been done, which is unsatisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	11	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

18. The strong teamwork is having a positive impact all round. The new headteacher and his staff are very clear about what needed to be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the junior class. They are successful.
19. The Foundation Stage staff are a good team, and the teacher is well supported by the recently appointed teaching assistant. They know the most effective ways to encourage young children to learn, and they make sure that learning is productive and fun. Early assessments enable tasks to be pitched at the right level. They are based on the early learning goals, and this is as expected. Staff now need to make sure there is always a strong focus on developing the children's spoken language, as well as giving them enough time to consolidate and reflect on their learning. Parents are fully involved, and they like this as it helps their children to improve.
20. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in the same class as the reception children. Good organisation means that pupils know what is expected of them, resources are on hand and this saves time, enabling lessons to run smoothly. In a science lesson the pupils were using their hearing to identify different sounds. They identified what was in the pots by the sound made when the pots were shaken. This helped them to extend their language skills successfully, as well as their writing skills in recording the findings on a chart. Some pupils used ICT for this task, and their skills were up to the job. Learning points were drawn out successfully at the end of the lesson, helping higher, average and lower attaining pupils to respond to their teacher's questions and to achieve well.
21. Teaching is consistently good in the junior class. High quality support from the teaching assistants enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to try hard and to do their best. Staff will not accept any work that is not at the highest standard that individual pupils are capable of achieving. Pupils rise to the challenge of these consistently high expectations. Standards are improving across the board and progress is speeding up. Pupils are achieving well, especially in the presentation of their work, which is very good, and is of significantly higher quality than in previous years. Homework is used effectively to support work done in class, and this gives another boost to standards.

The curriculum

The quality and range of experiences provided by the school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum covers all subjects and is planned so that it meets the needs of the mixed age classes.
- Additional opportunities to play musical instruments, and to go on residential visits provide enriched experiences for pupils.

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and is a strength of the school.
- Lessons are planned to ensure the needs of pupils of different abilities are met.
- There is good provision for extra-curricular activities.
- Teaching assistants are of high quality.
- The quality and level of accommodation for the reception class is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

22. All the subjects are taught in school and so the statutory requirements are met. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established, and planned effectively to meet the needs of the mixed age classes. ICT usefully supports the development of pupils' literacy skills through the use of word processing and note taking, and the development of knowledge and understanding in history through the use of the Internet for research. Religious education is taught in line with the requirements of the Lincolnshire agreed syllabus. A suitable programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is delivered, and includes sex education and an awareness of the use and misuse of drugs.
23. The curriculum is enriched through instrumental music tuition in recorders, cello and violin. Involvement in a dance workshop gives pupils the opportunity to meet pupils from other schools, and participate in a countywide dance festival. There are sporting clubs run by staff and parents including football and tag-rugby, and an ICT club for the younger pupils. These opportunities are open to all and are popular and well attended. These activities and an annual residential visit contribute well to pupils' physical and social development.
24. The school is fully inclusive and caters for all groups of pupils. Its particular strength is the very good provision for those pupils with special educational needs. They receive high quality support from the teaching assistants who manage and meet their needs very well through carefully targeted activities.
25. The quality of the accommodation to meet the curricular needs of the school is good. The space is well used and the school is bright and airy, and provides a welcoming and stimulating environment for learning. Pupils' work is displayed well in classes and around the school in a spirit of the sharing of success and achievement. Parts of the school has recently been refurbished to a good standard providing attractive changing and toilet areas for pupils, and a practical resource area for staff to work in, as well as small group activities. There is satisfactory provision of resources to support the curriculum. The accommodation for the reception is small and unsatisfactory, and the outdoor provision is small and inadequate for pupils' physical development. Resources are also unsatisfactory, and there is a lack of wheeled toys or large apparatus for outdoor use.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for care, guidance and support are good. Children are known well, treated and valued as an individual and cared for.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils and with adults are a major strength.
- Procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of all pupils, including child protection are good.
- Guidance for pupils' academic development is unsatisfactory but is in process of being improved through more effective assessment and its use in planning lessons.
- Pupils have good opportunity to have a voice in the running of the school.

