

INSPECTION REPORT

CROFTWAY FIRST SCHOOL

Blyth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122255

Headteacher: Mr Charles Ellis

Lead inspector: Mr Andrew Scott

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th February 2004

Inspection number: 256634

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	402
School address:	William Street Blyth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE24 2HP
Telephone number:	01670 353258
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Gordon Craigs
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average first school, situated close to the centre of Blyth in Northumberland. In September 2003, Croftway First School was created as a result of a merger between Crofton and Kingsway First Schools, two adjacent schools which had occupied the same site for many years. Building work to link the two schools physically was completed in November 2003. This inevitably brought some disruption to the daily life of the school but the bringing together of most of the staff and pupils has been relatively smooth and successful. The headteacher of Kingsway First School and the deputy headteacher of Crofton First School became the leadership team of the new school.

There are 402 boys and girls aged between three and nine, of whom 77 attend the nursery. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. The school lies in an area of social and economic deprivation, and there is steady movement of population in and out of the area. Almost all pupils are white. The few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds speak English fluently. Approximately 31 per cent of pupils claim free school meals and this is above the national average. Twelve per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below average. Most of these pupils have social, emotional or behavioural problems, or moderate learning difficulties. Four per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs, and this is well above the national average. The school's new Spartan Centre provides very good facilities for physical education and information and communication technology (ICT) for pupils and community groups. The school also uses the building to run courses on parenting skills.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27545	Andrew Scott	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology
19365	Gordon Stockley	Lay inspector	
40267	Jackson Marshall	Team inspector	Geography, history, religious education
32180	David Sleightholme	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, physical education, special educational needs
15015	Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage, science, art and design, design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's provision for its pupils is **satisfactory**. There is a positive and caring atmosphere in which pupils feel respected and motivated. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but it is consistently good for children in the Foundation Stage. The leadership and management are satisfactory, and the headteacher and governors have worked hard to oversee a successful merger. The school gives **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In a successful combination of the two schools, the headteacher has united the staff very well so that they share the same clear vision and the school's good plans for the future
- Standards in some of the main subjects are not consistently good enough
- The school takes good care of its pupils so that pupils feel valued and secure
- The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school and gives children a good start to their education
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to work, even though lessons are not consistently stimulating
- The subject co-ordinators do not develop their subjects effectively enough
- The governing body is insufficiently involved in school planning and does not monitor the school's progress objectively enough
- Attendance is low

It is not possible to judge how well the school has changed since its last inspection, because of the recent merger. It would be unfair and inappropriate to base judgements from earlier reports on the two separate schools and so, in this report, there are no references to previous reports or to standards before the merger took place.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they pass through the school. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. They begin school with skills and knowledge which are below average and, by the end of reception, achieve nearly all of the goals that children are expected to reach. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily and maintain average standards, especially in reading, writing and science. Standards in mathematics, however, are below average. Standards in English and mathematics are currently below average by the end of Year 4, although standards in science are average. The school's own records show that the achievement of these pupils has been satisfactory over time. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.

Standards are well below average in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 2. The standards in virtually all other subjects are average. In the current Year 4, standards are below average in ICT, religious education, geography and history and average in art and design and design and technology. It was not possible to judge pupils' attainment in physical education in Year 4 or music throughout the school.

The moral and social development of pupils is good, whilst their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have positive attitudes to work and behave well. They only become restless when lessons fail to capture their interest. Attendance is well below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching is **satisfactory**. In the nursery and reception classes, teaching is consistently good or better. As a result, children make good progress. Elsewhere, teaching is generally satisfactory with some good teaching, especially in

Years 1 and 2, and this results in satisfactory learning. Teachers have not recently taught much ICT or music, and so pupils' learning in these subjects is unsatisfactory.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. Much of curriculum is satisfactory but pupils have had only a limited curriculum in ICT and music this year and this has hampered learning. The curriculum is adequately enriched by visits and after-school clubs. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The accommodation is good, especially for indoor physical education and ICT, and classrooms are large and airy. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is very good and enables children to enjoy a wide range of learning experiences. The school takes good care of its pupils; pupils know there is always an adult to turn to in case of need. There are good links with parents, other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher provides clear direction and has been very effective in bringing the two schools together. In a short time, he has established strong teamwork among the staff and a common sense of purpose. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. The management is satisfactory. The school has good systems for checking its own progress but is not as rigorous as it might be in drawing conclusions and acting upon them. Governance is unsatisfactory. The governors are very supportive and active in observing work in the classrooms. However, they are not involved effectively enough in the development of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a good opinion of the school. They consider that their children achieve well, and that teaching and leadership and management are good. However, the inspection team judge these to be satisfactory. The inspection team agrees with parents that the school takes good care of the pupils' well-being and that it does not keep parents well-informed throughout the year about their children's progress. The team found no evidence of aggressive behaviour or bullying which concerned a minority of parents. Pupils accept that behaviour in the school is not perfect but do not see it as a major concern. Pupils are essentially happy with their school. They particularly appreciate their teachers and know they are expected to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve standards in mathematics and ICT by the end of Years 2 and 4, and in English and religious education by the end of Year 4
- ensure that the school is consistent and rigorous in monitoring its own development and decisive in carrying out its good action plans
- ensure that the school's governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and that they hold the school to account for its actions
- explore all possible ways to improve the level of attendance

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. By the end of the reception classes, children have average standards and achieve well. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and science are average but they are below average in mathematics; they are well below average in ICT. By the end of Year 4, standards are below average in all the main subjects, except for science where they are average. There is little difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics, ICT and religious education by the end of Year 4 are not good enough
- Pupils do not have high enough standards in mathematics and ICT by the end of Year 2
- Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes
- Pupils' attainment in geography and history by the end of Year 4 is below average

