

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ALBANY VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Washington

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 131036

Acting Headteacher: Mrs C Maughan

Reporting inspector: Mr J Peacock  
25344

Dates of inspection: 12-15 November 2001

Inspection number: 230541

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crossgill Albany Washington Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE37 1UA
Telephone number:	0191 2193650
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Simon Tate
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25433	J J Peacock	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards-the school's results and pupils' achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19807	K Osborne	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21038	G Timms	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage	Assessment
30000	J Tresadern	Team inspector	Science Geography History	
29426	D Grimwood	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
29262	N Hardy	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21552	B McAlpine	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This community primary school caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age and bigger than other primary schools. It has undergone a period of major disruption with eight teachers leaving as well as the headteacher and her deputy. There has also been a 20 per cent reduction in pupil numbers. There are now 292 pupils on roll, 132 boys and 160 girls in 14 classes, all of which have single age-groups. In addition, there is a nursery with 44 children attending on a part-time basis. Almost all of the pupils come from the immediate area. The attainment of most children when they start in the reception class is below average.

Fifty seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is very high compared to the national average. There are 77 pupils on the register for pupils with special educational needs, which is about average and 3 pupils have a statement of special educational needs, again about average. Only 3 pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and there are none with English as an additional language. A significant level of pupil mobility three years ago, caused mainly by the demolition of local flats, has become less of a problem now.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a rapidly improving school. The poor performance in national test results in 2000 led to the Local Education Authority identifying the school as one with significant concerns. The combined efforts of the very capable governing body, supported by the Local Education Authority and the expertise of the acting headteacher are helping the school to recover. It is too early to know if the many changes introduced since September will have an impact on test results but small improvements have been made in the standard of pupils' work. All staff and many parents now share a more optimistic view for the future. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and all pupils behave well. When all these factors are considered, along with the well above average level of funding, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Excellent leadership by the acting headteacher is providing a clear educational direction for the school.
- The governing body's leadership and management are very good.
- Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is a strength of the school.
- Very good procedures for promoting good behaviour have resulted in a big improvement.
- Provision for pupils' moral development is very good.
- There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and monitoring academic progress.
- The quality of information sent to parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology for eleven-year-olds.
- The identification and provision for higher and lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. This is mainly because of poor performance in the national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds since the previous inspection. Two key issues were identified in 1997; the management role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and a more consistent approach for assessing and recording pupils' progress. These areas of weakness have been given much attention but the extent of improvement has varied. The disruption caused by teachers leaving, seven out of the eight from the junior section of the school, has adversely affected the level of improvement for the co-ordination of some subjects but improvement has been satisfactory, overall. The school has brought about a major improvement in its assessment procedures, which are now very good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been satisfactorily implemented and these are helping to raise standards. The school is on course to meet its own targets set for English and mathematics. However, because of the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6, it will fall well short of national targets. The school currently has the support of skilled leadership. The acting headteacher will continue to support the school after the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. There is a strong commitment from staff and governors to maintain the recent trend of improvement. Inspectors share the optimism of staff and governors for the future, in view of the many changes implemented since September.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	E	E	C
mathematics	D	E	E	B
science	E	E*	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Pupils' achievements in the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds, shown above, have virtually remained at the same level in comparison to all schools since the previous inspection. Any improvement in the past two years has been thwarted by a period of major disruption caused by staffing changes. When the results in 2001 are compared to similar schools, standards being achieved by pupils are rather better. Inspection evidence shows that, by the time pupils are eleven, overall standards in English and science are below average and in mathematics well below the national average. This is an improvement in standards for English and science from 2001. An analysis of pupils' completed work and test results at seven confirms that pupils achievement in relation to their prior attainment is currently unsatisfactory. There is no appreciable difference between the attainment of girls and boys except in writing where boys are weaker. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory as many are not identified or adequately supported in class. Targets for English and mathematics are realistically based on a detailed assessment of pupils' potential and the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6.

By the time children are at the end of their reception year, most achieve the early learning goals in the six areas of learning which make up the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, many still experience problems in their communication, language and literacy skills and in their mathematical knowledge, having not had time to compensate for the very low ability levels in these two aspects when they entered the nursery. Standards for seven-year-olds in English are below average mainly due to weaknesses in speaking and writing skills. In mathematics and science, standards are average. Pupils throughout the school do better than expected in history but attainment in information and communication technology is below expectations, mainly reflecting insufficient and outdated resources.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most enjoy being at school. Many take part in extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In three-quarters of the 82 lessons seen, it was good or very good. Bullying is not a problem for the school.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils understand the impact of their actions on others. Opportunities for responsibility are limited mostly to Year 6 pupils. Relationships between pupils and adults are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The trend is one of steady improvement. There are few unauthorised absences. Lateness is a problem causing pupils to miss the beginning of important lessons. There have been only six fixed-term exclusions.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

In the 1997 inspection, teaching was good. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory, overall. This represents a good effort by teachers considering the level of change over the past two years. The quality of teaching is beginning to have a noticeable impact on the standards pupils achieve in the classroom. In the Foundation Stage, the overall quality is good with all lessons seen in the nursery and reception classes being good or better. This is helping most children to make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in their curriculum.

There is strong commitment to give all pupils the best possible education and the basic skills for all subjects are taught satisfactorily by an extremely conscientious staff. The above average standards in history, for example, are directly attributable to the quality of teaching. Other strong features promoting learning are detailed lesson planning and the management of pupils resulting in a firm but fair discipline. These features help to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities and as a result, the climate for learning is satisfactory. However, the identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially higher attaining pupils can do, are also generally unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils' productivity suffers. Pupils of all abilities are often given similar tasks to complete resulting in a lack of challenge for some. Some teachers do not make sufficient use of computers. Opportunities to maximise pupils' access to computers and to challenging programs are not always clearly defined in their planning. As a result, pupils' computer skills are not being fully utilised in some lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met, including those for the new Foundation Stage. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory, overall. Those on the register are supported satisfactorily and given appropriate work to do. However, gifted or talented pupils and many lower attaining pupils with special needs are not identified or given appropriately challenging work to do.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and social development is good. Provision for their moral development is very good but for their cultural development, it is satisfactory. Their knowledge about the diversity of cultures in Britain today is not as well developed as other aspects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. Procedures for child protection are good. Those for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, assessing attainment and progress and academic progress are very good.

Parental support and their involvement are being developed effectively. The newly formed Friends of Albany school association represents a new era for the home-school partnership.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The dynamic acting headteacher is providing excellent leadership, ably supported by the knowledgeable and experienced acting deputy headteacher. All staff are now working well as an effective team to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Led by the deeply committed and energetic chair, all governors carry out their duties exceptionally well, working hard to shape the future of the school. All business is conducted with pupils' best interests in mind.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Standards and the quality of teaching are closely scrutinised. Decisive action is taken to bring about improvements, where necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The finances are managed very carefully and best value is sought in all expenditure. Specific grants are spent appropriately. In view of recent staff changes, governors need to develop a recruitment and retention policy.