Commentary

26. Arrangements for pupils' care and welfare and child protection are good. All adults in the school are aware of school's procedures and practices to follow and do so in a sensitive manner. First Aid procedures are satisfactory. Governors are vigilant toward pupils' health and safety and conduct regular inspections of the premises. Risk assessment is conducted appropriately for visits to the village and a residential centre.
27. This is a happy and caring community where there is a trust between pupils and staff. As a result, relationships in the school are very good. Pupils spoken to have no doubt that there is an adult in school they can talk to if they have a problem or are worried about anything. Staff and pupils constantly talk with each other and the recently democratically elected school council is responsible for improving aspects of the school. Pupils have responded positively to the new opportunity for having a voice in developing the school and are keen to make suggestions, confidently knowing they will be listened to.
28. The guidance for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Provision for their academic guidance is currently unsatisfactory because the assessment system is not yet effective in ensuring that sufficiently sharp targets are given to raise pupils' individual learning. Rapid progress is being made however, to improve this situation. Pupils receive appropriate support from staff in lessons to help them improve and staff are flexible in ensuring that they give this support in the most appropriate manner. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and effective individual education plans set.
29. Induction arrangements for children under the age of five are good, with close links being held with the village nursery. Even those pupils who have only been in school a matter of weeks are confident and happy in their surroundings. The transition from one stage of their education within the school to the next is seamless.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The schools partnership with parents and other schools and with the wider local community is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's emphasis on building constructive relationships with parents and the community.
- Parents already have a secure respect for the headteacher and they appreciate the standards of behaviour and the general ethos of the school.
- Parents receive regular information about school activities but the pupils' end-of-year progress reports are inconsistent.

Commentary

30. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, much has been done to raise the profile of the school within the community and gain the confidence of parents. This has been a high priority following the recent significant reduction in the number of pupils on roll. Parents spoken with said that they believe the headteacher is committed to improving the school and has the ability to do so. Parents are very supportive of the new initiatives brought in by him and are particularly positive about the new stability that he is providing. Several mentioned that they are pleased that he provides a good role model for the boys in school. The Friends of the school is to be reinstated. A good number of parents regularly help in classrooms, and governors are committed to the school's new direction. Support from the local church is good with the vicar occasionally participating in assemblies.
31. Communication with parents has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Regular newsletters are now sent keep parents informed of termly and day-to-day matters. Pupils' end-of-year reports previously gave much information on what pupils could do and their understanding but they were largely repetitive both across and within the year groups. As such they did not give an accurate picture of individual pupils progress. The headteacher already has clear plans for modifying the reports to inform parents of the progress and actual achievement of their children.
32. Satisfactory links are held with other schools. A particular strength is in the dance project with Potterhanworth School. Joint participation at a residential centre supports pupils' wider links with other schools and helps pupils develop their social skills more effectively. Links with secondary schools are satisfactory and lead to smooth transfer to their next stage of education. The effectiveness of the growing partnerships between home and school, and of the local community, makes an effective contribution to supporting children's personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides very good leadership. The governance of the school is good, and leadership by key staff is also good. Overall, management is satisfactory. Systems being put in place for monitoring the work of the school have not yet had time to become effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher has ensured the school is now working together with confidence.
- The governing body have made good progress in establishing new systems for governance.
- There has been good progress in addressing the key issue from the previous inspection, under the leadership of the new headteacher.
- Day to day management is good, but systems for tracking pupil progress and achievement are not yet securely in place.
- The headteacher has been successful in recruiting good quality staff.
- Best value principles are applied well in all areas of school management.

Commentary

33. The headteacher has made considerable impact since he joined the school at the start of term, and has a clear vision of where he wants the school to be. He has involved all who work in school in identifying the strengths and weaknesses, and set systems in place to address these issues. This team approach has ensured that staff, governors and parents are now viewing the work of the school with growing confidence after the turbulence experienced during the last year. Already this is having a positive effect in addressing the key issue of the last inspection. Parents are now actively encouraged to play a full role in supporting the school. The headteacher sets great store in the establishment of strong working relationships, with staff having a clear understanding of their role, so that all are working together in an atmosphere of

mutual trust and understanding. He is aware of the standards currently being achieved and has set new challenging targets in order to boost levels of attainment. Teaching and learning are now looking stronger this term than they have been in recent times. He is leading curriculum development and has ensured that teaching is inclusive of all groups of pupils.

