

INSPECTION REPORT

LUDWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ludworth, Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114126

Headteacher: Mr Barrie Ivil

Lead inspector: Dr Richard Perkin

Dates of inspection: 1st - 3rd November 2004

Inspection number: 267255

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 91

School address: Moor Crescent
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Durham
County Durham

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of
governors: Mr J Turnbull

Date of previous
inspection: June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than usual school, with 91 pupils on roll, of whom nine attend part-time in the Foundation Stage Unit. All are of white, British heritage and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are slightly more girls than boys, though some year groups have significantly higher numbers of boys or girls. There are twenty pupils (an above average proportion) who have special educational needs and two who have statements of special educational need; the range includes severe learning needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. There is significant mobility, particularly at the top end of the school. Attainment on entry is well below that expected. The socio-economic background of the pupils is also well below average, with high rates of pupils qualifying for free school meals. The school is involved with the School Sport Co-ordinator Programme and gained the 'Healthy Schools' award in 2004 and the 'Schools Achievement' award in 2003 and the two years previously.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14591	R Perkin	Lead inspector	English as an additional language English Art and design Music Physical education Religious education
11084	J Hughes	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school, where pupils achieve highly and reach above average standards. Both parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard. Teaching is good and is of high quality for the older pupils. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good and relationships are excellent. The school is very well led by the headteacher with strong leadership, management and governance overall. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The high quality and innovative leadership of the headteacher is strongly supported by the staff team and an effective governing body;
- Pupils achieve very well because of strong teaching, a very rich curriculum and high standards of care and guidance;
- Standards in English are high, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to investigate and apply their mathematical and scientific skills;
- Relationships are excellent and pupils' personal development is very good;
- There are excellent links with the local community and other schools and very good partnerships with parents;
- Levels of attendance are below the national average.

The school's effectiveness has very much improved since the last inspection. Standards in English and religious education are much higher. Pupils' personal development is now very good. Teaching is stronger and there have been great improvements in the curriculum. Partnerships are now very good and there have been significant improvements in leadership, management and governance. Attendance is still a problem.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	C	B	A
mathematics	A*	D	C	B
science	A*	B	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those with similar prior attainment.*

Pupils' overall achievement is very good, with the low standards on entry transforming to above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils who have special educational needs and those identified as more able or talented progress well. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. They are likely to meet the expected goals by the end of the reception year in personal and social development, but are unlikely to meet them in most other areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve soundly in reading, writing and mathematics and standards by the end of Year 2 are average. Pupils progress well in Years 3 to 6 and very well in English. Standards in English by Year 6 are well above average. Standards in religious education, art and design and physical education are above those expected. In

mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), standards are at broadly expected levels. The inspection judgements are close to the as yet unvalidated results in the national tests in 2004; differences in performance over the years can be explained by the small numbers, the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high rates of pupil mobility.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and to learning and relationships are excellent. Behaviour is very good. Incidents of bullying are very rare and are firmly dealt with. Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory, though punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is good overall, with almost a third being very good or excellent. The teaching of English is particularly strong. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage, sound in Years 1 and 2 and very good or better for the older pupils. Teachers and support staff work very well together. Learning resources, including visitors, are used very constructively and homework is employed to very good effect. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to investigate or apply their mathematical and scientific skills in practical situations. Teachers' planning takes good account of the needs of the whole class and is effectively based on thorough assessment. However, some targets to improve pupils' work are not sufficiently clearly expressed.

The very good curriculum is considerably enriched by visitors, educational visits and an excellent range of out of school activities, notably in sport and the arts. The curriculum also benefits from the school's excellent capacity for innovation. Levels of care and guidance are high, though more could be done to encourage better attendance. The school listens carefully to the views of the pupils and the parents. The partnership with parents is very productive and there are excellent links with the local community and with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good. The very strong leadership of the headteacher and his excellent vision have taken the school forward very effectively since the last inspection. He is supported by a strong staff team. Consequently, the potential barriers to learning presented by low attainment on entry to school, significant pupil mobility and often high levels of deprivation have been successfully overcome. The school is well managed. An effectively led governing body knows the school very well and plays an important part in its life and direction. It has ensured that the school meets all its statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have extremely positive views about the school, appreciating in particular the approachability of the headteacher and staff and the friendliness of the school. Pupils also think very highly of the school. They love the range of activities and clearly appreciate the friendliness of their teachers and other pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve levels of attendance;
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate and apply their mathematical and scientific skills;
- Express targets in assessments and individual education plans more clearly and precisely.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Overall, pupils achieve very well and reach above average standards. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage. Children make good progress from their low attainment when they start, though most are unlikely to reach the goals expected of them in most areas by the end of reception. Pupils' achievement is sound in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those identified as more able or talented make good progress.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The high standards and excellent achievement in English;
- Achievement in mathematics and science is to some extent limited by too few opportunities to investigate or apply learning in practical situations;
- Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage;
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of good provision and very effective support from teaching assistants;
- Standards are above average in art and design, religious education and physical education.

COMMENTARY

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 - average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.9 (17.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	13.9 (16.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 - average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (26.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.5 (25.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.3 (29.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Statistics about pupils' performance in the national tests for 7 and 11-year-olds need to be treated with caution because of the small numbers involved. The results are also affected in some years by the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the numbers of pupils who join the school at times other than in the Foundation Stage. Consequently, results fluctuate considerably

from year-to-year and it is not possible to identify trends either in overall progress or in the achievement of boys and girls.

2. In the test results for 7-year-olds in 2004, the picture is very strong in all three subjects for those reaching the expected level but weak overall in that no pupils gained the above average level in any subject. Overall, performance was broadly average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics.
3. In the tests for 11-year-olds in English in 2004, all pupils reached the expected level, a notable achievement considering that almost half of the group had special educational needs. Performance in English was therefore strong and compared very well with similar schools. Performance in mathematics was also improved and was at the national average and above average for similar schools. Science results were similar to those in 2003, showing above average standards, both nationally and for similar schools.
4. Most children start school in the nursery with low levels of skills in all of the areas of learning, with many having difficulty in communicating clearly. The teaching in the Foundation Stage class settles children quickly into the routines of school and builds their confidence very well. Consequently, their language and communication skills improve markedly as they progress through the class. Children are encouraged to talk to each other and to the adults in the classroom and this has a positive effect on their learning in all areas. Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage in their personal and social development, which meets the goals expected by the end of reception. They achieve well in the other areas of learning, though they are still not on target to reach the expected learning goals by the time they leave reception in most of them.
5. Progress in English and other subjects is maintained throughout Years 1 and 2, with the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and science being taught well, so that pupils reach expected levels for their age by the time they leave Year 2.
6. Standards in English in the present Year 6 are well above average, improving on the results of the national tests in 2004 and showing a marked improvement on the performance in 2003. This improvement has been brought about by the high quality of teaching that has resulted from the school's focus on literacy in the last few years. The basic skills of literacy are taught well throughout the school and the strong emphasis on developing the skills of particular kinds of writing, supported by the excellent materials developed by the subject co-ordinator, has resulted in high levels of skill in the pupils. A strong emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening has been of great benefit to all aspects of English, as well as enhancing achievement in other subjects.
7. Standards in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 are close to those expected and pupils achieve well overall. However, greater achievement is hampered to some extent because pupils are not given enough opportunities to investigate for themselves. Nor are there enough opportunities for them to apply their learning to practical situations where they have to solve problems independently. This is particularly true for the more able pupils.