Staffing levels are satisfactory with the small single-age classes making up for the below average provision of teaching assistants in the junior section. The accommodation is good. Resources are satisfactory for all areas except religious education, geography and information and communication technology. More computers and programs are needed and old out-of-date books should be removed from the library.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school.</li><li>• They make good progress.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behaviour in school.</li><li>• The amount of homework.</li><li>• Information about children's progress.</li><li>• The approachability of the school.</li><li>• School working closer with parents.</li><li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li><li>• School helping children to become more mature.</li><li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li></ul>

Some parents reported difficulty when responding, being unclear whether to refer to the situation before September or after. Inspectors mostly agree with their positive responses. Learning in lessons is satisfactory but the long-term achievement of pupils needs to improve. The inspectors' evaluation of all the areas parents would like to see improved, based on detailed evidence, shows that the school is successfully bringing about improvements in each of them and that provision is at least satisfactory. Parents interviewed during the inspection appreciate the expertise of the acting headteacher and the differences the present management arrangements are having. Pupils' behaviour, for example, has improved markedly and is now good. The quality of information about pupils' progress is very good and closer links are effectively being forged with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The school has undergone a major period of change with many staff changes and a reduction in the number of pupils on roll. Numbers fell three years ago when local flats were demolished. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection in English, mathematics, and science for pupils aged eleven. Pupils aged seven have performed relatively better than the eleven-year-olds but standards in reading have been consistently well below average. The very low results in science in 2000, which were in the lowest five per cent nationally for eleven-year-olds, triggered the concerns of the Local Education Authority. With the full support of the governing body, decisive action was taken, which eventually led to the appointment of an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. The pace of change has been rapid since September 2001 and staff morale has reportedly increased noticeably, leading to a general feeling of optimism for the future. Unfortunately, this has not yet had time to make an impact on test results. The excellent leadership of the acting headteacher, the attitude and behaviour of pupils, improvements in teaching and the determination of all who work in the school to raise standards nevertheless reassured inspectors.
2. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of attainment. Levels of attainment on entry are below average for most. Linguistic skills and children's mathematical knowledge are generally well below average. Their physical development is better than that normally seen as most in this cohort of children display a natural agility. Good teaching enables all children to quickly settle into school routines and approach their learning positively. The teacher is supported very well by the conscientious nursery nurse, parent volunteers and on occasions, students. Children transfer to the reception classes having made good progress in all areas. However, because of the low starting point, many still experience difficulty with their communication skills and with their understanding of mathematics. The level of attainment for most therefore, is still below that normally seen. The good quality of teaching is maintained in the reception classes. During the Foundation Stage, which covers children's time in the nursery and reception classes, all children make good progress. Most are well placed to meet the Early Learning Goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development by the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1. In the case of their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, many do not attain the Early Learning Goals set for them in the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children do better than expected in their physical development and in their personal and social development achieving the standards expected well before the end of the new Key Stage ends.
3. Inspection findings show that attainment for seven-year-olds in English is below average, and in mathematics and science it is in line with the national average. This represents unsatisfactory improvement from the previous inspection in April 1997 for English and mathematics, but a similar picture for science. The school has consistently tried to improve standards in all three subjects, with little success. The satisfactory introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and an improvement in aspects of teaching such as planning and the assessment of progress are beginning to have an impact. The overall trend shows that the school is keeping pace with improving trends nationally but variations occur each year in pupils' performance in different subjects. In the national tests for seven-year-olds, for example, the trend is rising steadily in reading from 1998 but improvement in mathematics did not start until 2000. In writing, standards have been on a downward trend since 1999.
4. In comparison with all schools, standards in the 2001 tests in reading were below average, well below average in writing and in line with the average in mathematics. When the school's performance is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the extent of pupils' achievements can be appreciated more as their performance in 2001 was well above the similar school average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Teacher assessments in science show a below average proportion achieving the expected Level 2 or above, and 19 per cent achieving at the higher Level 3, which is in line with the national average. On inspection, the overall attainment in science for seven-year-olds was judged to be in line with the national average.
5. The results since 1997 show that the girls do slightly better than boys in reading and mathematics and much better in writing. This is similar to the national picture. The trend since 1996 shows results fluctuated in reading, writing and mathematics. In the school's own analysis, comparing the predicted National Curriculum level using data from the assessments on entry to the school, individual pupils mostly do as well as expected. The good start all children have in the Foundation Stage as a result of the good quality of teaching they experience there is an important factor helping most to achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.

6. In English, current work in Year 2 is below average in reading and listening skills and well below in writing and in speaking skills. Overall, standards in English are below average. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to express themselves in class discussions but weak linguistic skill limits the progress they make. Their lack of a wide vocabulary also has a negative effect on their writing and spelling and not enough emphasis is placed on broadening pupils' vocabulary in the teaching. Reading is taught effectively, enabling pupils to develop their phonic skills well. They have good strategies for reading unfamiliar words. The close liaison between home and school, with parents regularly hearing their children read, is most certainly helping to improve standards. Pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to write in most subjects, and teachers are focusing effectively on spelling and sentence structures in an attempt to raise standards. In the literacy sessions pupils are provided with a good range of writing opportunities such as re-telling stories and composing letters or poems. Few pupils competently use a joined style of handwriting.
7. In mathematics at Year 2, attainment is in line with the national average with pupils achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. They work out sums involving addition and subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers up to ten quickly. They count forwards and backwards in twos, threes, fives, and tens accurately and have a good grasp of the qualities of regular two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles, and circles. Much work of a practical nature is undertaken in science. Pupils in Year 2 are acquiring appropriate knowledge of life processes and living things. They know, for example, that there are different types of food and are beginning to understand what constitutes a healthy diet. However, there are weaknesses in the recording of results or observations. The overall standard of pupils' work in Year 2 is in line with that expected nationally.
8. Pupils attain standards that are in line with those normally expected for seven-year-olds in art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education. In religious education, standards are in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards in history, are above expectations and in information and communication technology, they are below those expected nationally. This represents a good level of achievement by pupils in most subjects. Their better level of attainment in history is mainly because of the quality of imaginative teaching, resulting from clear subject guidance. The effective teaching brings the past to life for pupils and they gain an understanding of what it was like at different periods in history. A lack of computers and a suitable range of programs available for pupils to use as part of their work in all subjects account for the dip in standards in information and communication technology.
9. The good achievement of pupils after starting Year 1, and the standards they attain by the age of seven, are a reflection of how well they are taught, their good behaviour and satisfactory attitudes towards their learning. Pupils' achievement between the ages of five and seven in English, mathematics and science, for example, is good in relation to their attainment on entry to the reception year. Almost all parents (96 per cent) who returned the questionnaire believe that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection team recognised the strong impact that the new leadership is having on pupils' attainment. All school staff are deeply committed to improving standards and in this section of the school, when national test results are compared with those for similar schools, they are succeeding.
10. Pupils' level of achievement is unsatisfactory by the time they are eleven. Few of the standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained. This is in part due to the fact that seven of the eight teachers who left in the last two years were junior staff. Parents reported much disruptive behaviour in school and some removed their children because of the low standards and amount of bullying. Inspection evidence backed by parents' views, shows that since September, things have changed for the better. In the current Year 6 class, attainment in English and science is below average and in mathematics, it is well below average. This level of low attainment has persisted for the past four years and it is largely responsible for the present arrangements with additional support from the Local Education Authority and the secondment of a respected headteacher from another local school.
11. When the school's results since 1996 are averaged out, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects is broadly in line with the national trend. It is difficult to compare the results with those achieved when these pupils were in Year 2 because of the number of pupils who have arrived or left each year since then. This mobility accounts for 30 per cent of pupils in the present Year 6 class, for example. In 1998, 64 pupils did the national tests for seven-year-olds. The number had reduced to 40 by the time the same group did the tests for eleven-year-olds. Taking into account the high proportion with special educational needs in the class, the standards attained reflect the difficulties experienced in the junior classes.
12. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven year-old pupils in 2001 showed that attainment was well below average in English mathematics and science. However, when these results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, they show a more successful picture; pupils' performance in English and science is in line with the average and above average in mathematics. The previous deputy headteacher and staff analysed all results very carefully and quickly identified weaknesses such as the quality of pupils' written work and the fact that many pupils failed to complete the tests. Positive steps have been taken to make these