Commentary

1. Standards in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) are average overall. Children usually enter nursery with skills and abilities which are below average. They make good progress and achieve well because of the consistently effective teaching in all classes. Their knowledge and understanding of the world, however, are well below average when they start at the school. Although children make good progress in this area of learning, their abilities are still below average by the end of the reception year.
2. The standards of pupils in the current Year 2 are average overall and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards in all aspects of English, namely speaking, listening, reading and writing, are satisfactory. Pupils listen intently in lessons and speak clearly and relevantly. They read familiar words well and know how letter sounds help to untangle new words. They write in sensible, complete sentences although their spelling and handwriting could be better. Pupils have below average standards in mathematics and their achievement is unsatisfactory because they are not adept at using their mathematical knowledge mentally to solve problems. However, in science, pupils' attainment is average and their achievement is satisfactory, because pupils are beginning to understand how to carry out simple experiments and present their findings clearly.
3. Standards of Year 2 pupils are average in religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education and their achievement in these subjects is satisfactory. However, standards are well below average in ICT. This is because pupils have had very little experience in the subject in recent terms and so they lack confidence and competence when at a computer keyboard. It was not possible to judge the achievement and attainment of pupils in music, as little evidence was available.
4. Standards of pupils in the current Year 4 are below average in English and mathematics. Their achievement, however, based on their performance since Year 2, is satisfactory. In English, pupils have reasonable basic skills in reading but their comprehension, as well as their creative writing, is limited by a narrow vocabulary. Pupils have speaking and listening skills typical for their age, which enable them to take part fully in discussions. In mathematics, pupils have the same difficulties as younger pupils in not having effective strategies to solve problems. Pupils' attainment in science is average because they have a clear understanding of how to carry out fair and accurate tests.

5. Pupils' attainment in most other subjects in Year 4 is below average. In ICT, attainment is below average because pupils lack the confidence and experience of working with computers. Attainment is average in design and technology and art and design, but it is below average in religious education, geography and history. In these subjects, pupils do not have a good enough factual knowledge and present insufficient work on paper. There was not enough evidence to judge standards in music and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their standards of behaviour are **good**. The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development is **good**, although their spiritual and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well around the school, because there are good relationships between all members of the school
- The school works well to promote pupils' social and moral development
- There are insufficient planned opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development
- The level of attendance is low but is beginning to improve

Commentary

6. Pupils generally get on well together in lessons and in their free time. They are polite to each other and to adults. They show respect for the newly refurbished building, and they are willing to work together in lessons and to share ideas. Older pupils have a keen sense of responsibility for younger ones, helping them on the playground. The school's 'PALS' give good support to lunchtime supervisors, acting as friends and helpers to others. Pupils are particularly well behaved in the dining hall, and this makes lunchtimes a pleasant experience. Members of the school council said that most children are well behaved, and that bullying is very rare in the school.
7. Staff know pupils well and are happy to talk to them if they have any concerns or problems. The school recognises and values pupils' achievements. Pupils are especially pleased if they are chosen to sit in the 'golden chair' during assembly for doing something particularly well, and when they are entered in the 'golden book' for good behaviour, work and effort. Pupils are particularly proud to be chosen as 'stars of the week', because their photograph is displayed on the wall. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility, and is a good model of democracy in action. They take their responsibilities seriously, and have created official notepaper for official correspondence. They have recently written to parents to explain about 'Funny Trouser Day' when they intend to raise funds for playground equipment. Pupils generally are keen to raise money for charity and many of them visit an old people's home to entertain the residents at Christmas.
8. There is satisfactory provision to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development. One good example was seen in Year 1 music lesson when a pupil clashed the cymbals for the first time to see what sort of noise they would make. Other pupils were stunned by this sound and their faces were a delight to look at. Such opportunities are few. For example, there is little scope to develop pupils' spirituality through assembly because there is rarely any singing, and music playing as pupils enter the hall is not discussed or celebrated. Similarly, opportunities to promote cultural development are limited. Pupils are aware of the difficulties facing a primary school in Kenya following flooding, and have developed a link with staff and pupils. They have also studied villages in India, comparing them with Blyth, but the achievements of other cultures are not celebrated as well as they might be through art and music, for example, or of their own culture through history, geography and religious education.

Attendance

Attendance is **unsatisfactory**, although pupils' punctuality is satisfactory.

Commentary

Attendance is well below the national average. The school is taking satisfactory action to monitor and improve attendance and this is having a slight impact. The school does not immediately follow up unreported absences with parents, although the education welfare officer writes to parents where attendance or punctuality causes concern. Two pupils account for half of the unauthorised absence during the current academic year. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education that the school provides for its pupils is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although they are good in nursery and reception classes. The curriculum is unsatisfactory but there is good provision for pupils' personal and social education. The positive relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are good and that they are well cared for. There are good partnerships with other schools and the local community, and satisfactory links with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **satisfactory** overall. Children learn well in the nursery and reception classes because teaching is consistently good. Between Years 1 and 4, there is some good teaching but it is essentially satisfactory and, occasionally, unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' learning matches the quality of teaching throughout the school. The school has efficient procedures for assessing how well pupils learn but teachers do not make full use of this data.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good working atmosphere in most classrooms which makes pupils eager to learn
- Lessons are not always interesting enough to motivate and challenge pupils fully, especially in Years 3 and 4 where there is some unsatisfactory teaching
- Teachers have some good strategies to help pupils to understand new learning
- The effective teaching in the Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress
- Information from assessment is not used purposefully enough to promote new learning
- Support from teaching assistants is often good but not in every lesson

Commentary

9. Teachers instil a positive attitude to work in their pupils. Teachers have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour so that pupils know what is required of them in lessons. As teachers are mostly confident about the subjects they teach, they explain new learning clearly and at the right level. In a Year 1 English lesson, for example, pupils could soon suggest words like 'kick', 'lick' and 'trick' once the teacher had clarified this kind of word ending. The planning of lessons relates closely to the national guidelines and teachers plan well together, so pupils of the same year groups receive a very similar curriculum.
10. However, teachers do not make sure that their lessons stimulate pupils' interest enough. There is a tendency to give pupils mundane tasks which do little to inspire pupils and encourage a slower pace of work. In a Year 3 geography lesson, for instance, pupils had to complete worksheets with little opportunity for finding out information about Indian village life for themselves from books or other sources. Sometimes, teachers dominate the lessons, which restricts pupils' involvement and their opportunities to learn by discovery. Pupils in a Year 4

music lesson, for example, were not encouraged enough to give their own thoughts of a piece of music.