8. Pupils achieve well in ICT and reach the expected standards by the end of Year 6. More able pupils in particular are adept at using the interactive whiteboards to help to teach the other pupils a particular skill. The quality of their presentations is good. Standards in religious education, art and design and physical education are above average; pupils' achievement is good in these subjects. The great improvement in religious education since the last inspection is due to very effective leadership and high quality teaching. Art and physical education have benefited greatly from the school's policy to make these priority areas and from the school's very effective use of visiting artists, coaches and practitioners.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress to achieve standards close to national averages in English and mathematics. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have also made good progress in modifying their behaviour, accepting school discipline and routines and developing positive relationships with their classmates and those adults who work with them. More able and talented pupils also achieve well, because of the arrangements for them. The range of clubs and other activities are successful in challenging and developing pupils with talent in art, music and sport, in particular.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are excellent. They have very positive attitudes to learning and a very high regard for the school. Their behaviour, values and personal development are all very good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Levels of attendance are well below the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children really like the school;
- The oldest pupils are eager to care for the needs of the younger ones;
- Adults work to bring out the very best qualities in each child;
- Pupils become sensitive and useful members of society;
- High quality relationships underpin the work of the school;
- Attendance levels are too low, although the school is working to improve this.

Commentary

10. It is plain that pupils are very happy at school. They enjoy their time there and are keen to tell visitors about what they are doing. Many take delight in showing their work which is so carefully displayed around the school. Pupils learn to appreciate the successes of others; they follow the fine examples set by adults as they interact with the children, praising their endeavours and suggesting ways they might improve. They participate readily in the weekly 'Shining Assembly' and heartily congratulate successful pupils.
11. This is a very calm and orderly school, where high standards of behaviour are the norm. Pupils are considerate towards each other as they move around the school and during playtimes. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions, where children sit together in mixed age groups as they chat. The dinner nannies and kitchen staff speak highly of the children and everyone gets on as part of one special family. In lessons, the very best behaviour is evident where teaching is most effective. The oldest pupils in the school show immense respect to their class teacher, because she is relentless in her pursuit of the best answer. She constantly pushes them for one more response or reflection, for example, and this really keeps them on their toes. Where teaching is more ordinary, pupils' behaviour dips below this very high benchmark. Pupils in Key Stage 1 find it hard to concentrate at times and some are easily distracted. There have been no exclusions from school.
12. Relationships between all members of the school community are exceptionally strong. They bear testimony to the nurturing learning environment created by the staff, pupils know what to expect. Pupils with special educational needs are positive members of their classes. They concentrate well on the tasks they are given, confidently answer questions and are keen to take part in all classroom activities, where they show enthusiasm and concentration.
13. Pupils' personal development is impressive. They make very good gains in their moral, social and cultural development, yet it is in their spiritual growth that these

children really shine. Staff surround pupils with examples of their high quality work and these help to create an uplifting environment. Small pockets of beauty can be found all around the school and classrooms. Visitors are moved to remark, 'Oh! Look at that!' as they wend their way around the building. For instance, the hall and some corridors are homes for beautifully executed prints of the Hindu and Christian 'Stories of Creation'. Painted by pupils, these are mounted under glass and hung for all to wonder at. Similarly, a multitude of watercolours decorate the walls, with lively oil and pastel drawings of local landscapes produced with the help of an Indian artist sitting alongside. Most impressive of all is the seamless way in which many aspects of pupils' personal development are incorporated into lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The class teacher pushes pupils along the path she is laying for them, encouraging them to think around a subject and to relate it to incidents they have experienced themselves. They are cajoled into becoming reflective souls and to empathising with those experiencing difficulties, as, for example, during a lesson about 'Oliver Twist' when pupils experienced the daring and fear of the little boy asking for more.

14. Pupils leave the school with finely honed moral and social codes. They are given plenty of opportunity to experience new situations during visits around the community and when participating in the raft of interesting extra-curricular activities. Resources and programmes led by other schools add to these experiences. Pupils are encouraged to fundraise, not only for their own school community but also for the good of those in the wider world, and they take this on board energetically. Similarly, they are taught to embrace responsibility. Some are eager to draw up the lunchtime rotas, while others act as learning leaders in their classrooms, modelling specific areas of study, such as diary writing, to a small group of their peers. Among the youngest children, staff encourage independence as they choose their own activities, when to eat a snack and then carefully tidy away resources.
15. Close links with the local clergy ensure pupils' experiences are excitingly broad and colourful. The vicar leads assemblies each week and also works in partnership with staff, teaching in some lessons. She has been instrumental in bringing artists from other cultures into school, such as an Indian artist and African drummers.
16. Visitors from the local community very effectively help to extend pupils' knowledge of their own cultural heritage and that of communities far away. There are very close ties with the local history group; the members who come in are steeped in local history and really bring it alive for their young audiences. They are regular visitors to school and bring with them a healthy dose of enthusiasm for their subject, which fascinates pupils. As a result, they have a more complete understanding of their local community than many children of a similar age.
17. Attendance rates are well below those expected. The school is to be commended for the work it already undertakes in trying to improve regular attendance. For example, registers are carefully completed, absentees who do not ring in are chased up during their first morning's absence and the school enjoys a supportive relationship with the educational welfare officer. Even so, some parents still do not understand the impact that significant periods away from school have on their children's learning. The school needs to take a more proactive approach to raising

parents' awareness of their responsibilities regarding children's regular attendance in school. Scrutiny of the registers for the first few weeks of this academic year shows several pupils have already had two weeks holiday.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is good and very good for the older pupils. There is a very rich curriculum and standards of care and guidance are high. The school benefits from excellent partnerships with the community and other schools and from very good links with parents.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning across the school are good and are significantly better than at the last inspection. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is good and teachers make effective use of it to plan for pupils' individual needs.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Very strong relationships and high quality pupil management underpin learning well;
- Support staff are deployed very effectively to support individuals and small groups;
- Teachers plan interesting activities with a variety of resources in most lessons, which engage pupils in learning well;
- Teachers make good use of information to plan work for individual pupils;
- Homework is used very effectively to support learning.

COMMENTARY

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3	6	10	6	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 quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons observed and, in over two thirds of lessons, it was good or better. The teaching of English is particularly strong throughout the school, especially for the older pupils.
19. Children in the Foundation Stage learn rapidly and achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. Key factors are the high quality planning of activities and the close assessment of the needs of individual pupils. These ensure that the next steps in learning are clearly identified, with tasks planned which closely match pupils' learning needs and that any barriers to learning are quickly identified and dealt with. Effective teamwork between the teacher and support staff ensures that they have a clear view of what they want children to achieve and a very good understanding of their various needs and abilities. Children are attentive and show high levels of interest in activities because staff are good role models and learning is skilfully developed through effective prompting and questioning.
20. In all classes, relationships between staff and pupils are extremely strong and this underpins learning particularly well. As a result, pupils work hard and learn effectively in the vast majority of lessons. Staff manage behaviour very well and have high expectations of pupils, which means that, learning is rarely disrupted because of the effective and consistent strategies employed across the school.
21. Teachers make very good use of support staff, effectively deploying them to work with individuals and small groups. Support staff are well prepared because teachers are clear about what they want pupils to achieve. This ensures that they are well briefed and make a positive impact on learning, whether they are working outside the class, perhaps with a Springboard mathematics group, or are helping slower learners in the classroom. Pupils with special educational needs are usually taught

alongside their classmates before working in small groups with help from support staff. Work is carefully prepared to meet their needs, ensuring that they are challenged but are able to experience success if they work hard.