aspects priorities for improvement. It is expected that this strategy, along with the satisfactory implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies will have a positive effect on standards for all pupils.

13. Pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments has been erratic over the past four years with little evidence of any improvement when compared to results for all schools nationally. Inspection evidence confirms that standards for Year 6 pupils, based on the scrutiny of work and lesson observations will remain below expectations mainly because of above average number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. However, apart from the pupils with special educational needs, most are attaining standards expected for their age in all three subjects.
14. The good quality of teachers' lesson planning and recently introduced procedures to improve behaviour are important factors affecting the level of improvement most pupils make as they move up the school. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has undoubtedly helped to raise standards in English and mathematics. Well-chosen texts and the teachers' skill in drawing pupils' attention to important differences in writing styles and content improve pupils' reading skills and widen their vocabulary. The partnership between home and school in reading remains strong and this contributes effectively to the achievement and progress that the pupils make in reading. Lower attaining pupils benefit from the additional support they receive in the classroom from their teachers and the skilled teaching assistants. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading skills with parents playing a key role by showing interest and listening to reading most nights. Pupils read confidently and write fluently in a wide range of contexts. In mathematics, they can work out sums with fractions and decimals, handle scientific data and solve problems involving numbers up to 1000 successfully.
15. In science, pupils have good opportunities to investigate and conduct experiments independently. By the age of eleven, they know how to devise a fair test and record their results carefully. However, they rarely use a computer to help them. All teachers in the junior classes show confidence when teaching science and are guided effectively by the good programme of work. Boys and girls both enjoy the practical approach and work hard in lessons to complete their work. Science is one subject where the boys tend to out-perform girls in the national tests, though the difference is small.
16. In other subjects, standards of attainment are above those normally seen in history, and below in information and communication technology. Pupils are unable to transfer skills learnt in the computer room into their class work as there is only one computer to be shared between two classes. The range of programs is also limited. In history, the better than expected standards are maintained from the infant department. Pupils complete a large amount of interesting work. However, insufficient use is made of computers. In art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education, standards are in line with expectations. The improvements in assessment procedures, a key issue identified previously and pupils' behaviour are the main reasons for this. In religious education, standards are in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Overall, the school is effective as the vast majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
17. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory, overall. Those who are identified and on the schools register for special educational needs are supported satisfactorily in class. Their individual education plans have clear achievable targets and careful planning by class teachers means that these are taken into account when they plan lessons. Effective support is provided by the teaching assistants, helping most to meet the challenging targets set for them. In all classes, those with recognised behavioural difficulties are fully integrated in lessons. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour and good levels of class control and discipline ensures that they make satisfactory progress. However, the issue for the school is to identify all pupils who find learning difficult and higher attaining pupils who also have special needs and make appropriate provision for them. The special educational needs for many lower attaining pupils in the school are not being adequately met, making overall provision unsatisfactory.
18. The school has only just begun to identify gifted or talented pupils but as yet it does not make any special provision for them. This needs to be corrected to afford all pupils with every chance to reach their full potential. Preliminary arrangements are in place to improve this shortcoming, by planning additional work in lessons for pupils of exceptional ability or with special talents in any particular subjects. All pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included in all aspects of school life with teachers ensuring equality of opportunity for all. As a result, all feel valued and this in turn encourages them to do their best in everything. This is just one of the reasons why the junior department of the school is returning to normality, with favourable comparisons being possible between the standards achieved by pupils in this school with those of pupils in similar schools.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

19. Pupils' attitudes to the school and their work are satisfactory. This judgement reflects the higher than average proportion of pupils with emotional or behaviour problems in some year groups. Most pupils enjoy being at school, especially when lessons are interesting. Year 4 children, for example, responded well to a history lesson in which they had to identify rich and poor people in a Tudor painting and Year 3 pupils were enthralled by the description of the mummification rituals in Ancient Egypt. Pupils showed their appreciation for a visiting evangelist in assembly by applauding loudly and spontaneously. Many take part in out of school clubs.
20. Behaviour during the inspection was good overall, although about one in ten pupils has recognised emotional or behavioural problems. These pupils have been helped to cope with their feelings very effectively, partly through discussions with other pupils during personal, social and health education sessions. In about three-quarters of the 82 lessons seen, behaviour was good or very good, and unsatisfactory behaviour occurred in only two lessons. This was largely because the work was not matched to the children's level of understanding and so they lost concentration.
21. Behaviour in the playground is satisfactory overall, but sometimes consists of boisterous games, particularly in the junior yard, where there is no provision for using equipment such as skipping ropes, nor anywhere to sit quietly. The provision of quiet areas with seating is one of the school's identified priorities in its current management plan. In the infant yard, dinner time staff and students organise traditional games such as 'Farmer's in his den', which the children enjoy. One example of poor behaviour was noted, when a tussle between a girl and a boy ended with her being kicked. The duty teacher took swift and effective action to deal with this incident, and both pupils' parents were informed immediately. The school's detailed records show that no continuous bullying or harassment occurs. Parents were concerned about the standards of behaviour before the present term, but have noticed a good improvement since September 2001.
22. Personal development and relationships are satisfactory overall. Pupils show appropriate understanding of the impact of their actions on others. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson on peer pressure when pupils, in a role-play situation, tried to persuade their partner to do something wrong. Pupils show a satisfactory respect for other people's feeling and beliefs, and they are helped to develop these from the reception class onwards, where, for example, they think about Goldilocks' feelings when she broke Baby Bear's chair. However, opportunities to show initiative and take personal responsibility are limited. It is mainly Year 6 pupils, for example, who act as door monitors, table monitors and librarians at lunch time, and help to set out equipment in the hall for assemblies. Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are good, and pupils respond well to the care and concern shown by the staff.
23. Attendance is satisfactory and improving steadily. In the academic year to May 2001, attendance was just above the national average for primary schools, and this has continued during the current school term. There are very few unauthorised absences and family holidays in term time account for much of the authorised absence. Late arrival for morning school is a problem for several children, and means they miss the beginning of important lessons in literacy or numeracy.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