34. The governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and during the period of crisis last year took on greater involvement of the leadership and management of the school. They have now established essential committees with key people in key posts who are bringing a range of skills into the governance of the school. All governors have a curriculum responsibility and they have begun to carry out monitoring of the curriculum in order to gain an understanding of the quality of provision. They are aware of the pressures placed on staff working in small schools and are determined oversee this aspect.
35. Day to day organisation is managed effectively. Funds are well managed and controlled effectively. Best value principles are central to all aspects of school management. The headteacher has achieved a great deal in a short time. The appointment of good quality staff has been integral in improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the deployment of staff to meet the differing needs of pupils is having a beneficial effect. However, procedures for tracking the progress and achievement of pupils are not yet in place. When judging what has already been achieved in such a short space of time, there is good capacity for improvement.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	160040
Total expenditure	151634
Expenditure per pupil	3032

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	8040
Balance carried forward to the next	6960

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving. Reception children are in the same class as those in Years 1 and 2, and this year there are five children. Most of them have attended a pre-school group before starting school and they join the class at the beginning of the school year they are five. Some of the time they are taught by their class teacher and integrated into the infant class, at other times they are taught as a reception group by the teaching assistant in the conservatory annex. This system works well. It enables the children to have enough time for indoor and outdoor activities, as well as achieving a satisfactory balance between those activities chosen by the children themselves and those directed by the teacher. Most of them have lower than average skills and understanding when they join the reception class. In the three weeks they have been in school the higher, average and lower attaining children are making good progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Teamwork is good, children are well managed and relationships are good. An appropriate curriculum is in place, as it was at the last inspection. Children's progress is observed and monitored effectively, and this guides the teacher's plans for the following days. The conservatory annex is a fairly recent addition, as is the fenced outdoor area, and this is an improvement to the accommodation. However, both of these areas are rather small and confined. Resources for the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory, especially the lack of wheeled toys and equipment for outdoor play.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are making good progress because there are many planned opportunities for their development, as well as a supportive adult on hand to guide and help them.
- The positive atmosphere makes children feel happy and secure. They want to come to school and to learn.

Commentary

36. Many children have limited personal, social and emotional skills when they start school. Some of them find it hard to share their toys and to wait their turn for a game or a piece of equipment. Most of them are unable to put on their coat without help. In the very short time they have been in school they have made very good progress. Many of the five children are on course to exceed their goals by the end of the reception year. Good relationships mean that the children have settled well into school routines. At the end of a morning session they tidied up sensibly, mostly putting their toys and games in the right places, lining up quietly and taking turns to wash hands ready for lunch. Children respond well to their teacher and their new teaching assistant. They are always encouraged to 'have a go' and to try hard to do their best. This is easier for some children than others. Adults respect the children, listening to what they have to say and making sure there is enough time for the children to speak in a sentence. The genuine encouragement gives pupils the confidence to speak out and to achieve well. Teaching and learning are good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff try very hard to extend children's speaking and listening skills and their vocabulary. They are generally successful, but just occasionally there are missed opportunities. When this happens learning slows.
- Scrutiny of work and records from last year showed that the children made good progress over the course of the year in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They achieved well.
- The Foundation Stage leader has had the post for one year. In that time she has improved the curriculum and put in place good systems for tracking children's progress and achievements.

Commentary

37. Many children join the class with limited language skills, others are able to speak in sentences and they talk about the characters in their story with confidence. The many opportunities for the children to talk and to listen help them to develop their language skills effectively. Songs, rhymes and singing games are enjoyed, and this helps the children to have greater confidence all round. Questions such as, 'How many legs has Elmer?', 'Which colours did you use here?', help lower attaining children to share their understanding with rest of the class. These children sometimes need more time to understand the meaning of the story, and staff need to make sure that this is available. Teaching is satisfactory. Early writing and reading skills are developing well, and many children are on course to attain their goals by the end of the reception year. Books and stories are enjoyed. A whole new world of literature is opening up for these children, and they are excited and keen to access it. The Foundation Stage leader has had a positive impact on moving the subject forward. Good systems for assessing how well the children are doing means that accurate information is always available to track the progress and achievements of individuals and groups.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan many opportunities to develop the children's sense and understanding of number.

