

INSPECTION REPORT

DUNDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Tring

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117286

Headteacher: Mrs J Langdon

Lead inspector: Ian Knight

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th April 2005

Inspection number: 274174

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	269 full time in Reception to Year 6; 25 part time children attend Nursery.
School address:	Silk Mill Way Tring Hertfordshire
Postcode:	HP23 5DJ
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Paul Stanton
Date of previous inspection:	6 th March 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dundale Primary School and Nursery is a large primary school serving the town of Tring. It was awarded the Hertfordshire Disability Award in 2004 and the Hertfordshire Quality Standard for Early Years in 2005. Almost all pupils are white British; there are a small number of Indian and other Asian pupils, and some are of mixed heritage. A small number of traveller children also attend the school. The background of most families is average. Relatively few pupils have special educational needs. These needs include specific learning difficulties; profound and multiple learning difficulties; social difficulties; emotional and behavioural difficulties; hearing impairment; physical problems; autism; and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Overall, standards on entry are average, within a full range of attainment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well in Nursery, Reception and the juniors, and satisfactorily in the infants. Teaching is good overall, and satisfactory in the infants. A good curriculum, with some innovative features, supports the teaching in the school. The headteacher provides very good leadership, supported well by other senior teachers. The school is managed well. This is achieved at a cost per pupil that is broadly average; the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and senior staff know the whole-school family very well because they rigorously check teaching; this enables them to share good practice throughout the school.
- The school nurtures pupils very well; relationships are very positive and pupils feel safe and secure.
- Junior pupils, especially the highest attainers, achieve well in English, mathematics and science because of good teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and travellers are included effectively in all aspects of school life and supported very well; as a result, their achievement is good.
- Expectations of achievement, attitudes and behaviour are not high enough in some infant classes.
- The school maintains very good links with parents, other schools and the greater community that significantly enhance pupils' experience of school life.
- Whilst provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is improving, it is still not used enough to support learning in other subjects.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. Provision for ICT and for religious education has improved to a satisfactory level. Teaching and achievement overall have been maintained at a good level. However, not enough has been done to improve attendance.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement in the school is good. Children in the Foundation Stage are on track to meet the Early Learning Goals and are achieving well. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education are in line with expectations in the infants. Infant pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils achieve well in the juniors, and standards are again in line with expectations in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. The other subjects were not foci of the inspection and no judgements can be made about them.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are progressing well. Children in the Foundation Stage and in the juniors demonstrate good attitudes and behaviour; in the infants they are satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good. In the Foundation Stage and the juniors, good teaching includes very good planning to meet the needs of all in the class, a very good emphasis on good attitudes and behaviour, and very good use of learning support assistants. Pupils are able to work independently and make good progress in their knowledge and skills. In the infants, expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate are not always high enough, and this slows learning down. However, infant teachers do make good use of learning support assistants, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

The school keeps rigorous records on the performance of individuals and groups. These are used effectively, alongside other data, to ensure the curriculum remains good and relevant, and to give pupils very good advice, support and guidance. The school is very caring; it makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Links with parents, other schools and the community in general, are all very good and have a very positive effect on pupils' experiences in school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership, with a very clear vision of how she wants the school to be. She is supported well in her endeavours by other senior staff who share her vision. Management is good; senior managers know the school very well because of the rigorous way they check the quality of teaching. Although the governing body is effective, it has not ensured that all statutory requirements are met; a small number of pupils with SEN are withdrawn from the daily act of collective worship to receive focused support.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They say their children like school, teaching is good and the school is led and managed well. Pupils also are satisfied and they feel safe and secure, although some say that other pupils do not always behave well. Inspectors support parents' very positive views of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure all infant teachers share the same high expectations of how well their pupils will work, behave and achieve.
- Make better use of ICT to support learning in all subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all pupils attend a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are at the expected level when pupils leave the school. Achievement in Nursery, Reception and the juniors is good. In the infants it is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage and the juniors achieve well.
- Pupils with SEN achieve well.

Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2004, standards were above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. If the school is compared only to those with a similar intake, the picture remains the same. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 in all subjects was, however, lower than that found nationally. The overall trend of improvement is in line with the national trend. There are no tests in the other core subject – science – but teachers' own assessments indicate that standards in 2004 were well above average, with all pupils gaining the expected level and a higher than average number gaining the higher Level 3.

2. The table below summarises the school's standards. One 'point' represents approximately the progress expected in a term. The expected Level 2 is represented by 15 points, and the higher Level 3 is represented by 21 points.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (16.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.5 (15.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.3 (16.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2004, standards were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. If the comparison is restricted only to those schools with similar performance in the Year 2 tests four years ago, then the picture is better: standards in English were well above average and standards in science were above average, although standards in mathematics were still average. In all three subjects, a notable feature is the high proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5, which indicates that the school provides a good level of challenge for these pupils. There was, however, a high number of pupils gaining the lower levels in mathematics. The school's tracking systems have improved and are now very rigorously applied, so that there is careful analysis of pupils' progress, and differences in the achievement of boys and girls are targeted in suitable ways to ensure all pupils are helped to achieve their potential.