24. During this inspection, the overall quality of teaching was satisfactory in the infant and junior classes. The proportion of good or better teaching is virtually the same in each section of the school. The overall quality of teaching seen during this inspection was satisfactory or better in all 82 lessons observed. It was very good in 13 per cent. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen in 64 per cent of lessons, which shows a slight increase since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, which covers the nursery and two reception classes, is good. In fact, all the lessons seen in this section of the school were either good or very good showing that the strength identified previously has been maintained.
25. In the previous inspection in May 1997, the overall quality of teaching was reported as good with more than half of all the lessons observed being good, very good or excellent. Of the lessons seen, 23 per cent were very good or better and nine per cent were found unsatisfactory. Comparisons between then and now are difficult because of the recent major turnover of staff, with eight teachers leaving plus the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Elements of teaching criticised previously such as the match of work to pupils' capabilities, repetition of work and weak discipline have all been successfully improved since then. Staff have developed detailed teaching programmes for all subjects, implemented very good procedures for assessing pupils' level of attainment and progress and worked hard to improve behaviour in class and around the school. The features, common to all teachers, which are contributing most to the effectiveness of teaching now are careful lesson planning and class discipline. A strong team spirit is evident amongst staff and there is a very strong determination by all to raise standards.

26. Most aspects of teaching in the infant and junior classes such as teachers' knowledge, teaching of basic skills and the use of time, support staff and resources, are satisfactory. Two aspects, the quality of planning, and management of pupils are stronger. All teachers' lesson planning is detailed with clear learning objectives and effective links made between subjects. In science in Year 2, for example, a lesson on healthy eating involved pupils designing a healthy meal and adding annotations to explain their drawings. Spelling and writing skills learnt in English lessons as well as those from design and technology were effectively put into practice. Behaviour in all lessons is at least satisfactory due mainly to the very good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. One weakness was found. Teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially higher attaining pupils can do, are generally unsatisfactory. Pupils of all abilities are often given similar tasks to complete resulting in a lack of challenge for some. The satisfactory attitude pupils in general have towards their work means that they can be trusted to work diligently. As part of the strategy to improve behaviour, praise is used well throughout to motivate or raise pupils' self-esteem. This was evident in the supportive comments attached to pupils marked work and the way in which all were fully included in all activities in class.
27. The quality of teaching in the literacy hours and during numeracy sessions is satisfactory throughout the school. All teachers use the skills that pupils have learned in these sessions well when teaching other subjects. In a history lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils literacy skills were developed well as they matched the correct ending to sentences about Ancient Egyptian tombs. Very good links were also made with science as they located the organs of the body, which were removed before mummification. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that pupils access to and use of computers to support their learning in literacy and numeracy lessons is limited.
28. The improved quality of teaching is beginning to raise the standards pupils achieve. In English and mathematics, teaching is never less than satisfactory and as a result, virtually all pupils achieve the individual targets set for them and many exceed them by the time they are ready to leave the school. However, due to the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, standards in national terms are below average in English and well below in mathematics. An analysis of the gains pupils make from the age of seven to eleven in the national tests shows that all improve to some degree and seven out of ten make satisfactory progress. This is mostly due to the quality of teaching and successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. However, in science by the age of eleven, in spite of the satisfactory quality of teaching throughout the school, standards are below the national average, again largely because of the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
29. In history, pupils achieve better than average standards by the time they are eleven years of age. This is a direct result of the good quality of teaching they receive from reception to Year 6. Parents recognise history as a strength and reported this to the inspection team at the meeting for parents. In information and communication technology, pupils' below average achievements reflect the shortage of computers in classrooms and poor variety of programs available to pupils. However, the quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout. The quality of teaching in religious education, art and design, and physical education is satisfactory and as a result, pupils achieve standards in line with expectations by the ages of seven and eleven. In design and technology, the quality of teaching is good throughout mainly because of the guidance provided by the programmes of work and teachers careful lesson planning. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of the subject and all, including pupils with special educational needs, work conscientiously. In music, the quality of teaching is good in the infant classes and very good in the juniors. Infant teachers work hard to compensate for their lack of specialist knowledge. Junior staff set high expectations for pupils and conduct lessons at a lively pace. Pupils' achievements, considering the limited time for music on the weekly timetable, are satisfactory in all aspects of the subject. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure overall judgement about the quality of teaching in geography. In the only lesson seen in Year 4 it was good.
30. All teachers work hard to establish a good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Teachers have developed very good strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils maintain their level of concentration. In most classes, for example, pupils are given strict time limits to finish tasks. Pupils obviously enjoy the calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and usually behave well. All have a satisfactory attitude towards their learning. However, on occasions, the concentration and work rate of higher attaining pupils suffers when they are set the same work as other pupils and lose interest in the undemanding tasks. This adversely affects the amount of work they produce. Low expectations by some teachers over the amount of work pupils can reasonably be expected to do means that the productivity in just about all year groups is unsatisfactory for all pupils. Pupils' performance in science is a typical example.
31. Teachers use assessment well to guide their planning and this helps them to plan work for the majority of pupils in their class which builds effectively on their previous learning. All pupils' work is marked thoroughly and teachers add helpful comments to give pupils guidance on how to improve their work. There were no gifted pupils identified to the inspection team. However, the school has very recently introduced a policy to identify

these pupils with a view to making special provision for them as part of its drive to raise standards. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons with a satisfactory range of resources readily available for pupils. This helps to maintain pupils' interest and encourages them to use their initiative and choose suitable materials to use when working independently. Pupils respond positively to all their lessons, sustaining satisfactory levels of concentration. As a direct result, the quality of learning is satisfactory in virtually all lessons.

32. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, which comprises of the nursery and reception classes, is good. Planning the curriculum is a team effort, with the nursery nurses fully included. All staff show a high level of care for all children. Support for children identified with special educational needs is satisfactory in each of the six areas of learning throughout the Foundation Stage enabling them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. However, the special needs of some are not being met as identification procedures are inadequate at present.
33. This weakness in provision for pupils with special educational needs also exists throughout the infant and junior sections of the school. Staff make use of expert advice on occasions but, at present, assessment information is not closely scrutinised to help with the identification process. In a random survey of a class in Year 3 during the inspection, almost one-third were judged to have learning difficulties but only three pupils were receiving any additional support. Those pupils on the register for pupils with special educational needs have clear individual learning plans and these identify precise and achievable targets in relation to literacy, numeracy, and social behaviour. Teachers take full account of these individual targets in their lesson plans. They work closely with teaching assistants to ensure that the best possible use is made of their time and talents. As a result, these pupils consistently receive the help they need to make satisfactory progress in relation to their personal targets. However, progress overall is unsatisfactory for the many unidentified pupils with special educational needs. A teaching assistant and a special educational needs support assistant work with small groups in Years 3 and 4 to give additional support in literacy and numeracy to lower attaining pupils. Booster sessions, which focus on English and mathematics, give pupils in Year 6 the extra push they need to achieve the best they can in National Curriculum tests. Teaching in these contexts is never less than good. It is characterised by clear targets, well-planned activities, and caring relationships.
34. A small number of parents, in their responses to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, were unhappy with the amount of homework their children were expected to do. At the meeting for parents, some said pupils were given too much homework, and others felt that the tasks set were not well matched to pupils' capabilities. Inspection evidence shows that the amount and quality of homework is satisfactory. The school's policy statement gives clear guidance to teachers and parents on homework. Teachers are generally making satisfactory use of homework as part of their strong commitment to raise standards. As a result, homework is effectively supporting pupils' learning.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

35. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils. All subjects are taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the Early Learning Goals for pupils in the Foundation Stage. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection. The balance of the time spent on the teaching of each subject is satisfactory with appropriate emphasis placed on subjects such as history, physical education and design and technology. A careful check of the time spent on each subject during a year is kept which ensures that all subjects are adequately covered. However, work is not always sufficiently well planned or delivered to ensure that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged or the least able pupils are provided with a level of work that meets their needs. The placing of pupils in sets based on their prior attainment in English and mathematics in Years 4 and 6 is improving provision in this aspect. It was attempted in Year 5 but was abandoned as there are a higher than average proportion of pupils with emotional and behaviour difficulties. It was decided that it was less unsettling for them if they remained with their own class teachers.
36. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactorily planned around the six areas of learning required for pupils to achieve the Early Learning Goals. The curriculum for these pupils is well planned and a good range and quality of activities and experiences is provided. Together with a good quality of teaching, it helps children to make good progress during their time in the nursery and reception classes. The main emphasis is placed on learning basic skills in literacy and numeracy and although attainment remains below average, pupils make good gains in relation to their prior attainment in what they know and can do. Appropriate attention is also given to the other areas of learning so that by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage pupils have been well prepared for the next stage of education.
37. The provision for children with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but it becomes unsatisfactory for pupils in the infant and junior departments. In class support is limited particularly in the junior

classes and many pupils are not identified quickly enough to derive maximum benefit from any additional support. Pupils who are gifted or talented have only just been identified and as a yet, no special provision is made for them. This is an area that the school is keen to develop in order to raise standards further.

38. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily and is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. Particular emphasis is being correctly placed on the improvement of pupils' writing skills, not only in English but in all subjects of the curriculum. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been satisfactorily implemented with improved result in the 2001 national test results for seven-year-olds. In Year 3 there is a noticeable improvement but standards are not yet rising sufficiently quickly in Years 4 to 6. Teachers' implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has resulted in improvements to pupils' mental and oral skills for all age groups.
39. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is provided. These cover activities such as music, dance, sports such as netball and football, and activities that encourage an interest in academic subjects such as science and the environment. Currently these activities are for older pupils. None are on offer for pupils in the infant classes. The school also runs a first aid course for pupils. Care is taken by the school to ensure that pupils are able to join in with all lessons offered by the school.
40. The overall provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. A new framework and policy to guide teachers' planning has been written and the benefits of this are beginning to show. Sex education is delivered through the science curriculum and when necessary, the help of the local health authority is enlisted to deliver parts of the programme of study. Outside expertise is also enlisted to help with work on improving pupils' behaviour and this too is proving to be very successful. Drug awareness programmes are under development. No formal records of pupils' personal development are kept but the new reporting format of pupils' progress is helping to keep parents fully informed of all aspects of their child's progress. Educational visits add appropriately to pupils' experiences. These have included visits to art galleries, a sculpture park, a Roman fort as well as a wildfowl park and mathematics road show. Links with local schools are effective with pupils making visits to secondary schools before transfer.
41. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has been improved since the previous inspection. The school is a caring and happy community and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and their behaviour. A large majority of parents is convinced that the school is helping their children to develop in a mature and responsible manner.
42. The provision for spiritual development is good. Good quality assemblies are planned around a weekly theme, for example, precious and special things. They offer periods for reflection and prayer. Care is taken to choose suitable music to create a tranquil atmosphere as the children enter the hall. They respond with quiet and respectful behaviour throughout the session. Pupils are given opportunities to consider the nature of God. Acts of collective worship offer genuinely spiritual moments. When, for example, a visiting evangelist, recounting a version of the Prodigal Son, showed a picture of the crucifixion and said he was going to his Father's house and when a teacher conducting an assembly for younger pupils spoke about rainbows, 'making you smile inside'. Hymns are carefully chosen to promote a sense of inner pride. In all classes, the day finishes with a period of silence when the pupils reflect on their activities. In literacy lessons pupils write about abstract subjects such as friendship and in history lessons learn about the experiences of people such as evacuees.
43. The school makes very good provision for the moral development of its pupils. It has a strong mission statement that is posted throughout the building and effectively guides the attitudes of the staff and pupils. Rules of behaviour are displayed in classrooms and are influenced by the assertive discipline policy adopted by the school. This is modelled to suit different age groups in the school and accentuates the positive aspects of good and considerate behaviour but makes clear the sanctions for anti-social behaviour. As a result, pupils of all ages appreciate the difference between right and wrong. All adults are involved and midday meals supervisory staff stress the value of good table manners. There are high expectations of good behaviour of children in classroom and playground. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are well maintained. Adults provide good role models. Teachers encourage pupils to be appreciative of the efforts of others and this was seen when pupils began to applaud spontaneously at the end of an assembly taken by an outside speaker.
44. The development of social behaviour is good. Pupils are elected to the school council and the recommendations of the council form part of the school development plan. One of the recommendations, that playground behaviour would be improved if there were more equipment to engage pupils' interest, is being acted upon. Older pupils are given responsibilities about the school: changing transparencies on the overhead projector in assemblies, delivering registers and helping younger pupils at lunchtime are some examples. Pupils develop their literacy and their information and communication technology skills by applying for these positions in writing. They are encouraged to think of those less fortunate than themselves through their good

support of charities, some of which are chosen by the pupils. Educational visits away from the school site provide useful opportunities for pupils to mix in the wider community. The idea that everybody in a community is important is encouraged by the school's celebration of pupils' birthdays. Every child's birthday is prominently displayed on a board in the main corridor and each child receives a card; those taking school meals are given a small cake on their birthday.