11. Teachers have good methods of helping pupils understand their work. They use resources well, for example, to reinforce learning. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher used a decapus (like an octopus but with 10 tentacles) to help pupils calculate multiples more easily. In good lessons, teacher vary their questions so that all pupils feel able to contribute, and ask open-ended questions so that pupils have to think for themselves. In ICT lessons, teachers tend to pair lower attaining pupils with higher attaining pupils. This helps to boost the abilities of the lower attaining pupils but limits the progress of the higher attaining pupils.
12. In the nursery and reception classes, teaching is uniformly good. Teachers succeed in blending the formal aspects of literacy and numeracy with exciting opportunities for learning by discovery. The whole Foundation Stage is a hive of activity and the many adults make sure that the children are gainfully employed, so that learning is secure. The many interesting resources are a bonus in keeping children motivated. Staff are vigilant in monitoring how well children learn and so they guide them ably to more challenging tasks, as appropriate.
13. The school tests its pupils well on a regular basis in the main subjects. This provides a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' learning. There is detailed analysis of this data and this has made teachers aware of shortcomings such as the quality of writing. The school has focused on this issue and standards are slowly rising. However, teachers do not always act decisively enough. Often, teachers do not expect enough from their pupils through the skilful planning of lessons and this inhibits swift progress. A few teachers mark their pupils' work thoughtfully and constructively so that pupils know how to improve, but this is not common practice. Pupils have recently been set targets in English and mathematics but few pupils remember what they are and so have little application in everyday work.
14. Teaching assistants provide effective support to groups of pupils or individuals. This is especially true in the Foundation Stage. In most lessons, teaching assistants are sensitive to the needs of pupils and guide their learning rather than doing it for them. However, when pupils are working as a whole class, teaching assistants play little active role in supporting lower attaining pupils, because teachers do not make it clear exactly how they can help.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	1 (2%)	17 (39%)	23 (52%)	2 (5%)	1 (2%)	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.

The curriculum

The breadth of the curriculum provided by the school is **unsatisfactory**. Much of the curriculum is satisfactory but there is limited provision of ICT and music. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. The accommodation and learning resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and delivered
- Provision for music and ICT is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4
- Teachers do not develop literacy, mathematics and ICT enough through other subjects
- Accommodation has been well developed as a result of the recent merger and building projects

Commentary

15. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is interesting and comprehensive. Staff plan carefully together to ensure that children not only receive formal teaching but also have ample chance to explore a wide range of learning experiences. The new layout of the rooms has been very well devised so that children have plenty of space to experiment with paint, sand or computers, for example. Resources are plentiful and the recently developed outdoor play area further stimulates the children to develop through play. It allows children to make good start to their education.
16. The school has done well to produce a mostly satisfactory curriculum suitable in the short time when the merger of the two schools took place. However, the school is aware that more planning needs to be done and this priority features on the school improvement plan. The main weaknesses at present concern ICT and music. The computer suite was out of action for a long period, when it became a classroom during the building programme. However, the school did not move quickly enough to adapt its resources by, for example, making its many laptop computers freely available. As a result, pupils are only just beginning to receive a proper curriculum. Music is a low priority in the school and pupils have too little opportunity to appreciate, compose or perform music in or out of lessons.
17. Teachers tend to teach subjects too much in isolation. There are good instances of subjects successfully blending together. Pupils sometimes show their findings from science investigations in mathematical graphs and speaking skills are developed through lively discussions in design and technology projects. However, there is no systematic approach to this and so vital opportunities are missed. In English, for example, pupils perform writing exercises with little influence of colourful subjects, like history or science. Pupils do not write much in geography or religious education. ICT rarely features in support of mathematics or design and technology.
18. The substantial investment in improving the school's accommodation has paid off. The physical bonding of the two schools has created a very good focal area on entry to the school. The new library, which is a part of this, is a good source of reference, although it is not used regularly yet by classes. Classrooms are mostly large and bright and create a pleasant learning environment. The grouping of the Foundation Stage rooms is intelligent and helps children to learn well. The imposing Spartan Centre benefits pupils and community alike, notably in physical education and ICT.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **good** standard of care for its pupils. It provides **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance and involves pupils **well** in the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good and trusting relationships between adults and pupils
- Teachers do not advise pupils satisfactorily about how to improve their work, although their support and guidance overall are satisfactory
- Staff take good care of the pupils' well-being
- The school values the views of its pupils

Commentary

19. The school has a positive atmosphere. Adults and children get on well with each other and lessons are mostly relaxed and convivial times, when pupils can simply concentrate on their learning. Pupils know that teachers generally appreciate their contributions. Teachers

constantly praise pupils' efforts and successes which in turn raises pupils' self-confidence. Pupils feel comfortable about sharing their worries and concerns with their teachers.