22. In the strongest lessons, the pace is brisk, expectations are high, teachers are confident and children learn rapidly in response. Teaching is innovative, imaginative and at times inspirational. Visitors, ICT and artefacts are used very effectively to interest and involve all pupils in their learning. An excellent example of this was seen in a lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6, where they listened carefully to a talk on baptism by the local Vicar before they shared and discussed the impressive range of related artefacts that they had brought from home. They recorded their observations using computer technology. As a result, pupils received an extremely rich learning experience in which opportunities to promote speaking and listening skills were expertly highlighted and developed. The use the school makes of its excellent partnership with the local community is extremely effective in making a very strong contribution to pupils' learning.
23. In most lessons, teachers' planning sets out very clearly what children are to learn and the tasks they are to undertake. Explanations to pupils are also very clear and this effectively focuses their learning. Previous learning is skilfully recapped and new learning expertly builds on this through effective questioning. This is a key feature in many of the strongest lessons observed. In a small number of lessons where teaching was less strong, there is a lack of variety in some of the activities to engage and sustain pupils' concentration for longer periods. This makes the management of the more challenging pupils more difficult, as the pace dips and learning slows somewhat.
24. Teachers make good use of questions to assess what children already know and understand; they then build on this and challenge them further. They are very skilled at using their knowledge of pupils to plan work for individual needs. This results in exciting and stimulating teaching, which fully engages pupils. This was highlighted in Years 5 and 6, where pupils were acting out scenes from 'Oliver Twist' in a drama and literacy lesson, to explore their feelings and attitudes to each other in role. The teacher generated great enthusiasm and motivation for the task because it had real purpose in their own personal development.
25. Homework is carefully planned on a regular basis for most pupils. All pupils are given every encouragement to reinforce and extend their learning with appropriate tasks and activities to do at home. Pupils feel well supported and motivated to develop and continue their efforts after school.
26. There are good procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress throughout the school, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In many of the other subjects, pupils' progress is judged at the end of a unit of work. Progress is closely tracked from the earliest stages and the information is used effectively to ensure that pupils receive the support or challenge they need. In most lessons, work is set at the appropriate level of challenge. However, on some occasions the information is not used well enough to match work accurately to the needs of higher attaining pupils. There are some inconsistencies between classes as to how effectively assessments are used to help children improve. So, for example, pupils in some classes are not given enough opportunities to investigate independently or to apply their learning in mathematics to real life problem solving. Targets for improvement are regularly identified and reviewed. However, some of these targets are not

framed in language that makes it clear to pupils and their parents precisely what the pupil needs to do to improve.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is very good. The school provides an excellent range of enrichment activities which most effectively support learning across the curriculum. Accommodation and learning resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- There is a very stimulating, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
- The school provides excellent opportunities for the curriculum to be enriched by visits, visitors and an excellent range of extra-curricular activities;
- There is very productive participation in sport and the arts;
- There is excellent curriculum innovation because the school is very open to new ideas and has successfully developed many innovative aspects of the curriculum.

COMMENTARY

27. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all subjects, including religious education. The whole curriculum supports pupils' personal development very effectively as well as helping their academic development. Pupils' independent learning skills are developed from their start in the Foundation Stage class and culminate in Years 5 and 6, where pupils work on their guided reading task, for example, with complete independence. However, while pupils have some opportunities to investigate and apply their learning in both mathematics and science, further opportunities would benefit more able pupils in particular. All subjects are given an appropriate amount of time and most benefit in addition from strong links across the curriculum. The school's willingness to experiment and to allow subjects to support each other was seen to excellent effect during the inspection. One lesson combined musical composition, using African drums and tambourines, the creation of dances and works of art both two and three-dimensional, and work with words expressing appropriate emotions. The result was an impressive performance at the end of the lesson, that made use of the creative efforts of all the pupils in the class.
28. Further curriculum innovation was seen in the school's decision to develop a Foundation Stage class to replace the separate provision for nursery and reception children that existed until this year. The success of this initiative is already evident even at such an early stage, in the successful progress made in the children's personal development. The English curriculum is built most imaginatively on an existing framework of the National Literacy Strategy. The subject is led creatively by the subject co-ordinator, who is introducing drama strategies to supplement thorough work on different kinds of writing. These initiatives are leading to excellent achievement and high standards by the pupils. Participation in the 'Healthy Schools' award has had an important role in helping pupils' personal, social and health education.
29. Evidence of the very rich contribution made to the curriculum by visitors and educational visits can be seen throughout the school. Displays feature impressive and varied work done by the pupils in response to several visiting artists. Coaches and sports practitioners were seen working productively with pupils during the inspection, for example, in a football lesson and the fencing club. Local history and geography lessons are brought alive by visiting members of the local history society and the vicar sheds valuable light on the significance of the Christian ceremony of baptism. Pupils' learning is enlivened by visits to museums and trips from theatre groups and musicians.

30. A very wide range of lunchtime and after school clubs, including some for the younger pupils, enhance many areas of the curriculum and the homework club enables pupils to extend their learning appropriately. The arts and sport are a particular, though not exclusive, focus for the school. Participation in a physical education project with other local schools has extended pupils' opportunities to play competitively with some success, thus developing their confidence and social skills alongside their sporting prowess. Links with the local high school add to the variety of activities available for pupils and also act as a means of easing the transfer of pupils when they leave the primary school.
31. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all that happens in the school. All pupils with special educational needs have specifically written individual education plans. However, some of these plans include targets that are too general and do not identify gaps in learning. Consequently, no specific learning strategies are identified to ensure that such gaps in learning are filled. Where targets are too general, they cannot be used to measure pupils' progress. Pupils identified as more able or talented are well provided for through clubs, such as the art club and the football club. When appropriate, pupils showing promise in subjects such as mathematics work for some of the time with older pupils.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff also provide very good advice, guidance and support. The school involves pupils well in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults take their duty of care for pupils very seriously;
- Outstanding relationships are at the centre of the school community;
- Involvement in the 'Healthy School' award provides a clear focus for pupils' personal development;
- Some targets to improve pupils' work need to be more concise and precise.

Commentary

32. The staff bring a wealth of experience that meets the needs of all pupils very well. Comprehensive health and safety arrangements ensure a secure, yet very welcoming, environment for everyone. All adults are familiar with emergency drill procedures; the headteacher, school secretary and caretaker liaise carefully to ensure systems are well known to all. The headteacher is designated responsible for child protection and he makes absolutely certain that vulnerable children are closely monitored and that staff are up-to-date with all the most relevant local policies.
33. All adults are approachable and sympathetic to the needs of pupils in their care. The school has recently become part of the local 'Community for Learning' project and this will provide increased support for pupils with special educational needs in local schools. Class teachers and support staff are adept at coping with pupils' individual needs and even those with potentially disruptive tendencies blend into school life very well. All pupils have a clear understanding of the high expectations staff have of them and they respond accordingly. By the time they leave the school, pupils are resourceful and successful learners.