4. In the table below, the expected Level 4 is represented by 27 points, and the higher Level 5 by 33 points.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (26.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.3 (25.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.0 (27.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. However, test results do not tell the whole story. They refer only to two year groups in a few subjects last year. In particular, they give no clue about 'achievement', that is, whether pupils are doing as well as they should. Inspection evidence can fill some of these gaps.
6. Children enter the school with attainment that is broadly average. The progress they make and the challenge they encounter in lessons show they achieve well and most children are expected to reach the expected levels in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.
7. Satisfactory teaching and learning consolidate this good start in Years 1 and 2. Observed standards were at the expected levels in English, mathematics, science, religious education and ICT. There was not enough evidence to form a secure view on the other subjects of the curriculum. This represents satisfactory achievement overall.
8. The pace of learning becomes hotter in the juniors, and good teaching results in good achievement overall. Standards are in line with expectations in Year 6 in all core subjects, ICT and religious education. Achievement is good in English, mathematics and science, and satisfactory in ICT and religious education. The findings for ICT and religious education represent an improvement on those of the previous inspection report.
9. Planning caters well for pupils with SEN, travellers and those who are gifted and talented. As a result, they achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour. Their mature personal development is well supported by strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage make a positive start to their school lives and have good attitudes and behaviour.
- Infant pupils' attitudes and behaviour vary between classes because of the inconsistent expectations of the teachers.
- Junior pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their involvement and concentration.
- Pupils' very good relationships and good behaviour around the school ensure that they work and play together with confidence and enjoyment.
- Pupils' maturity and self-confidence are positively shaped by the school's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Pupils want to come to school, but the attendance and punctuality of some pupils are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

10. Initially, children in the mixed-age Foundation Stage classes show varying levels of independence, but they respond well to the empathetic staff and quickly gain confidence. They make friends with each other and trust their teachers. They understand classroom routines, although they occasionally call out the answers to teachers' questions. They are motivated to explore activities and show real enjoyment when, for example, measuring classroom features, or each other. They listen well to their teachers and are able to work together in pairs or groups and share resources. Children develop good attitudes and behaviour, so that their progress in achieving their Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development is good.

11. Infant pupils have mostly satisfactory attitudes and behaviour. They are capable of learning enthusiastically and listening well, but when teachers' expectations for good behaviour are not high enough, or teaching lacks pace or interest, noise levels can rise and pupils may be distracted from their work. Boys dominate the answering of teachers' questions, as the girls are more passive and shy. Occasionally, some boys in Year 1 can show challenging behaviour, which impedes their progress.

12. Junior pupils have a clear understanding of their teachers' high expectations. Attitudes and behaviour are good, and by Years 5 and 6 are often very good. Pupils' self-discipline increases with their confidence, and their high levels of concentration and interest ensure classrooms are purposeful. Pupils listen enthusiastically to their teachers and offer creative and sensitive ideas, working well together in pairs or groups. Older pupils increasingly realise that hard work will bring success and want to do their best as they look forward to secondary school. Pupils with SEN and traveller pupils are indistinguishable in attitudes and behaviour from other pupils, and they contribute well.

13. Very good relationships are a distinctive feature of the school. All staff provide good role models for pupils. Pupils appreciate their efforts, respect them and show obvious trust. Around the school, pupils are happy and relaxed, and they play safely together without fear of bullying or oppressive behaviour. The school has seldom needed to use exclusions, as most pupils have a good understanding of the behaviour boundaries. Older pupils take their responsibilities for looking after younger pupils very seriously. All pupils value each others' differences and contributions, either in the classroom or in clubs and activities. They take good care of resources and the school building, as well as showing obvious respect for their environment.

14. Pupils' learning and personal development are well supported by their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. In the classroom, good personal, social and health education (PSHE) allows pupils to engage with the '3Es' – Energy, Esteem and Enquiry – that shape their mature outlook. The school is proactive in making pupils aware of their feelings through assemblies or by developing their curiosity and questioning skills in lessons. Although a small number of pupils do not consistently participate in collective worship, all pupils learn about, and have respect for, the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths, including the five pillars of Islam. Pupils gain a very good awareness of right and wrong as they progress through the school. The school effectively displays pupils' work to increase their self-esteem. The school is an energetic force in the local community through charity work, visits, sport and the 'Tring Tomorrow' project. The school has worked hard to address the weakness in multicultural education identified at the last inspection, and pupils are gaining a good appreciation of world cultures and the mixed cultures of modern Britain.

15. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained attendance levels broadly in line with the national average. Presently, pupils' attendance in the Foundation Stage and infant classes is unsatisfactory; unauthorised absence here has contributed significantly to the increase in the school's overall unauthorised absence, which is now well above the national average. The school's attendance procedures were identified as a key issue at the last inspection and have improved to a satisfactory level. However, they are not focused well enough to improve the attendance of all pupils; one in five pupils has poor attendance, which undoubtedly affects their progress. Punctuality is satisfactory at the start of the day, but a small number of pupils are regularly late. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service and, together, they have improved the attendance and punctuality of many traveller children.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.5
National data	5.2	National data	0.2

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 school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good, based on a good curriculum and supported by good assessment procedures. The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety, providing very good advice. Links with parents, other schools and the community in general are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall and satisfactory in the infants. Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage and the infants, and very good in the juniors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning support assistants and nursery nurses are deployed very well to promote pupils' learning.
- Very good planning in the juniors ensures that lessons are challenging for pupils, with some innovative features.
- Very clear assessment records are used to check the progress of all pupils in the school to ensure they make good progress.
- Teachers in the Foundation Stage and the junior department have high expectations of how hard pupils will work and how they will behave; pupils respond well to these.
- Expectations of behaviour and work rate in the infants are not consistently high enough, and this affects pupils' attitudes to learning and their achievement.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	5	9	9	2	0	0

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

16. The school has invested heavily in learning support assistants and this investment has repaid itself in pupils' enhanced learning and the progress that they make. Teachers, learning support assistants and nursery nurses work as a team so that pupils are supported at the right level, whether they have a particular special educational need or simply need a little extra help with some especially challenging work. In particular, the teaching and learning for pupils with SEN are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) ensures that the learning support assistants are familiar with the targets on pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). Pupils' IEPs are indeed very specific to each pupil, with targets that are clear and relevant to each pupil's needs. They are reviewed on a regular basis with teachers, pupils and parents. Specific intervention programmes are very well planned to meet pupils' needs. These enable pupils with SEN to achieve well.