Commentary

38. The strong focus on number rhymes and games successfully encourages the children to enjoy numbers and to have fun. All the children are at an early stage in their mathematical development, and a minority are just beginning to count. In one activity the children were drawing pictures of mini-beasts. They had observed the mini-beasts outside in the garden and their drawings were well shaped, with eyes and legs. A higher attaining child observed that her mini-beast had two eyes and four legs. The other children were not at this level, but they listened carefully to the explanation and tried to replicate it themselves. This demonstrates the beginning of an awareness of number and counting. Activities with play-dough and shapes help the children to learn the name of a circle and a square. Staff are working hard to make sure that the children develop a good command of mathematical language, but there is some way to go. Teaching is satisfactory. Planning needs to have a stronger focus on developing mathematical language across the whole of the Foundation Stage curriculum, making sure that the children understand the relevance and importance of number.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

39. It is not possible to make a judgement about provision or standards in these areas of learning. All elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are in place and there are good systems for tracking children's progress and achievement. Gaps are speedily identified and tackled, and pupils with special educational needs are identified straight away and given appropriate support. Every child is fully included in all aspects of day-to-day life in the reception group at Dunston St Peter's primary school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision is good. Pupils' achievement in English is much improved since last year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards attained by the age of seven are in line with the national average.
- By the age of eleven standards are below average.
- The quality of teaching is now good, and teaching assistants are used very effectively to support learning.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well in lessons.
- Assessment systems are not yet securely in place.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Leadership has clearly identified the path for improvement.

Commentary

40. By the age of seven, pupils are making good progress in English. Over time they are building on their writing skills, using punctuation correctly, and developing a competence in spelling. They show enjoyment of reading and most read accurately and with understanding. Pupils use a variety of clues to tackle unfamiliar words, usually successfully. Parents and staff listen to them reading regularly and this helps them to progress. Handwriting and general presentation of work is satisfactory.
41. Standards in English by the end of Year 6 are below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The period of turbulence suffered by the school last year affected this group of pupils the most, causing erratic progress and a fall in standards. However, the school has regained stability now, and with good quality teaching pupils are showing improved levels of achievement particularly in their writing. The presentation of work still needs improving, and so does handwriting and spelling. Pupils read with understanding and can talk about their choice of book, the plot and the characters in it. But for most pupils library skills are under developed.
42. Teaching is good across the school. Teachers are secure in their own subject knowledge and deliver well-planned lessons. They are skilled at ensuring the levels of challenge are appropriate for mixed age groups, use questions effectively to assess pupils' understanding, and have high expectations of pupils' efforts and behaviour. Teaching assistants play a full part in ensuring pupils with special educational needs are fully engaged in lessons through interacting with them and encouraging them to contribute orally. This high quality support ensures that this group of pupils make very good progress in their learning.
43. Leadership by the new headteacher is good. He has made good staffing appointments who have successfully begun to raise pupil achievement through the quality of their teaching. There is good team spirit among the staff who are mutually supportive of one another. An effective framework for teaching literacy, and suitable to the many needs of the mixed age classes, has been put in place. Although not yet in place appropriate assessment procedures are being developed to monitor pupil progress. A marking policy is also being produced and is to be used in conjunction with target setting. These are all part of his vision for raising standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their writing skills through the use of the computer for word processing and for improving their research skills using the Internet. Good use is made of their journalistic skills in history when pupils research and write about life in Britain in the 1970s, producing a newspaper article.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know their pupils well. Tasks are pitched at the right levels, teaching is good, and pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- Standards are too low in Years 3 to 6 because this class has experienced much turbulence in recent times. The current stability, alongside effective teaching, is having a marked effect on standards, learning and achievement.
- The lack of a cohesive approach to tracking pupils' progress and achievements make it more difficult to plan the way forward. This is being tackled, but it is too early for any impact to be apparent.