20. Whilst overall pupils have access to well-informed support, advice and guidance, the guidance they receive about work is unsatisfactory. Teachers give pupils specific targets in English and mathematics but do not weave the targets into lesson planning enough or insist that pupils remember them. The school has already recognised the need to involve pupils more in the setting and review of targets. Marking of class work and homework is inconsistent across the school and children are not all given clear, precise information as to how to improve their work.
21. The school takes good care of its pupils and they feel valued and safe. There is a particularly high standard of care in the Foundation Stage where very good procedures allow children to be admitted in small numbers over several days. This ensures that staff are able to provide intensive support that so that new children settle quickly and feel happy and comfortable. If a child has difficulty in settling, parents are encouraged to stay for a while until the child feels happier. There are effective child protection procedures, and health and safety matters are given a high priority. All necessary checks are carried out at appropriate intervals and pupils are reminded about safety in practical lessons such as science and baking. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award and a drugs awareness programme is taught as part of personal, social and health education.
22. The school council is an effective means of channelling pupils' views. There are representatives from each year group who meet regularly to voice concerns and discuss matters raised by pupils in their classes. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and allows good involvement of pupils in the day-to-day running of the school. The council has discussed a range of issues and has organised a 'Funny Trouser Day' to raise money for much needed playground equipment. The council wrote to parents about the event, using their own headed notepaper, and the headteacher has agreed to match the money raised pound for pound from the school budget. Members of the council also act as playground friends and have other responsibilities which support the smooth running of the school, as well as raising their self-esteem.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers produce very good annual reports on pupils' progress but other information for parents is not so good
- The procedures for dealing with parental concerns and complaints are good
- The partnerships with other schools broaden pupils' horizons
- The school's facilities greatly benefit the community

Commentary

23. Parents appreciate the quality of the very clear annual written reports that teachers produce. They tell parents exactly how well their child is doing in each of the subjects and whether or not it is good enough. In addition, there are targets for improvement and information about personal qualities such as effort, co-operation, behaviour and citizenship. The reports are easy to understand and use a good combination of narrative and grades to get their message across. Teachers also issue half-termly curriculum information sheets for parents so that they have an idea of the areas of work that their children will be covering. Unfortunately, these are not as informative as they could be. Publication of the revised prospectus for the new school has been delayed. The school has not responded quickly enough to this situation and is still using the out-of-date prospectus for Kingsway First School.

24. Parents are pleased with the way in which the school responds to their approaches. All complaints are treated seriously and investigated thoroughly and fairly. Even when the school is unable to do what the parent wishes, the reasons are explained and parents feel that they have had a fair hearing.
25. There is good liaison with the two middle schools to which pupils transfer. There is joint planning and support for pupils, which help them to change schools with a minimum of difficulty. Good links with a local Beacon school have contributed to curriculum development and staff training. There are developing links with a primary school in Germany and pupils are currently raising money to provide a new classroom for a school in Kenya. These contacts help to broaden pupils' awareness of the world at large.
26. The big, new Spartan Centre is well used both by the school and by the community. It has very good facilities which are used for activities such as adult computer classes, football training and meetings for local organisations. There are current plans to expand this community provision by developing a dual-use all-weather floodlit sports court. It is also used to support parents of children in the reception year. This popular programme is led by a specially trained member of staff and those parents who have attended the programme speak highly of it and the impact it has had. Several parents have gone on to undertake further training and gain qualifications.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory. The management of the school is satisfactory. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has led the school successfully through the merger of the two schools, uniting staff and pupils in a positive climate for learning
- The governing body does not have a clear enough overview of the school's work and is not rigorous enough in checking its development
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good
- Senior teachers support the school's development well but do not have clearly defined enough roles
- Subject co-ordinators do not effectively monitor their subjects

Commentary

27. The headteacher has spearheaded the new combined school capably and energetically. He has created a sense of harmony and common purpose in pursuit of the school's aims. Despite two terms away from the school last year on secondment, the headteacher has dealt successfully not only with staffing issues but also with the vital building work. All staff now share the sensible priorities for the school, which are based on a good analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are now very focused, for example, on raising the level of pupils' standards of work.
28. The governing body provides good support for the school. The governors have only just begun to meet as a body, although most of them were governors of the two original schools and so have valuable experience. Governors regularly visit the school and observe lessons at first hand and talk to teachers. However, the governors rely too much on staff for information about the school's progress. In addition, they are not involved in the school's development planning from the outset and are not sufficiently robust in challenging the school's decisions.

29. The Foundation Stage operates smoothly and efficiently. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision of how children should learn in the nursery and reception classes. She ensures that the learning resources and accommodation are right for children of these ages. She generates strong teamwork among all the staff, which in turn produces a lively and very focused climate for learning. Teachers and support staff are very well deployed so that children receive ample guidance but not too much direction.
30. Other senior teachers play a useful role in supporting the headteacher in decision making. The deputy headteacher values and is valued by the headteacher and has responsibility for important aspects of the school, such as assessment. Senior teachers meet with other teachers frequently to ensure that each part of the school is working as effectively as it can, particularly in planning the curriculum. However, senior teachers do not have clear job descriptions so that they can focus precisely on their responsibilities. In addition, they do not have any time out of lessons to fulfil their roles properly.
31. Subject co-ordinators do not lead or manage their subjects effectively enough. In order to reduce the stress and the workload of staff in the first year of the merger, the headteacher has carried out most of the lesson observations himself. In this way, he has been able to support staff, as well as assess their qualities. However, subject co-ordinators have little time to work alongside their colleagues and would like more training to help them develop their subjects. The special educational needs co-ordinator, for example, does not monitor the work of teaching assistants or teachers, and so she is unable to check how well pupils' specific needs are being met in the classroom or to identify staff training needs.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **good**.