17. Planning is particularly good in the juniors and is designed to meet the needs of all in the class. This was seen in an excellent science lesson for pupils in Year 6.

Example of outstanding practice

An innovative revision lesson caught the imagination of Year 6 pupils.

At this time of year, these pupils are revising for their forthcoming National Curriculum tests, but in this lesson, the teacher did not simply lead a dry review of the facts previously learned. Pupils were asked, in pairs, to design a revision aid on one of the areas they had identified as needing further work. A brief discussion at the beginning had the youngsters straining at the leash as they considered the sources they would need to use and the way they would present their aid. They had a clear understanding that different people have different preferences for learning, through seeing a visual aid, listening to a recount or actively doing something, such as playing a game. There was a real buzz of industry as pupils produced videos, posters, games and other aids, and critically judged their effectiveness. As a result of this lesson, pupils had become experts in an area of science, almost without realising it, in a highly motivating and pleasurable learning activity.

18. One facet of planning that is particularly effective is the use of assessment, especially in the juniors. Pupils' progress is closely tracked through regular, rigorous assessments, and then compared with targets for performance. Any shortfall is investigated. These assessments even include pupils' personal development, which is unusual. Pupils know their targets and are happy to discuss them as they work towards their achievement. As a result, learning is enhanced as pupils know where they are and the direction in which they are heading. Shorter term, informal assessment is also used effectively to fine-tune planning for future learning on the basis of present experience.

19. One of the key reasons why pupils in the Foundation Stage and the juniors achieve well is that they respond to teachers' high expectations. As a result, pupils make good progress in learning new skills and knowledge, and work hard and productively. Lessons proceed in an atmosphere of mutual respect based on the '3Es' of Energy, Esteem and Enquiry, on which much of the school's ethos is founded. In lessons, pupils often show a sense of pleasure in one another's company. They really enjoy being in lessons and want to please their teachers.

20. However, not all classes in the infants share these high expectations. Whilst there are examples of very good teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2, this is not consistent. Planning is too often sketchy and does not challenge pupils enough. This happened in a science lesson in which the planned outdoor activity could not take place because of inclement weather. The substitute lesson did not address the expected outcomes rigorously enough, had a slack pace and pupils did not learn enough. In infant classes, pupils are typically restless, which slows down their learning from the brisk pace seen elsewhere in the school.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum, with very good opportunities for enrichment. Provision for pupils with SEN is very good. The school is well staffed and enjoys very good accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is carefully designed to use topic work and subject lessons to provide breadth and balance.
- The very good links with the community, especially the excellent 'Tring Tomorrow' project, significantly enhance learning.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is very good.
- Although the provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, the school recognises that its use in supporting other subjects remains limited.
- The very good accommodation is well maintained and conducive to learning.

Commentary

21. The school has carefully designed its curriculum to take account of its own philosophy and also the context in which it works. At the time of the last inspection, weaknesses were identified in ICT and religious education, which obliged the school to complete schemes of work for these subjects. This has been done, and provision in these subjects is now satisfactory. The school uses a combination of topic work, that encourages cross-curricular working, and separate subject teaching to encourage learning in depth. It has also planned effectively for the use of mixed-age classes to ensure continuity of learning and avoid repetition. As a result, the curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement, from the Foundation Stage to Year 6.

22. The school enhances the curriculum very well through other activities. A wide range of clubs is available for pupils, and a particularly successful innovation is the 'Tring Tomorrow' project which involves collaboration with the local community.

Example of outstanding practice

Links with the community and other schools significantly enhance the curriculum on offer.

Dundale Primary School is a pioneer in enabling primary school pupils to understand the world of work. In 1989 it joined with Tring Secondary School, local businessmen and councillors, to develop a project: 'Tring Tomorrow'. This programme dovetails with the National Curriculum and involves parents. Presently, pupils from Year 6 undertake work-shadowing in many companies each year. They accompany adult workers for a day and are encouraged to research and ask questions about all aspects of their work. Later they make a presentation to their peer group and parents, with other schools, feeding back their experiences. Their presentations are a focus for school displays – both a source of pride for the participants and an inspiration for younger pupils. This initiative is developing the personal skills of the pupils, but has also stimulated a project in collaboration with Warwick University focusing on the 3Es – Energy, Esteem and Enquiry – which includes all pupils within the school. However, the 'Tring Tomorrow' project is not resting on its laurels and is now looking at initiatives to give pupils an understanding of the local area's cultural diversity and tourism in their market town.

23. There is very good provision for pupils with SEN. Their needs and progress are closely monitored and acted upon swiftly. There is a good range of intervention programmes for groups and individuals. These enable pupils to achieve well. They work on basic skills with support from learning support assistants to enable them to apply those skills in the classroom. Pupils withdrawn for support achieve well. Plans for each pupil show the wide range of activities in place for them. The school accessibility plan shows the SENCO's very good planning for inclusion. It is a well thought-out long-term plan. The school has been awarded the Hertfordshire Award for Disability.

24. As noted above, the provision for ICT has been significantly improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. However, the school is aware that, whilst pupils' understanding of ICT in its own right has improved, its use in supporting learning in other areas of the curriculum is limited. Plans are in hand to improve matters here.

25. The school has extensive grounds and large, airy buildings that provide very good facilities for learning. These are well maintained by the hard-working site supervisor and his staff. The school is generally well staffed with high levels of support staff, including administrative staff and midday supervisors, who are all part of the team that ensures pupils are safe and secure and can progress well.