Commentary

45. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average, they are below average in Year 6. Both groups are very small, and about two thirds of the Year 6 group have special educational needs. Standards in the 2003 national tests for the previous Year 2 group show a good improvement on previous years, with all pupils reaching the expected level or the higher level. It is a different situation with the previous Year 6 pupils. Only half the group reached the expected level or above, the others attained lower levels. Given the very small numbers involved it would be unwise to draw conclusions from these results. The current situation is broadly as it was at the last inspection.
46. Lessons are pitched at the right levels because teachers know their pupils well. They successfully plan suitable tasks for pupils of different ages and abilities in both the infant and junior classes. Teaching is now good across the school, but scrutiny of pupils' previous work indicates some unsatisfactory teaching in the junior class last year. This is no longer the case. Lessons move forward at a good pace. Teachers expect pupils to produce appropriate amounts of work, and to present their work well. Pupils rise to the challenges set for them. The standard of presentation is very good, and is well ahead of what was produced last year. However, there is much to be done if standards and achievements are to improve all round. Many of the average and lower attaining pupils in Year 5 / 6 find it difficult to work out problems⁵. They prefer to use addition rather than multiplication, for example when working out 6×22.5 , and they are not speedy enough at mental mathematics. Higher attaining pupils do better. They work with six digit numbers and negative numbers, using a good range of number operations to work out problems.
47. Year 2 pupils have a clear understanding of number facts and operations, which they use confidently in their day-to-day activities. Their teacher's very strong focus on using the correct mathematical language successfully extends their understanding of the properties of circles, rectangles, triangles and squares. Good use of the Venn Diagram reinforces this well, as pupils make decisions about where to place their shapes.
48. Teachers and teaching assistants do a good job in focusing, reinforcing and seeking to develop pupils' number skills. Marking is used well, identifying what needs to be done in order to

⁵ The group is very small so we are discussing pairs or individuals here.

improve. Homework is also used as an effective tool in pushing up standards. On-going assessment successfully helps the adults to plan the next stages in learning. All of this promotes good progress, helping boys and girls of all capabilities – including those with special educational needs, to achieve well.

49. The co-ordinator has been in post for a year. She has moved the curriculum forward, and she has a clear grasp of where the strengths and weaknesses are. This is because test and assessment results are analysed carefully, gaps are identified and tackled.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Pupils use their mathematics skills to support learning in other curriculum areas such as science or geography. Average and lower attaining pupils are less good at this, but they all have a go. One example was in the Year 5 / 6 science lesson on charting the effect of exercise on pulse rate. Some lower attaining pupils needed help to record their findings numerically, but they understood their findings well, clearly explaining them to the rest of the group. Measuring skills are used to good effect in design technology, and data is recorded in science and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' are doing well and their achievement is good because of good teaching.
- Science investigations are enjoyed, and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are good at using different methods to record their findings.
- Standards are too low in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' progress and achievements are not assessed consistently across the whole school. This limits the information that is available to plan future developments.

Commentary

51. Standards are below average for the current Year 6. They were well below average for the previous group in the national tests in 2003. The reason for this is the significant turbulence and sorrow experienced by the junior class (Years 3 to 6) in 2003, and the number of teachers that have taught this class over the last two years. Pupils' past work indicated that some of this teaching was unsatisfactory.
52. The situation has now improved significantly, with stable staff and a new headteacher in place. Progress is good and pupils are achieving well. About two thirds of the very small Year 6 group have special educational needs. They are working hard to succeed, and they are well motivated because of good teaching and effective support from the teaching assistants. Boys and girls achieve equally well, and they try equally hard.
53. Standards are average for the very small group of current Year 2 pupils. Test results in 2003 show that standards were broadly average for most pupils, but, once again, this was a very small group. Pupils of all capabilities are well catered for. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well by their extension tasks, and this brings them on. Other pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because their teacher gives them specific support, as well as asking brisk questions, so that their attention is always held and no time is wasted. Teaching is good and this is similar to the situation at the last inspection.
54. Staff always use the correct scientific vocabulary, and this extends the pupils own vocabulary successfully. In one Year 3 / 4 lesson the pupils correctly explained the use of different teeth, such as molar, incisor, canine. The class then created a Fact File about the use of teeth,

making good use of their literacy skills. This science lesson was organised well, with the younger Year 3 / 4 pupils working at the above task, and the older Year 5 / 6 pupils working on the effect of exercise on their pulse rate. The latter group had very good support from their teaching assistants, who used specific questions to check out how much the pupils had understood and learnt. Progress was good because the pupils had effective support when using their numeracy skills, and this helped them to make sense of the numbers they were using. The situation is broadly similar to the one that existed at the last inspection. The new co-ordinator is rapidly getting to grips with the subject. She is fully aware of the need to put in place a cohesive system for tracking pupils' progress and achievements, and a start has been made. Her impact is effective.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