Staff and children appreciate the very good facilities of the new Foundation Stage building. There is a tangible feeling of pride and purpose. Under the very good leadership of Foundation Stage co-ordinator, the staff share a common vision of providing a stimulating and creative learning environment, while remaining intent on raising standards. The adults' concern for the progress of the children is one of many reasons why they achieve so well. Teaching is consistently good. The curriculum is imaginative and planned in such a way that all children are supported and challenged.

Staff assess the children's progress continuously and are always on the watch for opportunities to move children to the next step in learning. The activities are well organised to make the most flexible use of the facilities. This allows a range of groupings so that teachers can work with individual children or with small groups, as well as with whole classes. The unusually large number of adults ensures that all of the many learning centres are used effectively. The children thrive amidst the vast array of fascinating new resources, their eyes aglow with wonder and curiosity.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between children and adults create an effective climate for learning
- There are good opportunities for children to interact and mature, although teachers direct children's learning too much sometimes

Commentary

32. This area of learning receives a high profile when children start in the nursery and the children achieve very well. By the time they start Year 1, most children reach the early learning goals. This is due to good teaching, very good relationships and a well-planned and ordered environment in which children quickly settle and feel secure. New children soon lose their dependence on adults, as they begin to explore the classroom and the large central learning area. Older children are encouraged to take responsibility and gain confidence in working independently on their tasks in preparation for the more formal routines in Year 1. They take turns being monitors, for instance, by helping to give out milk and taking the register to the office.
33. All learn to see the importance of keeping the environment neat and safe, and children tidy up enthusiastically. Behaviour is very good. The reception children are very good role models for the younger children. Because staff are skilled in knowing how young children learn, they plan an effective range of activities to develop confidence and social skills. These lead to good sharing, and growing interest and concentration, as well as a strong desire to learn. However, sometimes, teachers tell children what to do rather than encourage them to make their own choices. When making necklaces, for example, children tended to follow a common design.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading and writing are taught well
- Most opportunities are taken to enhance children's communication skills

Commentary

34. Teachers plan carefully to provide a structured range of activities specifically to develop the children's language skills, which are below average when they start school. All children achieve well and make good progress so that they reach the levels expected for their age as they start Year 1. In the nursery, this is because of good teaching of speaking and listening. Children learn to relish new words in exciting or humorous stories. With very good assistance from the nursery nurses and other adults, the teachers encourage the children to listen to each other with increasing attention. By the end of the nursery year, the children have learned that the words they see in books have a meaning and that they can read some of them. They also learn that the marks they make on paper can become real writing,
34. The teachers of reception classes extend these skills by taking children in stages through the planned stepping stones. Children in reception listen exceptionally well to adults and to one another, and in nursery, listening skills develop well. However, teachers do not always insist that children speak clearly and correctly. Overall, staff provide challenging activities that are well matched to the needs of the children, particularly those with special educational needs. The learning is fun and highly effective. Very good focused support is given to help the children improve the way they form letters. The shared writing in literacy lessons is taught well, exploring words and sentences from stories in a stimulating way. This keeps children fully engrossed in their learning. Many children are already reading simple stories and are learning to join sentences together in their writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to learn well through practical activities
- Mathematical skills are put to very good use across many areas of learning

Commentary

35. The good teaching uses practical activities to help children's understanding of number and related mathematical ideas. Consequently, children achieve well to move from a below average starting point to attain the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. In the nursery, the teachers use a wide range of mathematical and play equipment to allow children to explore number, pattern and shape. For example, children extend their numbers when counting the many wheels on the fire engines they have made. They have fun making necklaces, but at the same time are absorbing ideas of pattern. The teachers create good learning conditions, and guide the children to use an increasingly wide range of mathematical terms. Skilled questioning helps children develop their own thinking, curiosity and confidence.
36. Reception teachers extend these basic mathematical skills successfully across all areas of learning. This area is particularly well targeted, because the teachers use precise assessment well. This means they can move the children on at the peak of their understanding. Children

gain confidence in problem solving, and learn to work with care and concentration. By the end of reception, most children are recording simple addition and subtraction sums to ten and filling in missing numbers on a number line, using their knowledge, for example, that six is one more than five.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching provides children with numerous opportunities to learn about the world around them
- The staff provides a great variety of resources, visits and visitors to enrich the learning
- The children's computer skills are above average for their age

Commentary

37. Good teaching and learning enable children to make good progress. This is an area in which children enter the nursery with attainment that is well below average, but they achieve well and nearly reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. In computer skills, children do better. They start school with a good idea of how to use computers and, during the two years, the teachers ensure they get much quicker with the keyboard across a wide range of software. Teachers themselves make a variety of picture books which help children to understand growth and the passage of time. They take the children around the school, outside the school and to places further afield. In this way, children acquire the language of geography, moving and turning, left and right, near and far. The trip to the poultry farm is a regular delight, during which children not only learn about travel and distance but also the care of animals and the nature of food sources.
38. The teachers' books help children to learn simple religious ideas about special places and people. The reception teachers take these ideas a stage further, to celebrate many of the important festivals of the world, by dressing up at Christmas or making special foods and dragons for the Chinese New Year. The children are proud to share their cultural knowledge with older pupils who are invited to the feast. Investigations take place regularly. Reception children study the feeding habits of Milo the rabbit, hamsters and goldfish with interest, and record their observations. In technology, the art room is a rich source of tools and materials, where teachers give children plenty of time to learn to choose projects and guide them in the techniques they need to shape, assemble and join the materials they decide to use. This is good teaching, and the teachers assess the children's progress well with precise records to hand on to the Year 1 teachers.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching provides children with many opportunities to develop co-ordination and to experience outdoor play
- The children's skills in climbing, running, jumping and balancing are above average
- The indoor activities are not yet duplicated in the outdoor play area