34. The school has worked hard to achieve 'Healthy School' status and this has boosted the entire personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) programme. Elements of PSHCE are embedded throughout the curriculum and much valuable work is completed across a whole range of subjects. Teachers do not miss the chance to reinforce healthy messages. For example, during a literacy lesson in Years 5 and 6, the class teacher incorporated an example of the dangers of smoking into an exercise designed to reinforce pupils' understanding of the active and passive voice. Sex and relationships and drugs education are all covered with the help of the school nurse.
35. The school assesses pupils' academic progress and personal development well. All pupils are provided with carefully structured programmes to enhance their strengths and improve weaker areas. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and individual education plans are integrated effectively into each child's learning. The school makes good use of the full range of special educational needs support agencies maintained by the local authority. Experts visit the school regularly to assess pupils' progress and offer advice to class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator.
36. There is no formal school council but this does not stop pupils from airing their views. The difference in this school is that adults interact with pupils all the time and really take their opinions on board. This means that staff know what pupils think and what they like; they have a clear overview of how pupils see their life in school. As children are confident that their opinions matter, they are happy to approach adults with any concerns. Every pupil feels certain that they have an adult to turn to when they are worried about anything. Staff are always eager to involve pupils in school related matters. They have recently collaborated on a 'Safer Routes to School' project, for example.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

Parents are extremely happy with the school and the education it provides. The school establishes very good links with them. There are excellent links with other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents offer huge support to this school that they value so highly;
- Community members bring a wealth of experience to pupils' lives;
- Highly productive links with other schools extend the curriculum very effectively;
- The headteacher welcomes innovation and invites many outside agencies to help him succeed;
- Well targeted 'Family Learning' programmes benefit parents and community members.

Commentary

37. Parents are very happy with the school; they speak of it in glowing terms and queue up to sing the praises of the headteacher and staff. They state repeatedly that their children are very happy there. Parents are particularly appreciative of the

induction programme, the range of activities on offer, the approachability of staff and the quality of the school's leadership and management. Most feel that the school reacts well to any concerns they raise. A recurring theme throughout discussions that inspectors held with parents was the high esteem in which they hold the headteacher; they think he is great. This appreciation does not stop at mere words, however, as a dedicated team of parents provide exceptional support for the school in a multitude of tangible ways. There is a breathtaking programme of fundraising activities that provides a huge number of additional resources for the school. The influence of such committed parental support should not be underestimated. That parents continue to be motivated to support the school long after their children have left is a fine testament to the first class relationships cultivated by the headteacher and staff. These do not happen by chance, but have gradually evolved from a very low starting point, as trust has grown in the headteacher.

38. Good quality information is regularly available to parents through notice boards, interesting newsletters and more official publications, such as the prospectus. Invaluable daily contact is maintained with parents who regularly chat to staff about their children. Although parents are given general curriculum information, some would appreciate more detail about what is being covered. Written individual progress reports provide comprehensive evaluations of what pupils can do. Some of the targets on these reports are, however, either too broad or too complex to be of any real use to parents in supporting their children's learning at home.
39. There is a well established 'Family Learning' programme based upon the UK Online group. Led by the school administrator, this popular group offers a range of courses to adults and is very successful in building both their skills and self-confidence. Many go on to complete further courses and find the course tutors sympathetic and in tune with their individual needs. Many adults see this as a vital way to keep up to date with information technology. They come away from the classes better equipped to support their children's and grandchildren's learning at home.
40. The local community is a resource much cherished by the school, and rightly so. An outstanding partnership exists between the two bodies and each works for the benefit of the other. For example, pupils were closely involved in the Ludworth Play Area Regeneration Scheme, working in partnership with the County Council design staff, visiting other play areas and drawing up plans. This helped them to give something back to the community and also to serve as a useful partner for the locality. The school also serves as a training base for artists who wish to train to work with children. Community members run a host of extra-curricular activities. Very strong church links are maintained, as the vicar regularly visits and supports various aspects of curricular work. Through these myriad associations, pupils see the value of living in a close knit community and proudly play their part in its development and annual timetable of events.
41. The headteacher also nurtures first class relationships with local schools. A secondary school to which many pupils transfer has Performing Arts status and staff show zealotry in their regular efforts to bring joint expertise to the forefront of their liaison. This constant striving towards a greater partnership, sharing of professional expertise and resources enables pupils to enjoy a host of experiences that broaden their knowledge and improve their personal development. Staff swap

schools and team teach, pupils go on day visits and experience a full working timetable prior to their transfer into Year 7. Staff from this school are able to experience what the new intake will experience and point out some of the potential pitfalls. This really helps pupils to prepare well for secondary school. Some curriculum areas are developed so that subjects have 'bridging units' that pupils begin in Year 6 and complete in Year 7. The Arts Activity day is a particularly successful feature, enjoyed by all. Regular cluster meetings take place and colleagues enjoy a high level of professional interaction.

42. The school keeps parents of pupils with special educational needs fully and regularly informed. Parents have sight of their children's individual education plans and meet both the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teacher regularly. They are invited to all reviews, where their comments and observations are welcomed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is providing very effective leadership. Overall leadership is good. The governance of the school is good. The governing body is well informed and ensures that the school does all that it should do by law. Management responsibilities are evenly distributed and well performed. Financial management is accurate and effective.

MAINS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The enthusiastic and committed governing body work well alongside the headteacher to implement new policies and initiatives;
- The headteacher has created a very clear sense of purpose and direction;
- Strong leadership is provided by key staff;
- The formal monitoring of teaching and learning is restricted to the analysis of pupils' work.

COMMENTARY

43. Governors are enthusiastic and very supportive of the school and carry out their statutory duties effectively. They are totally committed to the school's principles of inclusion and raising achievement, and ensure that the school promotes equality of opportunity and racial harmony effectively. The governing body is very well led by the chair, who ensures that there are regular and sufficient opportunities to challenge and debate issues affecting the school. They are kept well informed by regular visits to the school and meetings with senior staff. Finances are carefully monitored by the relevant committee, where the chair plays a key role. The school's success in bidding for extra resources has enabled surpluses in the school budget to be applied to curriculum projects. A specific example of this is the current purchase of the latest computer equipment for the ICT suite. This will enable the existing machines to be relocated in classrooms and give pupils further opportunities to practise their skills.
44. The headteacher's leadership is very good. It has made significance progress in overcoming the barriers to learning presented by above average proportions of pupils with special educational needs, high mobility and deprivation. The

headteacher has a very clear vision for the continued development of the school, together with a sense of realism about what is possible and the identification of practical time scales. This has secured the commitment of all staff and governors to continued school improvement and has ensured the confidence of parents and the local community, as well as colleagues in other school throughout the country. A particularly valuable feature of his leadership is his innovative work in the small schools field. He is seen by local colleagues as a 'figurehead' as he helps to set the local agenda. He is held in high regard by local colleagues who look to this school as an example of how small schools can succeed when working together. A recent focus has been how to raise leadership skills in small schools. Useful links are also forged with the nearby university and the curriculum is supported by their staff.