55. Although a judgement cannot be made upon the quality of teaching because it was not possible to observe any lessons, it is clear that through talking to pupils and looking at some of their work that the school provides well for this subject. The school has established a computer suite with a suitable number of machines and programs for pupils to use on a group or individual basis. Pupils use word processing when writing poems and stories, to enhance the quality of their work. They know how to use the computer to make presentations using pictures and sounds. The Internet is used for conducting research into history, mathematics and geography, and pupils use note taking to assist in the development of their writing. Pupils show good understanding of the use of computers in the business and commercial world, and are aware that the supermarket checkout uses a computer to scan products and to record quantities and prices. Clearly pupils are confident in this area, have been exposed to a good range of experiences and are developing knowledge, skills and understanding well.

HUMANITIES

Geography, history and religious education

56. No lessons were seen in history, or geography. These subjects were not a focus for the inspection, and consequently there is insufficient evidence to make judgements on standards or teaching. The subjects are taught and the school has made satisfactory provision for them throughout the school. There was evidence of some pupils work in history completed by pupils in Years 3 to 6 displayed in the classroom showing the results of their research into life in the 1970s. Pupils used their writing skills to good effect to report their findings in journalistic style.
57. No lessons were seen in religious education. Discussions were held with pupils who were able to talk confidently about a wide range of comparative religions, and to indicate some of the similarities and differences. In particular, they knew that all religions believed in a supreme being, and taught their followers how to live a good life based upon a set of rules. Pupils showed a clear understanding of most of the major Christian festivals, elements of Christian symbolism, and were able to relate many of the stories from the Bible, including the parables of Jesus.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education

58. These subjects were sampled in the inspection. Only one lesson was seen in art and design, music and dance. No lessons were seen in design and technology. On this limited evidence it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. Discussions were also held with all the staff. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their work and they looked at previous work, photographic evidence and displays around the school.
59. Pupils have a varied curriculum in art and design. Their work around the school, and in the one lesson seen, demonstrates that pupils are imaginative in their use of different media to achieve

different effects. Younger pupils are good at using space, and older pupils have a sound understanding of perspective. This was similar to the situation at the last inspection. Infant pupils, working on self-portraits, came up with perceptive comments about to improve the quality of their own work, as well as that of their classmates.

60. Pupils were able to recall their previous work in design and technology, which they discussed eagerly. Their skills appear limited, but they have a secure understanding of how to set about their planning and designing when starting a new topic. As in art and design the pupils were used to evaluating their work and that of their classmates. The situation at the last inspection has been maintained.
61. The music lesson was in the infant class, and all the pupils were fully involved throughout. The teacher's good command of her subject meant that the lesson was well planned from beginning to end. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of musical sounds, linking them to the different instruments. All of them had an opportunity to play their instruments, responding well to the range of tones produced. Singing is enthusiastic, as it was in assembly, and was enjoyed by everyone. Musical productions are well attended by parents, who feel that these are pleasant occasions for everyone to share. All of which is very similar to the situation at the last inspection.
62. Pupils experience the full range of physical education activities in this very small school, as they did at the last inspection. Extra-curricular activities are in place, and these cover a range of sporting activities, which are well attended by boys and girls - all of whom have full access to every sporting activity provided by the school. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, worked very hard to interpret the mood of the music in their dance lesson. By giving good demonstrations, the teacher showed the pupils how to contrast fluidity and stiffness in their movements, successfully helping them to achieve well.
63. At the time of the inspection roles and responsibilities for each of these subjects were still being finalised. The new headteacher, and all the staff, are working together as a strong team to push these subjects forward. The lack of a whole school approach to tracking pupils' progress and achievements means that staff have limited information about standards, teaching and learning. This curtails their ability to plan ahead.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a harmonious community. Pupils and their families respect and value each other, everyone gets on well together.
- There are many planned opportunities for pupils' personal development, which is good.
- Pupils are learning to take care of themselves and to eat healthily. The school's policy for sex education is in place. Discussions about its implementation are taking place with the school nurse.

Commentary

64. Personal, social and health education is well provided for in this very small school. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and learning. They are positive about school and are keen to move on from the traumatic experiences of earlier this year. Their good level of personal development aided and supported them to come to terms with the tragedy they experienced. The school is racially harmonious, and pupils raise funds for a number of charities to support others in different parts of the world, that are less fortunate than themselves.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
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	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
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	4
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	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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