Commentary

39. Children start the nursery with confident skills in running, jumping and climbing and play on large equipment such as tricycles and wheeled vehicles. The good teaching develops these further and by the end of the reception year, the children are above average in attainment and confidence. The fine finger control of small items, such as holding pencils, brushes and other small objects, is more limited. Children start well below average in this. Consequently, the teachers provide a very large number of opportunities for children to handle a wide range of items that improve finger and grip control. In the reception classes, this leads naturally to the care in accurate formation of letters and numbers. Physical education lessons in the bright new sports hall often focus well on the children's need to control the throwing and catching of small games objects. By the end of reception, most children's grip control skills have been brought up to the level expected for their age. This is a very good achievement.
40. The large, colourful new outdoor play area has been brought into use effectively. The children love to explore vigorous movement, climbing and balancing on the large equipment. This aids their confidence and physical development enormously. The teachers carefully track their progress through the stepping stones to learning. The staff have not had time, because of the sorting of resources since the merger of the two schools, to apply the indoor curriculum fully in the outdoor situation.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good direct teaching of skills is combined with good opportunities to learn through play
- Children are provided with an exciting range of activities that enriches their learning

Commentary

Unusually, this year, the children started nursery with lively imaginations and a well-developed, confident approach to creative situations. The staff have enjoyed planning a wide range of stimulating and fun activities to enable the children to build further on these talents. All share in the lively dance sessions when the nursery teacher leads on the piano. In one lesson, one child invented the 'waltz'. The large store of musical instruments is well used. Nursery children quickly form themselves into a little orchestra and play in time, with gusto. They are already above average in this.

The art room is a busy studio where children explore colour mixing with bare hands, and learn close observation skills as they study their reflection in the mirror to ensure accurate self-portraits. Teachers guide them skilfully in the techniques they might need, and these are extended in the reception year. Much valuable support is given by the nursery nurses, who encourage the children particularly well, having established such good relationships with them. There is a wealth of opportunities for imaginative play in the 'home corners' and other role-play situations. Their play extends their creative ideas and enhances their spoken language well. With this input carefully planned and assessed, the children make good progress and achieve well to reach beyond the early learning goals at the end of reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are below average by the end of Year 4, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall
- Although teaching is adequate, teachers do not always plan carefully enough to meet the needs of all pupils
- The curriculum is not very stimulating, or developed well through other subjects
- A recent initiative has had a positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing
- Assessment procedures are good but teachers do not use the data effectively

Commentary

41. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing is not as good as it should be by the end of Year 4. When reading, pupils have the basic skills to help them to tackle new words but are not confident or expressive. They do not have a wide vocabulary and this also limits the creativity in their writing. In addition, pupils' spelling is not consistently accurate and many pupils do not join up their handwriting well enough. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils' reading and writing are average but only just. Overall, pupils make at least satisfactory achievement in their time at the school.
42. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are increasingly ensuring that there is good discussion in their lessons, which strengthens pupils' concentration and stimulates their imagination. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils had to quiz the 'Wolf' in Little Red Riding Hood as to his unseemly behaviour. One boy asked the wonderful question, "Are grandmas tasty?" Teachers frequently use questions skilfully to make sure that pupils understand new work and to check their progress.
43. Teachers structure their lessons well so that pupils know exactly what they are learning. They use resources thoughtfully to reinforce new learning. For example, teachers in Year 4 used a picture of *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes to encourage pupils to suggest similes. However, teachers' planning is not always focused well enough for all pupils to progress at their own pace. Teachers sometimes have the same expectations for all pupils so that the work can be too easy for some and too hard for others. Lower attaining pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, benefit from support from sensitive teaching assistants. However, some teachers do not plan the time of teaching assistants throughout the lessons to maximise their effectiveness.
44. Teaching is often uninspiring so that pupils are not motivated enough to learn well. Too often, pupils have to complete repetitive, grammatical work on worksheets. To their credit, pupils stick at this well but the pace of their work is not swift, as a result. Teachers do not make English exciting enough by bringing in other influences, such as literature. There is some good cultural input through literature with stories like Rumpelstiltskin, but it is not extensive and helps to explain why pupils' vocabulary is not as rich as it might be.
45. The school has succeeded in improving pupils' writing. In a recent drive to improve standards, teachers have worked to improve the structure of pupils' writing and have succeeded, especially for pupils in Years 1 and 2. More pupils are achieving suitable standards because they are writing sentences correctly and sequencing them into reasonable narrative.

46. There is good assessment of pupils' work. Throughout the year, teachers use various means to test how well pupils are doing. They analyse this information to find out what needs improving. This led to the initiative on writing, for example. However, teachers do not yet use this data systematically enough to ensure that pupils have clear goals for improving. The school has introduced target setting for all pupils, but this is all very new and pupils do not yet readily know what they have to do to improve. The subject co-ordinator does not have the time or opportunity to check on teaching and learning and so does not have a clear view of the development of the subject. The leadership of the subject, therefore, is satisfactory but the management is not so effective.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Language and literacy are not developed satisfactorily through other subjects. Within English lessons, for example, pupils rarely write about historical or religious topics. In other subjects, like geography, pupils do not write factually enough about topics, although they do acquire much information through discussions. ICT is significantly underused. Pupils have had very little chance to word-process their work and pupils have not learned how to present and set out their work imaginatively in different text and layout.