Care, guidance and support

The school is highly effective in ensuring pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. It provides them with very good support and guidance and promotes good involvement with pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, staff and governors have developed very good care policies and procedures that allow pupils to enjoy their school lives.
- The headteacher and staff have a very thorough understanding of their pupils' needs and offer them high quality pastoral care, with help from outside professional agencies.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are very vigilant in protecting pupils from dangers inside and outside the school, so that they feel secure.
- The headteacher and staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils' academic and non-academic qualities through detailed tracking of pupils' achievements.
- Pupils are soon made to feel part of the school family through good induction procedures.
- The school makes determined efforts to listen to pupils and to value their views in developing the school.

Commentary

26. The headteacher gives a very high priority to the care of pupils and receives very good support from staff and governors. Since the last inspection, she has further strengthened this area so that it is now very good. The care of pupils is underpinned by a very wide range of clearly written policies and very good office procedures which allow the well-trained staff to be consistent in their roles. Pupils feel well cared for and secure, and develop healthy minds in healthy bodies. Traveller pupils and pupils with problems – whether they are physical, emotional or learning difficulties – are effectively integrated into the school's rich range of activities so they can focus on building their confidence and self-esteem. The school welcomes the good support of outside professional agencies.

27. Older pupils are encouraged to show very good care for younger pupils, and carry out shared reading activities responsibly. There is a very strong mutual trust between adults and pupils, and pupils know that they can trust their teachers and other staff to listen to their problems and anxieties. Pupils show an obvious happiness in their school life and feel that they can undertake a learning adventure in a safe environment without distractions.

28. Child protection procedures conform to statutory guidelines, and the staff's awareness of them is continuously updated. The school has a very good focus on health and safety issues. A governor undertakes regular audits of the school premises with staff, and the school has won an award for its awareness of health and safety for the disabled. Risk assessments are in place. The school is a safe place; there are few minor accidents. Procedures for dealing with accidents and the dispensing of medicines are thoroughly implemented, accompanied by a little tender loving care.

29. Behaviour procedures are well defined and have the involvement and agreement of pupils. They are not rigid in their application, and self-discipline is an expectation. Rewards and sanctions have a very positive impact on pupils and their progress in the junior school, but where expectations for behaviour are lower in the infant school, their impact is only satisfactory. The school quickly and successfully intervenes if there are any signs of oppressive behaviour, and pupils feel safe. Attendance procedures are adequate, but do not have enough rigour to improve the present satisfactory levels of attendance and punctuality.

30. Support and guidance, based on monitoring the individual child, are very good. Academic assessments allow teachers to engage pupils in setting meaningful targets and give them a good understanding of how they might improve their work. The tracking of pupils' personal development is very thoroughly documented and allows teachers to give accurate verbal and written feedback to parents. Teachers systematically identify pupils with SEN and they develop very good IEPs with pupils and parents.

31. Parents and pupils rapidly become part of the school family. The school is aware of anxieties when moving pupils between classes and from the infants to the juniors, and encourages older pupils to play a supportive role. New parents are welcomed into the school to become acquainted with their new surroundings and the staff.

32. The school tries hard to consult with pupils on wider school and community issues that affect them. It routinely calls for their views through teaching and personal and social education lessons, and pupils enthusiastically participate. Pupils complete a questionnaire on school issues every two years and elect councillors to the school council, where they discuss real issues.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents are very satisfied with the school and the education it provides. The partnership between the school and home is very good. The school's links with the community and other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with all aspects of the school and greatly appreciate the headteacher's and staff's vision for their children's education.
- The very good partnership with parents makes an effective contribution to most pupils' learning and involvement in school life.
- The headteacher and staff welcome parents' participation and provide them with comprehensive information about their children's progress and the work of the school.
- All pupils benefit greatly from the school's very good participation and relationships in the local community.
- The school has very good relationships with the local schools, which greatly help pupils to settle well at the time of transfer to the next stage of education.

Commentary

33. The headteacher gives a high priority to the school's relationships with parents who recognise her sincerity and clarity in dealing with issues. Historically, the school acquired an inferior reputation compared with other local schools, but parents now feel privileged to be part of the school, respond enthusiastically to the warm welcome and are happy with the quality of their children's education. The partnership with parents is very effective in supporting the school and pupils' education and progress. Parents are now more satisfied with the school than at the time of the last inspection. They are especially satisfied with the range of activities outside the classroom. Many parents told the inspectors that the school was 'brilliant' or 'excellent'. The inspection team confirm the very positive views of parents.

34. The school's aims include maintaining positive links with parents, and the headteacher is approachable to allay any concerns. She and the staff are trusted by parents, so that complaints are minimal. Parents feel that the school respects and values them and that they are full partners in their children's education. They have signed the home/school agreement and the majority fulfil their pledge by, for example, assisting their children with homework. The school is proactive with parents in discussing how they might help their children and explaining new education strategies and initiatives. Parents feel involved in the school's development and complete biennial questionnaires. A good number of parents help in the school, and parent governor positions are filled enthusiastically. The Dundale School Association is energetic in involving parents and pupils in social events and fund-raising.

35. The statutory information provided for parents is very good and represents the essential ethos and character of the school. Annual reports to parents are very enlightening statements of what children can do in all subjects and are supported by informative progress evenings with the teachers. Reports contain feedback on performance against academic targets and indicate targets for the following year. They call for parents' views, and pupils give their own written appreciation of the school year. Parents enjoy regular and informative school and class newsletters, and letters to home are timely. The school website is developing well. Most parents feel comfortable with the opportunities they have for engaging with the school and the teachers, and they value the comprehensive reports on the progress of their children and their achievements.