45. The headteacher continues to involve governors and staff in a thorough ongoing review of the school by co-ordinating subject monitoring reports and policy documents relating to teachers' management roles. Parents are kept fully informed of what is happening in school. Excellent professional relationships exist between the headteacher and governors and this is exemplified in the dialogue that takes place before the annual budget is agreed by the full governing body, so that spending decisions make an appropriate impact.
46. All staff are fully aware of the need to raise achievement continually and, with this in mind, secure systems are in place to monitor the quality of pupils' education. These are at least satisfactory and further improvement can be achieved by more regular monitoring of teaching and learning, to ensure that best practice is spread throughout all classes. The small numbers of staff make it challenging to organise regular lesson observations, so subjects are prioritised and these timetables are adhered to. One particularly successful initiative is the setting up of a Foundation Stage class, which is a good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. This has ensured that the curriculum for the youngest children is appropriate and challenging, and that classes are now made up of pupils from only two National Curriculum years.
47. The school improvement plan has provided a very useful tool for development with a clear time scale for improving achievement through developing teaching, learning and resources. It is fully costed and closely linked to the planned provision for in-service training. Very good use is made of specific grants and careful decisions have been made to rationalise the numbers and deployment of learning assistants who work with pupils with special educational needs. The ongoing deployment of these learning assistants is the responsibility of the deputy headteacher and ensures that their skills and expertise are used very effectively. National test results are systematically evaluated by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher (Year 2) and the Year 6 teacher, and teaching programmes are adjusted where necessary.
48. The school fully meets the requirements of the current Code of Practice for special educational needs and all the administration is kept up-to-date by the effective special educational needs co-ordinator, who is the deputy headteacher. The delegated governor responsible for special educational needs, who meets regularly with the special educational needs co-ordinator and reports directly to the governing body, effectively supports the provision.

49. The headteacher has ensured that responsibilities are shared amongst the staff to reduce the amount of overload. The newly qualified teacher is given very good support. Day-to-day financial accounts are strictly monitored with the principle of 'best value' considered.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	374,641
Total expenditure	345,533
Expenditure per pupil	3,755

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	29,631
Balance carried forward to the next year	29,107

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The school has successfully set up a Foundation Stage class and planning has ensured that there are challenging activities to meet the needs of both nursery and reception aged children. Children are prepared well for transfer to Year 1. They enter the nursery group following their third birthday and attend part-time. There are very good arrangements that help the children settle well. Although the attainment on entry to the nursery of a significant proportion of children is very low, they all achieve well because the teaching is good and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which match their needs well. Adults set excellent role models for the children and manage them well. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the needs of all are met well. The staff work very effectively as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring all children's progress. The accommodation inside is satisfactory and children benefit from a safe outside play area. Resources overall are satisfactory. However, some of the equipment is old and in need of replacement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of good teaching and the high expectations set by the staff;
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance the children's development and they are in line to reach the expected goals by the end of the academic year;
- Supportive relationships are being established so children feel confident and happy.

Commentary

51. The personal, social and emotional development of the nursery children was well below that expected when they joined the nursery. Some children had under developed social skills and found it difficult to become involved in the activities set out for them. They found it difficult to respond positively to the presence of other children and some were unhappy about remaining in the classroom once their parent had left. By the time of the inspection, almost all children settled quickly and were able to choose an activity. They had learned the daily routines and settled to tasks with the minimum of fuss, behaving sensibly. This is because a very high level of trust exists between adults and children. All the adults who work with the children have a calm but rigorous approach to work. The majority of children show interest in what they are doing, concentrate well even when they are not directly supervised and are eager to learn.

52. Children are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve. They are friendly and take a pride in their work. They are encouraged to share and take turns amicably and to put up their hands when answering a question. Adults are firm and fair with the children, who learn to appreciate the needs of others in their group. They are expected to clear up after themselves and seek help when required. The gains in learning already evident in this area are the result of continual reinforcement of routines by adults who treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This helps the children to succeed. Children are on track to meet the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the end of reception.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills and teaching is good;
- Children are continually encouraged to take part in conversations and to speak in phrases and sentences.

Commentary

53. Children are making good progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen. However, indications are that because of very low levels of speech acquisition on entry to the nursery, a larger than average number of children will not meet the expectations in this area of learning. All staff take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary through probing questions and are consistent in insisting that children listen to the contributions of others. For example, when children were acting out the roles of vet, adults and secretaries in the role play area, the adults working with them continually involved them in conversation. They challenged them to talk about what had happened and what they would have to do to mend the injuries for example. Children enjoy books and listen attentively when a story is read to them. For instance, when the teacher read the book 'Creeping through the Jungle', the children were hanging on her every word as she read with expression and excitement. There are many opportunities for children to look at books themselves, which they handle with care, appreciating that text is read from left to right. Older children are beginning to connect initial sounds to their letters and are developing recognisable letter formation. Children write their names and have good opportunities to practise writing skills in the writing corner and in role play, when they take on the job of 'secretary'. Individual letters are recognisable and more able children are spelling simple words correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning, which ensures that children achieve well;
- Every opportunity is grasped in all activities to promote children's mathematical development.

Commentary

54. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. However, a significant minority of children

are not working at levels expected for their age, because their initial attainment on entry was well below the expected levels. Overall, most are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they leave reception. Adults use a wide variety of number rhymes and songs to help children count. This is effectively supported by well planned practical activities, where children can experiment with mathematical language and sort and match objects according to shape, size and colour. Good use is made of ICT to add interest and excitement to these practical activities.

55. During more formal mathematical activities, older children demonstrated an accurate ability to count to five and to associate the value of this number with the written digit. During this lesson, adults worked hard to help children think things through to achieve an accurate answer, and used questioning very effectively to help them come to an understanding.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A suitable range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.

Commentary

56. A good variety of appropriate and interesting activities is planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. For example, children learn of the festival of Bonfire Night. They know that seeds require water to make them grow and observe what happens to seeds that are not given water. Children observe weather conditions and show interest in pets, talking about what they need to live. Most can use the space bar and mouse to operate a simple computer programme. However, insufficient numbers of pupils in the reception group are making sufficient progress to meet the expected goals in this area of learning by the time they leave reception. This reflects their low levels of attainment when they join the nursery.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from a typical range of activities in the classroom, which develop their fine motor skills;
- When outside sessions take place, opportunities are missed to link physical development with other areas of learning.

Commentary

57. The quality of teaching and learning is sound. Children are given appropriate opportunities to use the outside play area and use a full range of tools, such as pencils, brushes and scissors. Their skills indicate that they are in line to meet the expected goals at the end of the year. Children's opportunities for outdoor play were limited in that they were not encouraged to become involved in role play or organised paired ball games. This prevented conversation from being practised or progress being made in personal development. Children could organise themselves and sustain their activities. In the classroom, they develop their manipulative skills well by handling dough, scissors and brushes and they manipulate small

construction equipment with dexterity. Most children hold mark-making tools such as pencils and crayons correctly. This helps in the development of their handwriting skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children's work is displayed to good effect;
- They respond well to opportunities for role play.