45. Cultural provision at the school is satisfactory. Pupils gain an appropriate understanding of their cultural heritage through their work in history and the visits they make to local museums and historical buildings like the F. Pit Museum. Visiting musicians teach them traditional Geordie songs. Music themes in assemblies introduce pupils to the works of various composers and visiting musical ensembles give pupils an understanding of a range of instruments. The Local Education Authority funds visits from authors and poets. Pupils' knowledge of musicians and artists is limited however and although higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are able to name artists like Van Gogh and Leonardo da Vinci and are able to name some of their paintings, many pupils know little about such matters. Pupils are given a chance to develop an awareness of the culture of other faiths through their work in religious knowledge. Year 4 pupils, for example, make a study of various aspects of life in India. However, opportunities for studying the cultural diversity of British society are not as well developed as other areas.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

46. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory overall. The school's procedures for child protection are good, as they were in the previous inspection. The headteacher is the named person, and all staff have been trained in child protection procedures. Appropriate procedures are followed in all cases. Health and safety systems are satisfactory. Termly checks are made by a governors' committee, and the caretaker receives regular training to update his knowledge and skills. The school is aware, for example, that there is a potential hazard with the junior hall floor being slippery for physical education, especially after dinners have been eaten in there and that the information and communication technology room has insufficient ventilation. Both matters, raised by the inspection team, are scheduled for attention. There is a clear and effective policy for children's medication, and for dealing with playground accidents.
47. Good systems are in place for monitoring and improving pupils' academic performance and personal development. Attendance and punctuality are monitored well, and reasons for lateness are requested. Regular intermittent absences are followed up, as well as unexplained absences.
48. Very good systems are in place for improving behaviour, using a combination of warning cards, behaviour target books and certificates for good behaviour. Staff are alert for possible bullying and oppressive behaviour, and parents' concerns are taken very seriously. For example, playground staff are asked to keep a watch on individual pupils to check that they are not being bullied.
49. The school has good methods of tracking pupils' personal development, and identifying when children are not thriving or are having problems. The good care for pupils includes ensuring that they receive a birthday card from school.
50. At the time of the previous inspection, the assessment arrangements were unsatisfactory. There was no consistent approach, the assessment of pupils' progress was not planned into the termly programmes of work and record keeping was haphazard. Over the last two years the assessment co-ordinator has worked extremely hard, together with the school's senior management, on developing the present very good assessment systems and procedures. With the exception of the accurate identification of pupils with special educational needs, these procedures are now very effective in enabling teachers to assess how much pupils have learned, with the focus on the learning objectives for the lesson. For example, the weekly planning for literacy and numeracy contains daily comments on any specific learning made by individuals or groups.
51. The use of assessment data from the testing of pupils when they enter the nursery, and when they enter the reception classes, is used in planning appropriate activities to try and address weaknesses. School and national test results are being increasingly used to analyse areas of weakness in the teaching or curriculum. For example, the senior staff have recently analysed which pupils made the expected or less than expected progress from their Year 2 national tests to the ones they took in Year 6. In English, a good analysis of strengths and weaknesses in particular areas has enabled the co-ordinator to draw up some appropriate key points for action to improve standards in the future. The recent appointment of a member of staff to be a data manager, in addition to the assessment co-ordinator, is indicative of the importance the school now places on assessment information. Although at an early stage this work is already enabling good questions to be asked about pupils who are under- or over-achieving. Eventually it is hoped to extend this work into more detailed individual pupil tracking throughout the school to enable effective assessments to be made on how far

individuals have improved each year. The use of the assessment information gathered is still at an early stage of development. However, there are already clear indications of staff altering their planning to take account of previous learning in lessons.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

52. Parents' views of the school, under its present leadership are good. At the meeting prior to the inspection, all said that they were much happier now than they were before September 2001. Responses to the parents' questionnaire indicate that parents feel their children like school; that good teaching enables pupils to make good progress; and that teachers have high expectations. A small number of parents felt that the school does not work closely enough with them, and that they do not receive enough information; that the leadership and management of the school is not good enough, and that there are not enough out-of-school activities. The inspection team was not clear whether these negative views related to the situation before September or after. Inspectors found that teaching is satisfactory overall, but that teachers' expectations of higher achieving pupils in the infants and juniors are too low. Overall, pupils' progress in the nursery, reception and infant classes is good, but it is not fast enough in the juniors, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs also make unsatisfactory progress, mainly because class teachers do not identify many. This means that they are not provided with specific targets that would help them to improve. The acting headteacher provides excellent leadership, supported by an extremely effective governing body. This is rapidly bringing about improvements in many aspects of school life and beginning to have an impact on raising standards. Newly introduced systems for keeping parents informed are very good and among the best that the team has seen. The range of out-of-school clubs is similar to that seen in most schools.
53. There are effective links with parents, with very good written and oral communication, particularly about pupils' achievements in the new combined termly report and target setting document. This lists what each pupil is expected to learn during the term in mathematics, English and science, linked to the ability group for each subject. Written comments from teachers identify how well pupils have performed and what future targets are necessary. For other subjects the curriculum information is less detailed, but still provides enough information to allow parents to know what is being studied in history, for example. There is a panel of parents and other volunteers who provide valuable additional help in classrooms, for example hearing readers, or helping with creative work. The school has recently set up a Friends of the School association to help with fund raising and social activities. Most parents support the school's satisfactory programme of homework for pupils.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

54. The previous inspection took place in the first year following the amalgamation of the separate infant and junior schools and the appointment of a new headteacher. A clear sense of purpose and direction was noted and leadership was judged effective. However, since then standards have remained low, particularly in the junior section and in the past two years, eight teachers have left the school along with the deputy headteacher and headteacher who both resigned. Some parents began to remove their children from the school, adding to the decline in numbers, caused initially by the demolition of nearby blocks of flats.
55. Decisive action by the governing body, the positive support from the Local Education Authority and expertise provided by the acting headteacher are all combining to bring about an air of normality to the school, following this major period of disruption. The dynamic acting headteacher, in partnership with the governing body, is the driving force, providing leadership of the highest quality. She has a clear vision of what needs to be achieved for the benefit of the pupils and community, is rapidly creating a sense of purpose and is helping all staff to face the future with optimism. Staff share this commitment to improve and work hard to fulfil the school's mission statement. The aims and values in this are beginning to be reflected in all aspects of school life such as pupils' changing attitudes towards their work and their good behaviour. Parents views of the school are now good with all appreciating the 'warm feeling' transmitted by the acting headteacher, her excellent leadership qualities and the improving relationships. The recent formation of the 'Friends of Albany Village School' involving staff and parents, is an example of how quickly changes are being made to involve parents. There is a firm commitment by the local Education Authority to maintain the same level of support for a term after the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.
56. The delegation of responsibility to senior staff is satisfactory. The senior management team is beginning to provide an effective forum in which the school's performance can be evaluated and its future planned. The acting deputy headteacher for example, carries out her responsibilities very efficiently and effectively. Her knowledge of and expertise in the education of children in the Foundation Stage and throughout their time in the infant classes is impressive. Individual staff who co-ordinate the development of subjects within the