36. The school has very good relationships with the local community and is actively engaged with local people, organisations and charities. Pupils benefit greatly from these close ties, which give them additional activities and awareness of their local culture and traditions, as well as a sense of helping others. The church, local buildings and facilities, and the adjacent countryside, are important resources for the practical teaching of some subjects. Through the local consortium of schools, the school has helped to pioneer the excellent 'Tring Tomorrow' project, which introduces older pupils to the world of work through work-shadowing.

37. The local Tring area has a very close family of schools – primary and secondary – which have produced many initiatives for the benefit of all pupils: 'Tring Tomorrow', networked learning strategies and staff liaison meetings are all indicators of very good links across the local schools. The links to the local secondary school enable pupils to enjoy swimming facilities, and there is a joint development of the 3E's project, stimulating their enquiry skills, energy and self-esteem.

Parents receive knowledgeable and informative advice as the time for transfer to secondary school approaches. The school's positive efforts to care for all pupils, including travellers and those with SEN, and the pupils' natural confidence, produce a mainly anxiety-free transition for all pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good, supported well by other staff with management responsibilities. Management is good. Governance of the school is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met, except those for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- The governing body is supportive.
- Pupils with SEN sometimes miss out on a daily act of collective worship.
- Tracking of pupils' progress is very rigorous.
- The school's strong financial planning is reacting well to the school's changing circumstances.

Commentary

38. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She works very hard and is strongly committed to the school and its community. She makes a significant contribution to the standards pupils achieve and to the school's very good relationships with parents. Governors and parents have the highest regard for her leadership and support her clear vision of how to improve the school. The headteacher enjoys very good relationships with key staff, who are also hard working and share their expertise well so that pupils benefit from their united skills. Leadership and management of SEN are very good. Teachers and support staff have implemented successful strategies to rectify areas of weakness, such as the differing achievements of boys and girls.

39. The governing body are proud of their school and are aware of the challenges facing the school. Members of the governing body are assigned to classes and regularly visit school to observe and assist in pupils' learning. They are effective in ensuring all statutory requirements are met, except in the provision of a daily act of worship for pupils with SEN who sometimes miss out when they are withdrawn for extra support. The school believes strongly in equal opportunities and this is reflected in the way in which all pupils, including traveller children and those with SEN, have access to all subjects of the curriculum.

40. Pupils' progress throughout the school is rigorously tracked in English, mathematics and science, and areas of weakness are carefully analysed so that all staff have a very clear focus on what is needed to improve standards. Induction procedures help new staff settle in well, and the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, and of teaching and learning, are good. Opportunities for teachers and learning support assistants to further their professional development are very good.

41. The governing body has responded effectively to the pressures on the school's finances due to the falling number of pupils on roll. The school's good financial planning has identified the projected decline in financial balances over the next three years and has taken appropriate strategic action to correct the situation. Historically, the school has operated with cash balances in excess of national recommendations. However, these high balances have been effectively used in the last two years to implement the educational priorities identified in the school improvement plan, such as

the renewal of learning resources and increased levels of support staff to improve educational standards. The school's use of best value practices is not well developed and has been confined to reviews of tender contracts, although the school is starting to challenge and review service contracts as governors react to the financial imperatives on the school.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	790,086.00
Total expenditure	810,799.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,014.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	85,202.00
Balance carried forward to the next	64,489.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. Children achieve well from a starting point that is just within the average range in all of the areas of learning. Teaching and learning are good in all areas of learning, and the team work well together to provide a good curriculum. Children with SEN are well integrated and catered for. There are very good opportunities for all children to play together in a safe and well resourced environment. Accommodation is very good. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, with good improvement in creative development.

43. Overall, parents are pleased with the way the children settle into school, although a few parents were concerned about the transition from the Nursery to Reception and from the Reception class into the Year 1 and 2 classes. For example, they felt that there was quite a leap from the practical approach to teaching and learning in the Reception class to the more formal approach in Years 1 and 2. The school is aware of this and plans to hold a meeting with parents in order to share information about the teaching and learning approaches in Years 1 and 2. There is currently a structured approach to teaching literacy and numeracy for the Reception children in order to prepare them for the Year 1 curriculum. There are also planned opportunities for the Nursery children to play in small groups outside in order to further develop their confidence.

44. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to build on the present mode of assessment of children's progress. Currently, staff do not have a structured and consistent approach for each team member to observe individuals or groups of children to assess their knowledge and understanding in each area of learning. Additionally, they do not systematically track the choices children make during child-initiated play activities. Therefore, amending planning in the light of children's needs is problematic. The team has made a good start by planning different levels of work for groups of Reception children in literacy and numeracy and phonic lessons.

45. The co-ordinator's role, in terms of checking the quality of provision, is underdeveloped. As a result, areas for further improvement directly derived from such analyses are not identified and effectively fed into the school improvement plan. However, the early years co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that the new arrangements for having mixed ages across the Foundation Unit are well planned for. The staff team has also worked to achieve closer links with the Early Learning Goals within the Foundation Stage curriculum for activities initiated by children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships between children and adults create a good atmosphere for learning.
- Children have good opportunities to develop their skills at their own level during outdoor play.
- Children respond well to the expectations that they will behave sensibly, and behaviour is good.