Commentary

58. The work on display indicates that standards are as expected. A particularly well developed display included self-portraits. Here, children have made bold paint brush strokes to create their portrait. The more able children included specific body segments such as face, body, hands and feet. All children enjoyed the opportunity to take part in role play with confidence and maturity. Good use was made of model making components, as individual children lost themselves in the creation of imaginary stories and adventures.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils achieve very well and reach high standards, showing a considerable improvement since the last inspection;
- Innovative teaching, particularly for the older pupils, motivates pupils very effectively;
- Excellent leadership and management has produced rigorous and effective systems for assessment and planning.

COMMENTARY

59. The results in national tests vary from year to year because of the small numbers involved. During the last two years, however, almost all pupils have reached the expected level in the tests at the end of Year 2 and, in 2003, the test results were in the top 5 per cent nationally for writing and well above average for reading. In comparison with similar schools, the results were in the top 5 per cent for both reading and writing. In 2004, however, in a group who had entered school with much lower attainment, no pupils were assessed as reaching the above average level in either reading or writing; consequently, performance was average for reading and below the national average for writing. The picture for pupils taking the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 is very positive and markedly better than that in 2003. All pupils reached the nationally expected level, a very creditable result given that almost half the group had special educational needs and several had joined the school within the previous two or three years. Over a fifth gained the level above that expected for their age, a similar proportion to that in similar schools. There is

no significant trend over time in the relative achievement of boys and girls but in both 2003 and 2004, girls performed noticeably better than boys at the above average level.

60. Pupils in Year 2 are on track at present to perform at expected levels by the end of the year in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Given the low levels of language and literacy with which they started school, this marks good achievement for these pupils. The school's strong emphasis on speaking and listening and the frequent opportunities pupils are given to develop their communication skills not only raise standards in speaking and listening but also have a positive effect on skills in reading and writing. The basic skills of reading and writing are taught systematically and well in Years 1 and 2, with pupils having good opportunities to improve their skills in handwriting and spelling, alongside the chance to write for different audiences and purposes.
61. Standards for pupils in the present Year 6 are well above average in all aspects of English and they achieve very well. The priority given to the development of basic literacy skills continues throughout Years 3 to 6. In Years 5 and 6, more advanced literacy skills are taught extremely well so that pupils become very familiar with the characteristics of a wide range of different kinds of writing. They apply that knowledge very effectively in their own writing. This process is helped by the thorough drafting and re-drafting of their work, supported by detailed and constructive marking from the teacher. Pupils are encouraged to be creative and to develop an extensive vocabulary; for example, a poem by a pupil in Year 6 goes: 'The moon is a razorblade cutting through the clouds finding its victory' and Wackford Squeers is described as being 'like a bolt of lightning in a world of his own'. They also develop a wide variety of reading strategies, benefiting from the systems set up by the teacher to such an extent that groups of pupils are able to take responsibility for their reading independently. One such group had prepared the three pages of the novel they were reading as a homework task, supported by a set of key questions provided by the teacher. The notes they had taken formed the agenda for the group reading session, where they were able to share high quality insights into the meaning of the novel, as a result of their thorough preparation. Drama work promotes the careful and appropriate use of language, while providing insights into characters' feelings and helping pupils to apply their reading of fiction to their own life and emotions. Consequently, pupils are confident in expressing their views and in debating issues arising from the literature they read.
62. The quality of teaching in English is very good overall and often, in Years 5 and 6, excellent. Teachers benefit from the systems put in place by the very good co-ordinator, building on their training in the National Literacy Strategy but adding more creative approaches, many of which are used to very good effect with the older pupils. Consequently, the use of drama, dance, music and art in the teaching of English leads to very high levels of interest and productivity from the pupils. Achievement in the subject also benefits greatly from the use of ICT. In one lesson with Years 3 and 4, for example, exploring the language and meaning of the story 'The Paperbag Princess', a video and photographs were used to catch pupils' interest and to promote their use of language in visualising the 'Poison Pool'. Pupils began to develop a presentation using a computer program. Pupils' search for alternative vocabulary benefited from their confident use of the thesaurus.

Consequently, reference was made in their discussion and in their writing to 'the black bubbling water' and words such as 'grotesque', 'grimy', 'hazardous', 'overwhelming' and 'venomous' were used appropriately. The use of the interactive whiteboard is firmly embedded in teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6, with pupils having the confidence to use it to share their learning independently with other pupils. Teachers are good at using the range of teaching and learning resources provided by the co-ordinator. Lessons move at a brisk pace and are invariably challenging. Teachers are skilled at maintaining the interest of pupils and classroom management skills are very well deployed in most lessons. The learning of pupils with special educational needs benefits greatly from the help of very skilled support staff and enables them to achieve well.

63. The very experienced and extremely effective subject co-ordinator is a lead teacher for the subject and, as such, has provided training on guided reading for support staff in the area. She has implemented a series of initiatives to improve pupils' achievement in literacy, such as the whole school spelling session on Fridays that uses data from the previous week provided by support staff. She has adapted an exciting commercial scheme to meet the school's need for a focus on literature and has compiled an impressive collection of support materials for teachers related to varieties of writing. All of these have had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Her management of the subject is excellent. Developments are based on careful analysis and evaluation of present practice. Performance and teachers and support staff are monitored and supported in a variety of ways. As assessment co-ordinator, she has introduced assessment procedures and target setting systems that also have a very positive effect on pupils' progress in English.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

64. Literacy skills are very well developed through other subjects. Pair and group discussions and opportunities to address the whole class occur in most lessons. Teachers in all subjects are adept at asking questions that draw out the pupils' verbal responses and make them use language accurately. Pupils' skills in ICT develop alongside their literacy skills because of the widespread use of computers for word processing. Opportunities for extended writing are offered in subjects such as history and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well;
- Pupils are very well taught in Years 5 and 6;
- Basic mathematical skills are developed systematically throughout the school;
- Opportunities for children to use and apply their skills are not consistently applied;
- There are insufficient opportunities to develop mathematics across the curriculum.

COMMENTARY

65. The small numbers of pupils taking the national tests each year, along with varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs and high mobility in some years, make it hard to identify trends in performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In the tests in 2003, pupils' performance was average at the age of 7 and below average at the age of 11, when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, however, standards were above average at the age of 7 and broadly in line at the age of 11. In the most recent national tests (2004) for pupils aged 7 and 11, results indicate a significant improvement. All pupils achieved the average level (Level 2) and standards were in line with national expectations at the age of 7 when compared with all schools nationally. Standards at the age of 11 were in line with all schools but above average when compared to similar schools in similar circumstances.
66. Achievement is strong across the school. This is largely because pupils build very rapidly on the firm foundation established in their early years of schooling, as a result of consistently good teaching and high quality classroom support. Pupils are encouraged and challenged by effective teaching, so that by the end of Year 6 standards are broadly at expected levels for their age, with more able pupils reaching levels of work that match their capacity. Lower ability groups, including pupils with special educational needs, are supported very well by skilled and effectively deployed classroom assistants, both in lessons and in small groups. This enables them to make good progress in relation to their abilities and increasing numbers achieve average levels in the national tests. Standards are similar to those seen at the last inspection.

67. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good for older junior pupils. The strengths identified in the previous inspection have been maintained. Features of this teaching include skilful questioning to check the pupils' understanding and to develop their learning further. The aims of the lessons are sharp, explained effectively to pupils at the beginning of lessons and referred back to at the end to check their understanding. The time at the end of the lesson is used well to help the pupils reflect on what they had learned and for teachers to assess their understanding. Teachers are increasingly confident at helping pupils to see that there is a wide range of strategies that can be used to calculate answers when multiplying or dividing numbers for example. This helps them to understand that there is more than one way to tackle a problem. For example, pupils receiving extra support in Years 3 and 4 were able to give three different ways of calculating the total cost of two steak pies at 65p each and two portions of chips at 35p a bag by using their knowledge of different ways of counting, rounding and multiplying numbers. In the best lessons, expectations are high, the pace is brisk and not a moment is wasted.
68. Throughout the school a strong emphasis is given to the teaching of basic mathematical skills. Pupils are confident when handling and calculating numbers both large and small because the teaching is systematic and thorough. This ensures that pupils develop a secure understanding of place value. By the time they are in Years 5 and 6, they can identify the value of a digit in numbers to two and three decimal places. Classroom displays are used effectively to reinforce and support pupils' learning. Basic rules, mathematical vocabulary and guidance for problem solving are prominently displayed and children regularly refer to this information in their work. Children's understanding of the correct mathematical language is constantly developed by teachers and reinforced during lessons. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were supported well to develop their understanding of the meaning of odd and even, with careful prompting and effective questioning.
69. Opportunities for children to explore and investigate mathematical problems by using and applying their knowledge in different situations, using a wide range of resources, such as ICT, are not consistently developed in all classes, although improvements are beginning to show through. Consequently, some children's skills in mental, oral and investigative activities are less well developed. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in a small number of lessons where learning does not always progress at a fast enough pace. In these lessons, teaching does not always achieve an accurate match between the task set and the ability of the pupils. On occasion, some of the activities lack a variety of approach to fully engage the interest and motivation of the children.
70. The subject is well led and managed. The curriculum leader has made a positive start in identifying strengths and weaknesses and is developing the subject further with local education authority support and training for staff. He has identified as an area for development the need for the systematic planning of opportunities to enhance numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. He has a clear understanding of what good mathematics teaching looks like and is, therefore, able to support his colleagues effectively. He has a good handle on standards and what is needed to bring about improvements through the careful analysis of test results and pupils' work.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

71. Currently, although opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects are improving, they often lack a clear focus and are inconsistently highlighted and applied. However, there are sound examples of pupils using their numeracy skills, such as making graphs of data collected in science. Measuring skills have also been used in science to estimate and measure the human skeleton and the computer is used to support basic number skills in many lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching, particularly of the older pupils;
- There is a good emphasis on the use of specific technical language;
- Younger pupils' investigations are over influenced by teachers;
- The data handling opportunities of ICT are not systematically used by pupils to analyse the results of their investigations.

Commentary

72. There have been many improvements since the last inspection. Standards and achievement have improved, as have teaching and learning. A rolling programme of topics in a two-year cycle, to accommodate the mixed age classes, now ensures that all elements of the subject are taught. Regular assessment of attainment and analysis of test results now take place and resources have been improved.
73. Standards are average for pupils in Year 2. In the national assessments in 2003, all pupils achieved the national standard but no pupils achieved the higher level. Performance was similar in 2004. The current Year 2 pupils, like the pupils in the past few years, entered school with well below average understanding of the world about them. However, they achieve well and are on track to reach average standards by the end of the year. Standards are average in the present Year 6. In the national tests in 2003 and 2004, pupils' performance was above the national average and that for similar schools, with a good proportion reaching the above average level. This is because of the very good teaching of the older pupils and the insistence on the correct use of technical vocabulary. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
74. Teaching is good, overall. It is best in Years 5 and 6, where it is consistently very good. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching varied between satisfactory and very good. Teachers know their subject well and planning shows a clear focus. Consequently, pupils learn well, show interest and enthusiasm for the subject and concentrate hard. Occasionally, teachers' planning did not anticipate some rapid gains in learning and more advanced pupils did not achieve the levels of which they are capable. A good emphasis is placed on practical activities and this enables pupils to carry out experiments, but there are insufficient opportunities for younger pupils to plan their own investigations. There is a good emphasis in all lessons on the correct use of specific vocabulary, which ensures that pupils fully understand scientific terms. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from particularly challenging science lessons. Very good use is made of ICT in some classes to ensure that they gain a full understanding of scientific phenomena. A very good range of teaching strategies is used. This ensures that pupils are continually challenged, their interest levels remain high and, when they return to particular topics, they are enabled to study scientific knowledge in different ways.

75. Leadership and management are sound. The recently appointed co-ordinator has introduced the monitoring of pupils' work. However, there is no systematic tracking of pupils' achievements or the identifying of specific targets to ensure that all higher attainers in Year 2 are achieving their potential. The subject is due to be prioritised in the school development plan.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- There have been ongoing improvements in resources and staff expertise since the last inspection;
- Direct teaching of ICT skills is good;
- ICT is used consistently to support learning in most other subjects;
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in ICT are established and effective.

COMMENTARY

76. By the end of Year 6, pupils' ICT skills are broadly in line with those expected. Pupils achieve well. Careful budgeting has enabled the school to initiate its subject action plan, order up-to-date machines for the ICT suite and relocate the older machines in classrooms.
77. Teachers are particularly skilled at including ICT skills in their teaching of most other subjects, though more could be done in mathematics. Good use is often made of digital recorders during whole class teaching. Pupils use the Internet to research data to include in their multimedia presentations. Good use is made of the ICT suite by all classes. Teachers' planning is based on national guidance and consequently ensures that pupils experience the use of ICT for word processing, graphics, research and data handling, as well as control monitoring and modelling.
78. Where ICT is used in lessons as part of whole class teaching, teachers question pupils' use of ICT procedures in order to help them understand the necessary sequence of instructions. Pupils are effectively challenged to apply their ICT skills to their learning. In Years 3 to 6, pupils confidently run their own multimedia presentations to highlight and reinforce the learning objectives of the lesson. In Years 1 and 2, a good aspect of a design and technology lesson was the use of data handling techniques to record graphically pupils' favourite fruits. Older pupils confidently use word processing to record their research into the geography and history of their locality. Effective use of digital cameras has enabled pupils to record aspects of their locality. They have imported these photographs to illustrate their writing, to highlight physical and historical features and areas for improvement. Pupils are enthusiastic about the use of ICT and confidently work with partners to achieve well.
79. Good leadership and management of the subject have ensured that a full range of ICT tasks and projects are available to pupils throughout the year, so that they build up their confidence, skill and expertise. Assessments are an integral part of the subject planning. This ensures that pupils continually build up their skills and techniques. These findings represent a good improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

80. ICT is used widely in other subjects, particularly English, science, religious education, art and design and technology. It is also used in history and geography. Photography and multimedia presentations developed by the pupils helped to make the school 'Book Week' interesting and exciting for other pupils and parents.

HUMANITIES

81. No judgement is made about provision in **history** and **geography**, because only one lesson was seen in history and none in geography. Evidence was drawn from teachers' planning, discussions with staff and pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in both subjects is at least at expected levels. The school's partnership with the local community is extremely effective in supporting pupils' learning in these subjects. The knowledge and expertise of regular visitors to school are skilfully used by staff to engage pupils in their work with interesting and thought provoking lessons. For example, in a lesson in Years 3 and 4, they showed high levels of interest and enthusiasm when listening to members of the local history society talking about living in Ludworth in past times. The curriculum is also enriched through a range of practical activities and visits. Fieldwork is undertaken around the school and in the local community. Pupils respond well to these experiences and their learning accelerates as a result. A good range of relevant topics are studied throughout the school in appropriate depth so that pupils build their knowledge and skills from year-to-year.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards and achievement are good because of the good teaching and very effective leadership and management;
- The subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- A good level of resources is very well used;
- Pupils' have very positive attitudes to the subject.