MATHEMATICS

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are below national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 4
- Pupils do not have enough scope to apply their mathematical skills and solve problems
- Mental mathematics sessions lack pace in some classes and do not challenge pupils sufficiently
- The improvement in marking work is helping pupils to learn from their mistakes

Commentary

48. Standards of attainment are below those expected nationally for pupils in Years 2 and 4. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily. Standards are below average because pupils are not confident at applying mathematical skills when solving problems. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils chanted multiples of 4, reading them from the board. The teacher did not develop pupils' understanding beyond this by giving pupils the chance to use multiples of 4 in real-life situations. For example, they might have calculated the cost of items on a shopping list, where 4p is the unit cost. Work in pupils' books indicates a similar picture. Consequently, by the end of Year 4, pupils' understanding and application of mathematical skills are well below expectations.
49. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, with some good features. For example, in good lessons, teachers plan activities that are generally well matched to pupils' needs, so pupils make good progress and achieve well. When teachers ask 'quick fire' questions, include all pupils and vary the questions according to the ability of the child, all pupils make good progress. However, in some lessons, the activities for higher attaining pupils in particular are too easy and their achievement is no better than satisfactory. Often, lessons lack pace and pupils' progress slows down. For example, in one lesson, Year 1 pupils responded to a challenge from the headteacher who had sent them a letter posing a mathematical problem – to see how many different ways they could arrange eight flowers in three vases. This good activity started well with ideas flying around but it lost momentum when individual pupils were invited to write solutions on the board, so most pupils were not involved for long periods of time.

50. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinators and senior staff have analysed test results, identified the subject's strengths and weaknesses and produced appropriate action plans. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been undertaken by the headteacher. Staff have received feedback on their strengths and areas for development, but there has been insufficient impact yet to improve the quality of teaching or to raise standards. The co-ordinators have had little opportunity to develop their roles fully, which is not helping the rate of improvement or the school's ability to raise standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Mathematics is developed satisfactorily through other subjects. In Year 4, for example, pupils record temperatures in science and present them in tables and charts, and in Year 1 in geography pupils collect data about how they travel to school and represent this in a block graph. There is little evidence of computers being used to support pupils' work in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment data is used effectively to monitor the development of the subject
- Teachers use other subjects well to strengthen pupils' learning in science
- The level of challenge for some pupils is not good enough

Commentary

52. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected for the pupils' age. Pupils in Year 4 are on track to achieve average standards by the end of the year. Pupils make satisfactory progress, and this leads to satisfactory achievement.
53. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. The disturbance involved in the merger of the two schools has interrupted pupils' learning a little but, now that teachers have more time, their planning and preparation are better. In a Year 2 lesson, for instance, the teacher presented a good investigation of 'how to stop ice cubes melting'. The pupils developed a positive attitude as they clarified their ideas through discussion with partners. They understood that science experiments should be carried out in a fair way. Teachers also develop science well through other subjects. For example, pupils enjoyed the measurement of time passing in the ice cube test and used their numeracy skills well to count and record their findings. Year 4 pupils also responded well during a lesson about the value of food plants. They used their literacy skills well to take notes and write up their impressions.
54. In the lessons observed, however, the teachers had not used the information available from assessments to set tasks that specifically challenged the higher attaining pupils. Therefore these pupils are not being moved quickly enough toward the higher levels. The staff support pupils who have special educational needs more effectively.
55. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator carried out a good analysis of the reasons for lower results last year. This indicated that pupils scored very low on practical investigation. The co-ordinator encouraged the staff to adopt a style of teaching that promoted much more active learning. This is more in keeping with the school's teaching and learning policy. Most pupils' books show an improvement in the kind of investigative work since September. However, the subject co-ordinator does not have the opportunity to observe lessons to help to improve teaching further and standards and progress more closely. Despite good resources for ICT, teachers do not use computers much in science teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the end of Year 4
- Standards are well below average by the end of Year 2
- Although there is a good curriculum, it has not been recently available to the pupils
- Teachers do not develop ICT effectively through other subjects
- The school has very good accommodation and resources

Commentary

56. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory by the end of Year 4. During the process of the recent merger, pupils have done little work in ICT. As a result, pupils are not confident when working on a computer. Their word-processing skills are hesitant. They do not edit text efficiently and lower attaining pupils do not know how to save or retrieve work. Higher attaining pupils have average skills with text and can insert and re-size graphics. Pupils know how to search the Internet for information but lack practice, and they have very few skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as data handling or simulation.
57. Pupils have weak skills by the end of Year 2, and their achievement is unsatisfactory. They know how to word process, for example, but have to hunt for the letter keys laboriously and know only a few of the other keys on the keyboard. Only higher attaining pupils know how to open and close programs, print, save and find work again. Pupils have competent skills in using a paint program and many of them have produced imaginative pictures. However, pupils have very little experience in any other aspect of ICT.
58. The disruption to school life during the merger has had a serious impact on learning in ICT. Pupils were unable to use the computer suite, because it was needed as a classroom. However, the school did not try its best to overcome this by, for example, ensuring that the many computers in the school were shared among the classes. Teachers did not ensure that pupils had regular work on ICT each week and so pupils achieved very little during this time. Most pupils benefit from a weekly session in the computer suite now, but the timetabling has still not been finalised and some classes benefit more than others. There is a good curriculum in place and this should ensure that pupils achieve more successfully in the future.
59. The school is very well equipped for ICT. The new computer suite is a very comfortable place with ample computers, although these are not all made available for pupils. This means that they mostly have to share with a partner. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good plans for the future and the computer manager is a valuable asset. His expertise supports teaching very well and helps pupils to make faster progress. However, the overall leadership and management are unsatisfactory because the school has not made ICT a priority. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is a positive atmosphere in lessons, because pupils enjoy working with computers. However, because all pupils have the same work to do, lower attaining pupils rely on adult support to succeed and higher attaining pupils do not progress as quickly as they might.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Teachers' use of ICT within other subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have experimented with artistic designs in a paint package and a few pupils in Year 4 have word processed their account of a Sikh visitor to the school. However, ICT is not an intrinsic part of pupils' learning, and this is a weakness.