Commentary

46. The very good relationships between staff and children enable the children to make good progress. Many children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals and some will exceed them. Children in the Nursery settle quickly. The older Reception children provide good role models for behaviour. The majority of children show an interest in what they are doing, even when they are not directly supervised. Children are encouraged to take responsibilities and show confidence in working independently on their tasks. For example, three children were seen working together independently, writing addition sums on a whiteboard using a number line, and another two were working together and taking turns whilst working on the computer. Behaviour is good because staff set clear expectations and make learning interesting. In a very good lesson, the children were highly engaged and listened with sustained interest and concentration due to the exciting activities planned and the teacher's enthusiastic approach.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good, and staff provide many opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

47. In all activities, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their language skills, which are just within the average range when they start school. Good provision is made for pupils who have speech difficulties. In the Nursery, listening skills are developing well. Children in the Reception classes listen well to adults and to one another. Staff provide appropriate activities that are matched to the needs of the children. For example, the Reception children are taught separately from the Nursery children in literacy, and the work is further adapted across the two classes. By the end of their time in the Nursery, the more able children can write their names and most are making marks in their free writing. By the end of the Reception year, the more able pupils are writing phonetically plausible sentences. Children are encouraged to take books home regularly. The school's link books show good support from parents for shared reading. The very good 'Story Sack' resources provide very good opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills and imagination. Children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception, and some will exceed them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good and provide a good challenge for the different age groups.

Commentary

48. The good range of practical activities helps children to achieve well. Teaching and learning are good because work is planned to meet the different age groups and abilities across the Foundation Unit. Nursery children participate in a good range of practical activities at their own level; for example, sorting teddies by colour and size. There is a good emphasis on developing

mathematical language. For example, in a music and movement lesson, children used words like 'taller' and 'shorter' whilst dancing and singing. In another lesson, children worked on a range of practical activities, such as threading and counting beads and using non-standard measures to measure the length of their bodies. By the end of Reception, most children are recording simple addition and subtraction sums to 10, and can identify whether a number is smaller or bigger than a given number. In a good lesson observed, children were counting out in 10s, and knew that 10 and 10 make 20. The majority of children are well on their way to achieving the Early Learning Goals, with some exceeding them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well.
- The outdoor space provides good opportunities for children to learn about the world around them.

Commentary

49. Teaching and learning are good and help all pupils to achieve well. The very good accommodation and resources support this area of learning well. Children take care of the plants in the garden; they look for living things in soil and have used the wild area for sound walks. They develop their knowledge of different materials through their play with sand, water and play dough. During 'Multicultural Week', the children listened to African drumming and their enjoyment was evident in their vivid and happy drawings. They are also developing knowledge and understanding of stories from other cultures. Photographic evidence shows drawings inspired by 'The Laughing Bean' story from Honduras. Many children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals, with some exceeding them. Children in the Nursery need a lot of help with the use of the computer initially, but by the end of the Reception class, they are moving the mouse confidently.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to improve their physical development skills.
- Children achieve well.

Commentary

50. Many children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals. There are good opportunities for children to develop movement, confidence and imagination using small and large equipment. Nursery children gain confidence during separately planned outdoor time, and the Reception children gain experience in the large playground in preparation for their transition into Year 1. They show a good awareness of space, of themselves and of others, and move with control and co-ordination on the wide range of outdoor equipment. Photographs show children developing their fine motor skills by using equipment safely, for example, to make sandwiches.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well.
- Children are provided with a good range of activities to inspire their imagination.

Commentary

51. The good teaching and learning enable children to achieve well. Many are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals, with some well on the way to exceeding them. Children are taught how to mix paint; they quickly learn how to use scissors and glue, and confidently use a variety of materials to make things. For example, two girls were seen independently creating masks. The children showed a good sense of rhythm in a carefully planned music and movement lesson. The teacher skilfully integrated the learning of literacy and numeracy within this lesson. Children were also singing simple songs from memory. Role-play areas encourage children to engage in imaginative play. For example, children were seen playing the roles of the prince and princess as a result of their story theme, 'The Queen's Knickers'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in the juniors and those with SEN achieve well.
- There is good tracking and analysis of pupil progress.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always identify the next steps in learning.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management for the subject.
- The use of ICT to enhance learning in English is underdeveloped.

Commentary

52. Standards are in line with national expectations for speaking and listening, and reading and writing for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6. Overall, there is satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection because the strategies being implemented across the school to raise achievement have yet to impact fully. The school has taken swift action to address the differences in performance in Year 6 for reading and writing between girls and boys and is closely monitoring their progress. The inspection findings are that achievement in Year 2 is satisfactory and in Year 6 it is good. This difference in achievement across the infant and junior years is due to the variation in the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2.

53. The very good quality support for pupils with SEN enables them to achieve well. The systematic intervention programmes, such as Early Learning Support in English, are having a good impact on learning. This is due to the fact that the SENCO monitors the progress of these pupils in English very closely and plans specific reading and spelling programmes linked to their very good IEPs.

54. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Where teaching was very good:
- very good planning addressed the needs of varying abilities within the class, ensuring that pupils were highly challenged;
 - lessons had a very clear structure with very well planned end of lesson activities, enabling pupils to apply previous knowledge and to develop their speaking and listening skills well;
 - learning support assistants were very clear about their roles and made a very good contribution to the pupils' learning.

However, in the satisfactory lessons observed:

- the pace of the lesson was affected by poor behaviour;
- there were limited opportunities for pupils to contribute to the lesson.

Visitors to the school enhance pupils' learning experiences in English. For example, the Booster Theatre performed 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' for the infant pupils.

55. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a very clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Data about pupils' progress is rigorously analysed and the findings are used to plan specific strategies across the school in order to raise achievement. For example, reading resources and writing styles are selected for teaching and learning to reflect the differing interests of boys and girls. Additionally, staff monitor the responses from boys and girls during speaking and listening activities to ensure good access for all pupils. Monitoring of pupils' completed work showed that the quality of marking varied between teachers. As a result, the co-ordinator issued guidance for each year group. She is aware of the need to further develop marking in order to include the next steps for learning and to further build on achievement. The co-ordinator is also aware of the need to further develop the use of ICT across the school. A good example was seen in use when pupils used a program to recognise alphabetical order. This learning was closely linked to the learning intention for the lesson.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. This is developing well. A good start has been made in history, geography and design and technology. For example, in Years 5 and 6 pupils wrote non-chronological reports in their Ancient Greek project for the Olympic Games and in Years 3 and 4 they wrote non-chronological reports for their theme on the Ancient Egyptians.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, especially the higher attainers, achieve well in the juniors because of good teaching based on high expectations.
- Expectations are inconsistent in the infants and so teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory there.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Assessment and other data are used rigorously to improve standards.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used effectively enough to support learning.

Commentary

57. Standards in National Curriculum tests in 2004 for pupils in Year 6 were about average overall, although the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 was above average. If the school is only compared to those whose pupils performed similarly four years ago, then the picture is similar: standards were average overall and well above average in terms of the pupils gaining the higher level. This suggests that pupils achieve well in this school, especially higher attaining pupils.

A scrutiny of completed work over the last academic year and an analysis of the school's own comprehensive tracking data show that this remains the case; although standards are about average, pupils' achievement is good. The school's setting system in the juniors has been of particular advantage to the highest attainers, as they are taught in smaller classes at a brisker pace, which enables them to do relatively better than their peers. In addition, in all classes, expectations are rigorous, and pupils are keen to respond and work to their limit. They apply themselves well to work, and lessons proceed in an atmosphere of quiet industry and mutual respect. When necessary, pupils are supported effectively by teachers or learning support assistants to ensure that they can make progress. As a result of good teaching, pupils therefore learn well, and this is the chief reason for their good achievement.

58. In the National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 2, standards were about average again, both when compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools. However, although good numbers of pupils gained the expected Level 2, the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was below average. This would suggest that standards and achievement are about average in the infants and that the rigorous expectations evident in the juniors is lacking. Whilst there were lessons in the infants that were very good, with well organised tasks that clearly met the needs of all, other lessons seen, and the analysis of completed work, show that this is not consistent. In addition, in some lessons, pupils were restless and the pace of learning suffered. The overall picture is one in which, whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, expectations of behaviour, work rate and the standards at which pupils can work are not consistently high enough.

59. The co-ordinator is aware of the picture painted above through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the subject. Although he has not visited lessons himself, the local education authority (LEA) has supported the school by arranging for observations of lessons and the teaching of model lessons. However, the co-ordinator does keep a close eye on assessment data and pupils' work. This has led to improvements, for example, in the more effective use of 'catch-up' programmes implemented earlier, as pupils are identified as being at risk of not achieving their potential. This rigorous use of data has been a factor in the good achievement in the juniors and in identifying where further support might be needed in the infants.

60. Although all classrooms have at least one computer in them, these were rarely seen in use in lessons to support learning in mathematics. The analysis of completed work and work seen on display showed that there is some use of computers, but far less than would normally be seen. The school is aware of this and plans are in hand to improve matters.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Mathematics is used effectively to support learning in other subjects when appropriate. For example, there are good links between mathematics and ICT in Years 3 and 4. Here, pupils are learning about the computer language LOGO and using some of their geometric understanding from mathematics to help them to construct, for example, squares, rectangles and triangles. Graphical work is evident in science books as pupils use those skills to summarise and interrogate data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is carefully planned and has been improved so that achievement is now good.
- Teaching and achievement in the infants are satisfactory.
- The subject is led and managed well by a knowledgeable co-ordinator.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used well enough to support learning.

Commentary

62. The school is rightly proud of its science curriculum that fits in with the topic structure and enables pupils to begin to think and act like scientists. There is a two-year programme that ensures that the use of mixed-age classes does not disadvantage pupils. This is evident from the analysis of completed work that shows that there is a clear emphasis on investigative work and the understanding of, for example, fair testing. Standards in National Curriculum assessments in 2004 for pupils in Year 2 were above average when compared both with all schools nationally and to similar schools. Standards in Year 6 tests were slightly lower, being average when compared to all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. Higher attaining pupils did particularly well: the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 was above average nationally, and well above the average for similar schools. However, the weaker picture in Year 6 led the school to make changes, for example, in staffing. Standards in the juniors are now in line with expectations, and pupils now achieve well. This was especially evident in the excellent lesson cited in Part B of this report, in which pupils worked hard and willingly to produce revision aids.

63. However, teaching in the infants is less consistent in terms of expectations and the quality of planning. As a result, standards in the infants are in line with expectations and achievement is now satisfactory rather than good, as would be suggested by the assessment results from last year.

64. The co-ordinator rigorously checks standards throughout the school and leads meetings to keep staff abreast of areas for development. She is well aware of the variations reported above and is actively supporting staff to ensure that consistency is attained.

65. Some use of ICT was observed: for example, in the excellent lesson for pupils in Year 6, several chose to use the internet or the computer's video recording and editing features in the production of their film about teeth. However, this quality of use is not consistent, and this is recognised by the school, forming part of its plan for further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with SEN are supported well in lessons and achieve well.
- Leadership and management are good, with clear recognition of what needs to be improved.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT across the curriculum.

Commentary

66. At the time of the previous inspection standards were average by Year 2, but below average by Year 6. Progress was unsatisfactory in the juniors. Current inspection findings are that improvements have been made, and standards are now average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement overall is satisfactory.

67. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. On occasions it is significantly better. Pupils with SEN are well supported, and this helps them to achieve well in ICT and to improve their basic skills.