COMMENTARY

82. Standards in religious education are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus and at the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well. Lively and interesting teaching ensures that pupils learn about customs and beliefs from a number of different religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Learning is well supported by very good quality displays that include a good range of appropriate artefacts and books. The school houses the resources that are shared with other cluster schools. Teachers make very good use of material that pupils provide for themselves. For example, a lesson on baptism benefited enormously from the wide range of baptismal garments and objects that pupils brought from home. Learning in this lesson was also enhanced by a video of a baptism that actually involved one of the pupils and by the presence of the vicar who was able to run through the baptism of a doll to show the ceremony at first hand. The school makes very good use of visitors so that the pupils' high quality art work on Hindu stories benefited from the support of an Indian artist. Lessons also make very good use of ICT as, for instance, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 went to the computer

suite to continue their lesson on baptism by preparing a multimedia presentation on the subject.

83. The subject has an important role in helping pupils' personal development because the stimulating teaching catches and maintains pupils' interest so well. They learn to understand and appreciate the beliefs and customs of others, so that the subject plays an important part in promoting racial understanding and equality. They also learn to respect the feelings and views of other pupils and to celebrate differences.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to judge provision in **design and technology** and **music**. Only one lesson was observed in design and technology and none in music. Inspectors examined planning, spoke to pupils about what they had learned in the subject and looked at their work.
85. In design and technology, pupils gain experience of a range of materials and techniques and are developing the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products. In the observed lesson, younger pupils were identifying their favourite fruit, prior to designing and preparing a fruit salad. They were applying scientific and mathematical skills to this task and using the data handling application of ICT to identify pupil preferences. This is a good example of the subject contributing to the general curriculum and is a clear improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The school now has a detailed subject plan that ensures that a full range of projects and skills are organised and taught. An effective assessment system is also in place.
86. Older pupils explained how they used the Internet to research their designs of shelters. They had applied mathematical qualities of triangles to erect rigid structures. They had scientifically tested a range of materials to check their waterproofing qualities prior to selecting covering materials for the roof. Pupils created their own designs, with more able pupils adding a sequenced commentary of instructions to assist in the construction of the shelter. Although older pupils are beginning to evaluate their work, this is still the least developed area of the subject.
87. There is good curriculum guidance that ensures full coverage of all aspects of music. Pupils have opportunities to perform at concerts and other events at school and at the local church. Individuals who show talent or wish to learn an instrument have the chance to be taught by peripatetic teachers. The singing observed in assemblies and hymn practices was whole-hearted and tuneful and pupils of all ages clearly enjoyed participating. They were very enthusiastically led by members of staff. Pupils' musical skills benefit from the African drum club run by a parent, and set up after a visit by an African drummer had caught the imagination of the pupils. Their drumming skills enabled them to create an impressive piece to accompany dances and words produced during a lesson on an African creation myth. Work on drums will continue when pupils transfer to high school. Pupils' sense of rhythm and beat develop during the dance club which is very well attended.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very creative use is made of visiting artists;
- Pupils produce a good range and variety of art work which is displayed to very good effect;

- Art and design is very well integrated into other subjects.

Commentary

88. Standards by the time pupils leave the school are above those expected and pupils of all abilities achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Talented pupils attend an art club where their skills are nurtured. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support in the classrooms, to which they respond very well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The subject is well led and managed.

89. There is much evidence around the school of the positive impact made by visiting artists. For example, the design for the school sign was developed with a visiting artist. In a link with a local museum, older pupils worked with two artists to produce a striking inlaid wood veneer depiction of a windy day. A visiting Indian artist helped pupils work landscapes using oil pastels very effectively. Collage seascapes, mosaics of sea creatures and work on Gormley's Angel of the North represent something of the variety of art work undertaken by the pupils, alongside the more usual development of skills in observational drawing and painting. The school makes very good use of the local area and displays include carefully observed drawings and paintings of local buildings, often presented in unusual ways such as the sand-surfaced cut outs of Ludworth Tower. The quality of all this work is greatly enhanced by the high quality of display; some excellent watercolour depictions of Hindu and Christian creation stories are displayed behind glass with matching frames.
90. Teachers use art to support learning in other subjects while at the same time ensuring that pupils develop their skills in the subject progressively. Activities such as observational drawing and painting contribute to pupils' learning in history, geography and religious education. An art lesson with pupils in Years 3 and 4 on investigating pattern made a significant contribution to learning in mathematics and religious education. In some lessons, art and design is closely integrated into creative work across the curriculum, as in the lesson where painted mobiles and word art formed part of the final performance of dance and music. Computer designed art features in all classes as pupils learn to use the computer increasingly creatively as they progress through the school.
91. Effective leadership and management have ensured that art and design has a high profile in the school and that it makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high profile given to sports and physical activities benefits pupils' personal development significantly;
- Visiting coaches and sporting achievers make a very good contribution to pupils' achievement;
- The range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum considerably;
- The school's good facilities for sports and physical education contribute to the quality of its provision.

Commentary

92. Standards in physical education are above those expected by the time pupils leave the school and pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and is enhanced by the school's use of professional coaches

and other expert practitioners. For example, in a lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6, their footballing skills were expertly developed by a professional football coach, a former international player. The fencing club is run by an international fencer, who not only acts as a role model for the girls but also systematically develops pupils' skills in an atmosphere of great enjoyment where pupils work hard but have lots of fun. Pupils' skills in gymnastics and dance are systematically developed and benefit from the good facilities available both inside and out.

93. Under the energetic leadership of the co-ordinator, the school's decision to give sport and physical activity a high profile coincided with the setting up of a local Physical Education Project and the achievement of the 'Healthy Schools' award. Consequently, pupils now have many opportunities to participate with some success in competitions and activities with other schools in several sports, such as football and netball. They also have opportunities to attend a broad variety of clubs, including a dance club, which is very well attended by both girls and boys, and a gym club for younger pupils. This rich variety of experiences not only contributes to pupils' own awareness and achievement of healthy life styles but also enhances their personal development by raising confidence and understanding at the demands and responsibilities of teamwork and competition.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

94. No lessons in **personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE)** were observed so no judgement can be made about overall provision in the subject. However, pupils' personal development was seen to be central to everything the school does and it permeates all school activities. It is clearly a very strong area. Very good attention is paid to issues of health. The headteacher and staff show a strong commitment to this area of the curriculum. Indeed, elements of the programme run through many lessons. Participation in the 'Healthy Schools' award is providing the school with renewed impetus for its programme and several initiatives are already planned for, such as embracing the new National Fruit scheme.
95. Class teachers are ever mindful that they are trying to support and develop mature and socially responsible pupils. To this end, they offer pupils responsibilities around the school and encourage them to become sensitive to the emotional and physical needs of others. There are close links with community agencies such as the police and fire services to ensure pupils obtain a greater understanding of how such groups serve the local community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1

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	3

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