HUMANITIES

It is not possible to judge the provision for **geography**, as there was too little evidence available during the inspection. However, attainment is judged to be average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 4. Pupils in Year 2 have a reasonable appreciation of their own locality and can produce simple maps, such as their routes to school. They are able to express their personal preferences about the local area and give ideas of how to improve it. Pupils in Year 4 have some knowledge of overseas locations but their perceptions can be inaccurate. Some pupils think, for example, that everyone in India wears a turban. Pupils have too few opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge in writing or displays.

It is a similar picture in **history**. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is typical for pupils of their age. The attainment of pupils in the current Year 4, however, is below average. Year 2 children know of famous people like Grace Darling, and can compare what she had to endure to life on a modern lifeboat in Blyth. They know key facts about famous events like the Great Fire of London. Pupils in Year 4 are less clear about historical facts. From their study of World War 2, they know about Anderson shelters, for example, but not why rationing was necessary. Although pupils research topics for themselves, they are not helped by weak literacy skills to draw good enough conclusions.

Religious education

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the end of Year 4
- The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory
- Resources are used effectively to engage pupils

Commentary

61. Pupils' standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at Year 2. However, they are below average at Year 4. Pupils in Year 4 produce little work in writing and so miss opportunities to present their knowledge clearly and reinforce learning. Discussions with pupils in Year 4 showed that their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths are confused. As pupils do not write enough of their work down and as teachers do not regularly assess how well pupils progress, these misconceptions have not been corrected.
62. The leadership and management of the subject are not good enough. The school ensures that all the elements of the locally agreed syllabus are taught and that pupils have enough time learning the subject. However, there is no co-ordinator at present to oversee the subject. Therefore, the school does not carry out a systematic approach to checking the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, standards are not high enough for older pupils.
63. Teaching overall is satisfactory. In good lessons, teachers use resources effectively to help pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher made effective use of a video and globe to help pupils appreciate the seasons and why there was less daylight in spring than in summer. In this way, pupils understood what was meant by a new beginning. Links with the local churches and visits from people of other faiths also support the teaching of religious education throughout the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Not enough lessons were observed in **art and design** to make a judgement on provision or teaching. Discussions with pupils about their displayed work indicated that they achieve satisfactorily in art and design from Years 1 to 4. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum in art, but the

quantity of work is less than expected. The pupils are taught a reasonable range of skills and techniques. Some good use is made of outside influences, for instance in the 'Picture This' project, where pupils learn how computer techniques help them to understand composition and mood. There is no co-ordinator for the subject at present and, as a result, standards are not being assessed or monitored sufficiently, which inhibits progress and continuity.

There was very little **music** taking place in the school during the week of inspection. Pupils in Year 4 said they did not do music very often, and similarly, pupils in Year 2 were not confident when talking about musical activities. Pupils did not sing in any of the assemblies seen. Two lessons were observed, and the quality of teaching was satisfactory in one lesson but less than satisfactory in the other. Music is a low priority in the school. Pupils do not have enough time for lessons and there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop musical skills outside lessons.

In **physical education**, it was only possible to observe teaching in Years 1 and 2. In these three lessons, teaching was either good or satisfactory and pupils' attainment was typical for their age. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in these year groups. In a good dance lesson with pupils in Year 2, there were good links with literacy and science which motivated the pupils. Responding to the stimulus of a poem about 'Jack Frost', pupils created imaginative frosty, spiky shapes that they improved on throughout the lesson. The indoor accommodation for gymnastics and games is very good. The school believes strongly in developing pupils' swimming skills and all pupils in Years 3 and 4 visit the baths every week. Most pupils in Year 4 are able to swim the expected distance of 25 metres.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Year 4, but satisfactorily overall
- There is a good balance of activities within the curriculum
- Teaching focuses well on teaching basic skills
- The co-ordinator does not have enough training to monitor teaching and standards

Commentary

64. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are in line with those expected for the pupils' ages. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, and achieve satisfactorily. However, in the current Year 4, they are achieving well because the teaching is good. For example, in one lesson, the teacher used resources very effectively to enable pupils to select different ways to decorate their Indian wall-hangings. She ensured that pupils learned new skills such as stitching, and had brought in enough adult help to ensure the lesson ran smoothly. In consequence the pupils had very positive attitudes and worked hard to meet the challenge.
65. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned. Over the school year, pupils experience the full range of design topics, including mechanisms, structures and food technology. The curriculum is based carefully on national guidelines, and teachers select topics that stimulate pupils and link in with other subjects. For instance, for their wall-hangings, pupils in Year 4 called upon their art skills to produce the water crayon central picture.
66. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In particularly well-planned lessons, the teaching is good.
66. Teachers focus well on design skills. They encourage pupils to create their design systematically, to work from their initial plans and to modify them if things go wrong. Pupils are encouraged to consider who will use their product. For example, pupils in Year 2 had to allow for the reading abilities of pupils in Year 1 when designing books for them. At the end of such

projects, pupils know how to evaluate their own work so that they can learn from their mistakes and successes.

67. The co-ordinator is new to her role and has not had enough training to help her develop it. As a result, she is unable to influence standards efficiently by checking how well pupils learn and by working alongside colleagues to improve the quality of teaching.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

It was not possible to observe enough of the school's formal provision of this subject to evaluate its effectiveness.

The care that the school has for its pupils strengthens their sense of belonging and emotional security. Teachers provide weekly sessions when pupils can speak freely about personal issues and learn of their responsibilities in the wider world. In the one lesson observed, Year 4 pupils explored how victims of crime might feel and pupils were invited to share their own experiences. Older pupils are given a variety of responsible jobs around school, so that they can become increasingly self-reliant. By Year 4, pupils are mostly sensible and helpful, and sensitive to the needs of others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).