68. In a Year 2 lesson where the teaching and learning were satisfactory, the noise level at the start of the lesson was high and the teacher did not have high enough expectations to ensure that pupils were attentive while instructions were given. All pupils were happy and confident to work independently at a computer and they were successful in entering data and labelling axes.

Higher attainers created a title for the graph produced. Achievement was good for the lower attainers, satisfactory for pupils of average ability, but unsatisfactory for the higher attaining pupils because they quickly finished the task and were not provided with any new learning.

69. Teaching and learning were very good in a lesson observed in a class of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils. These pupils were working on the computer language LOGO and extending their knowledge of the basic graphics commands. Previously, they had learned how to make squares and rectangles. By the end of this lesson, because of the teacher's clearly expressed instructions, carefully thought-out grouping and pupils' desire to work, pupils had progressed to using more commands and producing symmetrical 'robot heads' on screen.

70. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in the leadership and management of the subject. A focused evaluation of teachers' skills has resulted in all staff benefiting from training and support to advance their expertise. Staff in most junior classes are now confident to use data projectors and a suitable range of software to support their teaching and pupils' learning. However, the size and shape of the ICT suite and the lack of interactive whiteboards restricts the way in which teachers are able to deliver lessons. The co-ordinator has good skills and the enthusiasm to further develop ICT. Tracking of pupils' progress in ICT is at an early stage of development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The use of ICT to support learning is not planned for widely enough in other subjects. While good examples were seen of how pupils collect information to support their research in science, history and geography and to build up data handling skills from Year 3 to Year 6, there are too few opportunities throughout the school for pupils to use the computers to help them develop their writing and numeracy skills on a regular basis.

HUMANITIES

History and geography were not foci of the inspection and secure judgements cannot be made about provision.

72. Nevertheless, in **history**, in a mixed-age class of Year 3 and Year 4 the teaching and learning were very good. The lesson had been very carefully planned so that there was a very good balance between exposition by the teacher and participation by pupils. The introduction captured pupils' interest very well so that they were all very eager to look carefully and examine the writing on the Rosetta stone. The tasks set were varied according to the pupils' ability levels so that all pupils, including those with SEN, achieved very well in their understanding of Egyptian writing. Discussions with pupils in Years 5 and 6 show that they have a good understanding of Ancient and modern Greece, and of the landscape and climate there. No lessons were seen in geography.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use practical approaches to help pupils understand new ideas.
- The curriculum now meets pupils' needs.

Commentary

73. The previous inspection found standards in religious education to be in line with those expected of the locally Agreed Syllabus in Year 2, but below those expected in Year 6. Current findings are that in both Years 2 and 6 attainment is in line with the standards expected. Achievement is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with SEN and traveller children. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory in both Years 2 and 6.

74. In a mixed-age class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, the lesson got off to a slow start when the teacher did not have high enough expectations of the pupils, who took too long to settle. Good links were made with literacy as pupils shared the reading of a short story which identified clear features of the Christian faith. The teacher prepared pupils well for the forthcoming visit of the local vicar and, in pairs, pupils drew up a list of questions they would like to ask him. In this lesson, teaching and learning were satisfactory, as was the achievement of the pupils.

75. In a Year 6 lesson where teaching and learning were good, pupils' interest was immediately stimulated when the teacher made good use of resources to set the scene to demonstrate the meaning of Christian symbols – fire and the dove – which are associated with the festival of Pentecost. Pupils listened well to a tape of fire burning and studied a large picture of fire intently. This provided them with a very good stimulus for discussion and reflection on the properties of fire. They readily contributed their ideas on 'the power of fire', for example, to 'destroy' or to 'sustain' life. The thoughtful reading of a short prayer by a pupil and the accompanying bible passage, 'tongues of fire', where the disciples all spoke in different languages, heightened pupils' understanding of the ceremony of Pentecost and in this lesson pupils achieved well.

76. Leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory. The curriculum for religious education has improved since the previous inspection and better use is now made of resources to enhance pupils' learning. Assessment is still at an early stage of development and there is little evidence of the use of ICT to support learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education, art and design, design and technology, and music were not foci of the inspection and no judgements can be made on provision or standards. Only one lesson was seen in music and no lessons were observed in the other subjects.

77. In **physical education**, pupils participate in a good range of sporting activities, with opportunities for girls to participate in extra-curricular activities such as rugby and football. Specialist teachers provide teaching expertise in cricket and rugby. In **art and design**, work on display shows that pupils have good opportunities to use a range of media and materials. For example, work displayed by Years 3 and 4 showed a good focus on the process the pupils went through to develop and design their batik work. There was also some good evidence of the use of ICT to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of art history and style. In **design and technology**, pupils' work shows a good emphasis being placed on planning, designing and accuracy. This was particularly evident in the junior years. Pupils' handbag designs in Years 3 and 4 were completed to a high standard.

78. In the **music** lesson observed in Years 5 and 6, teaching and learning were good. There was a clear focus and structure to the lesson. The class teacher showed good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This was evident in the good questioning which linked to the intended outcomes. By the end of the lesson, pupils were able to improvise rhythmic phrases and compose by developing ideas with music structures. There are good links with the local secondary school. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed singing there. Extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' learning in music. In an attractive display, there was evidence of pupils learning to play a range of recorders.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. The school makes good provision for pupils' PSHE. Citizenship is promoted particularly well through the 'Tring Tomorrow' partnership in which pupils shadow adult workers and present reports on their experiences. Timetabled lessons enable pupils to discuss issues that concern them and also ensure that the statutory requirements regarding sex, drugs and alcohol education are covered. In the lessons seen, pupils were happy to discuss topics concerning the importance of respecting others' views, making informed decisions, what makes them feel happy and the importance of family life, with maturity.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
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).