curriculum take their responsibilities seriously, giving much support to one another. However, many are newly appointed and have not yet had time to implement the necessary changes. The special educational needs co-ordinator, although very knowledgeable and experienced, has not been given the time needed to manage this area effectively. As a result, the special educational needs of many pupils' are not being identified. In a Year 3 class, chosen at random by the inspection team, for example, only a small proportion of those eligible were actually placed on the register for pupils with special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school is therefore much higher than the school's statistics show. The newly formed Foundation Stage for nursery and reception aged children is managed very well by the acting deputy headteacher who is also the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, responsible for the infant section of the school. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants feel part of the school team and value the guidance and support they receive from teachers. The quality of their work adds to the success of pupils' learning experiences.

57. The governing body carries out its statutory duties exceptionally well and works extremely hard to support the school and shape its future. The contribution of the chair of governors, who is deeply committed to the school, is recognised as a significant factor in the school's determination to improve. His knowledge, dedication, and energy are an inspiration for all who come into contact with him. Through his regular visits and meetings with the headteacher, he has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. During the inspection, for example, he worked effectively alongside one of the temporary teachers, showing pupils how to join two pieces of material with a back-stitch, learnt by himself the previous day in preparation for the lesson. Individual governors are chosen wisely for their expertise in different areas and all approach their duties conscientiously. All have responsibility for an area of the curriculum and are fully involved in monitoring standards and evaluating performance. Minutes of the governing body's meetings indicate that meetings are well attended and business is conducted efficiently. The statutory requirements for the special educational needs Code of Practice are met. However, provision for any gifted or talented pupils and for many lower-attaining pupils is unsatisfactory.
58. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching in lessons are satisfactory, overall. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, procedures are in place and used well, giving staff opportunities to spread good practice and to support colleagues in any area of insecurity. However, in other subjects, procedures are newly in place and subject co-ordinators have had little opportunity to monitor or evaluate. The school's procedure for assessing teachers' performance is satisfactory. The acting headteacher, with staff and governors, has recently introduced a programme for looking at pupils' books to evaluate the standards, giving co-ordinators and the senior management team a clear overview of actual standards being achieved in all subjects. When the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were introduced, for example, careful monitoring enabled areas of difficulty to be quickly identified and put right.
59. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory, overall. Two key issues were identified. The management role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum needed developing and a more consistent approach was required for assessing and recording pupils' progress. These areas of weakness have been given much attention but the level of improvement has varied. The disruption caused by teachers leaving, mostly from the junior section of the school, has adversely affected the level of improvement for the co-ordination of each subject but it has been satisfactory. The school has brought about a major improvement in its assessment procedures which are now very good for assessing pupils' progress and the information gathered is recorded carefully and used well to plan future work. The strength in the Foundation Stage has been maintained and weak aspects of teaching such as weak discipline and the inappropriate match of work for pupils have been put right. However, the rate of improvement in standards, particularly for pupils at the end of their time in the junior section has been unsatisfactory. In the national tests for eleven year-olds since 1998, for example, results in English, mathematics, and science have been consistently below or well below average. The very low performance in science, where results were in the lowest five per cent in 2000, triggered the concern of the Local Education Authority and ultimately led to the appointment of the acting headteacher. The pace of change has been rapid and inspectors share the optimism of governors and staff about the likely impact this will have on future standards.
60. The school administration staff run the school office very efficiently. All duties and responsibilities are carried out cheerfully and calmly, and this helps to give a positive first impression of the school to visitors. Satisfactory use is made of new technology in the office, with electronic mail facility and computer programs for managing the finances. However, the school's use of new technology is unsatisfactory, overall. There are relatively few computers for pupils to use in their classrooms and an insufficient range of programs to add interest in lessons. Government grants are used effectively and correctly. The special educational needs co-ordinator is meticulous in making sure that funds are applied to the best effect. Overall financial control is very good. The school budget is much higher than the average for most schools, mainly because of the additional funding provided by the local Education Authority to keep single age group classes with small numbers in each. When local authority finance officers conducted an audit of the school's financial management a few months ago, only a few minor items for improvement could be found. These have been put in place. The school buys its resources

and services at the most competitive prices and pays careful attention to quality. Taking into account the high expenditure per pupil, the quality of leadership and management, the standards achieved, the satisfactory quality of teaching and pupils' improving attitudes and good behaviour, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

61. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory, overall. The school is very well staffed with teachers due to the intervention of the Local Education Authority, which has provided the financial resources to keep class sizes small in an attempt to raise standards. There have been many changes in staffing over the past two years with eight teachers leaving and five replacements being appointed. This is in addition to the resignation of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Two vacancies remain unfilled and one teacher is on long term sick leave. Under the circumstances, it is surprising to find that the governors do not have an agreed policy for the recruitment and retention of staff. The procedures for the induction of new teachers into school are good and training opportunities, identified through regular professional development, are always readily available for all staff. The school has established strong links with two local universities and is used regularly to train new teachers. During this academic year, for example, trainee teachers and students training to become teaching assistants will work in the school for varying lengths of time. The provision of teaching assistants to work closely with class teachers is satisfactory in the infant department but is below the level normally found in other schools for the junior department. All teaching assistants working in the school make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The provision of support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory for the numbers on the register for pupils with special educational needs. However, as identification improves, increasing the number of pupils, the level of provision should be increased accordingly.
62. The spacious building includes a new administration block, which joins the former infant and junior schools. It incorporates facilities for disabled pupils. Some areas in the original buildings such as floor coverings and storage facilities are in need of renovation and a programme of refurbishment is planned to bring more of this 1970's building up to modern day standards. Inspectors noted an element of noise intrusion from one class to another but it did not seriously affect pupils' concentration levels. The site supervisor takes an obvious pride in his work and keeps the school meticulously clean. He is supported well by three equally conscientious cleaners. Classrooms and corridors contain many interesting and colourful displays of pupils' work, adding interest for pupils and showing that their work is valued. The grounds have adequate grassed and hard play areas. However, in the playgrounds, there are no designated quiet areas or seating for pupils to use at present. Provision for these is included in the school management plan for this year. Children in the reception class have easy access to the nursery's very good outdoor play area to develop their physical and social skills.
63. The range and quality of teaching resources is satisfactory, overall and most are used effectively throughout the school. However, they are unsatisfactory for religious education, geography and information and communication technology. The school has increased the number of computers but the ratio of pupils to each computer remains unfavourable when compared to similar schools. A new computer room has recently been created where necessary skills can be taught to whole classes. It is also made available for community use after school hours. However, not all classrooms have the use of a computer and the range of programs is poor. More artefacts are needed to add interest to religious education lessons and in geography, a better selection of maps and aerial photographs are required. There is a good range of reading books available in classrooms. However, the attractive library has many out of date books and encyclopaedia and the computer section is sparsely stocked.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. The school has experienced a major period of change in the previous two years with a high turnover of staff and a reduction in pupil numbers. The performance of pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, reported in the previous inspection report, has not been achieved since then. However, due to the strong commitment to improve the situation by the governing body, the excellent support provided by the Local Education Authority and the borrowed expertise of another headteacher, an air of optimism exists within the school. The rapid pace of change since September has not yet had time to make an impact on test results.
65. In order to build on the improvements so far, the school now needs to:
- ❑ improve pupils skills in all aspects of English by;
    - increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop their speech and language;
    - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in all subjects
    - improving the accuracy of pupils' spelling;
    - matching reading books more closely to pupils' capability;  
(Paragraphs 3-6, 9,12,14,27,28,38,74,75, 84-93)
  - ❑ improve standards in mathematics by:
    - improving mental and oral sessions to ensure that pupils have a good working knowledge of number facts and vocabulary;
    - ensuring that pupils have frequent opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems;
    - giving greater emphasis to the teaching of data handling and shape, space and measures;
    - reviewing pupils' work to assess individual pupils' progress accurately;  
(Paragraphs 3-7,9,12,14,28,38,76,77, 94-102)
  - ❑ improve standards in science by:
    - raising teachers' expectations of what higher attaining pupils can achieve;
    - increasing the pace of lessons and work rate of pupils;
    - providing tasks which are more closely matched to individual pupils' capabilities;
    - providing more opportunities for pupils to conduct experiments and carry out scientific investigations;
    - developing the use of computers in science lessons;  
(Paragraphs 4,7,9,12,15,28,39,78,79,103-109)
  - ❑ raise standards in information and communication technology by:
    - increasing the number of computers in classrooms as funds allow so that pupils may consolidate and extend skills learned in lessons held in the computer suite;
    - establishing Internet access to the computers in all classrooms so that pupils develop their research skills and are able to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum;
    - allowing pupils to use e-mail facilities;
    - improving pupils' knowledge of the control and monitoring areas of the curriculum;
    - improving methods of demonstration in the computer suite;
    - improving staff knowledge and confidence through appropriate training;  
(Paragraphs 8,16,29,61,64,101,108,117,126,133,135-142)
  - ❑ improve the identification and level of support for higher and lower attaining pupils and for those with special educational needs so that they can be fully included in all activities by:
    - analysing assessment information more closely;
    - raising teacher expectations of what higher attaining pupils can do;
    - planning tasks which are relevant to individual pupils capabilities;
    - improving the management of special educational needs provision by giving the co-ordinator more time and support to meet the requirements of pupils;
    - maintaining a register of talented and gifted pupils so that their specific needs can be met;  
(Paragraphs 13,17,18,31,33,37,50,51,52,56,57,62 and 124)
66. The following less important weakness, not included as a key issue for action, should also be considered by the school:
- ❑ Prepare and implement a policy for the recruitment and retention of staff.  
(Paragraphs 54, 62)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	42	29	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	51	36	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	292
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	168

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	77

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	25	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	14	23
	Girls	24	22	24
	Total	42	36	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88(80)	75(76)	98(87)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	20	19
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	40	43	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83(80)	90(78)	90(83)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	18	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	22
	Girls	8	8	15
	Total	24	26	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60(57)	65(54)	93(41)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	22
	Girls	9	9	15
	Total	26	29	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65(64)	73(60)	93(63)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	233
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Average class size	20.9

#### **Education support staff: YR - Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	109

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000 /01
	£
Total income	668075
Total expenditure	641525
Expenditure per pupil (based on 320 pupils)	2002
Balance brought forward from previous year	-13823
Balance carried forward to next year	12727

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Number of questionnaires sent out

342

Number of questionnaires returned

94

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	42	5	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	48	5	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	43	15	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	57	8	2	4
The teaching is good.	37	53	4	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	49	24	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	46	10	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	53	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	26	41	28	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	24	45	22	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	53	9	6	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	40	20	12	13

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

67. Children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The majority attend for one year from the age of three. They move into the reception classes on a full-time basis at the start of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were 44 children on roll in the nursery class and 38 children in the two reception classes. The nursery is housed in a very good, purpose-built unit with good accommodation both indoors and outside. Outdoor provision is particularly good with a secure play area, complete with a soft surface, and an interesting and well-maintained garden.
68. Assessments made shortly after the children start school indicate that their attainment is generally below average, and well below average in speech and language development and mathematical knowledge. Observations of the progress made through the nursery indicate that it is good, but that the children still enter reception with below average skills, particularly in communication, language, and literacy and in their mathematical development. In the reception classes, the good progress continues and much of the work is focused on improving pupils' linguistic skills. Recent developments yet to have an impact or to have fully started are projects for teaching pupils more effectively to talk, and a closer involvement of speech therapy staff.
69. Staff make home visits, when invited and the arrangements for the introduction to school are effective and efficient, helping children to settle very quickly. The transition to reception is managed well and children willingly take a full part in assemblies and other whole school activities. The transition from there to Year 1 is also smoothly organised. Links with parents are well developed and a number help in the classrooms. In the reception classes, the results of early assessments are discussed with parents in the autumn term and reports on progress are sent home in each of the other two terms.
70. In the previous inspection, the provision for the children who were under-five was found to be one of the major strengths of the school. The strength of provision has been maintained since then, even when changes to staff are taken into account. A lot of work has gone into the introduction of the new Foundation Stage, which covers children in the nursery and two reception classes. All staff are very aware of the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum which children are expected to attain by the end of the Reception year and teach all aspects effectively.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

71. Overall, teaching is good in the nursery and in the reception classes enabling good progress to be made by most children. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and children clearly understand what is acceptable and what will not be tolerated. Progress in this area of learning is good and children are on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. In the Nursery, pretend birthday parties, sometimes led by an adult, involve children in a very good social activity as they sing to each other, hold a mock party and play party games. In discussion times children are encouraged to give things to friends and be polite. This has evident results when children choose a friend to be with, even when this is not requested by the adults. Children are expected to tidy up and take some responsibility for putting away the activities they have been enjoying. When playing outdoors they share toys and bikes without arguing.
72. In the reception classes, children also respond well to the high expectations their teachers have for their behaviour. They listen to the teacher quietly and without unnecessary interruptions, and are quickly learning the class rules such as putting hands up to answer questions. Children are good at working together and show interest in each other's work. Teachers encourage children's independence effectively and give them the responsibility for choosing activities and making sure that not too many people are joining in any one activity at one time. Overall, most children are likely to attain the early learning goals in this aspect well before the end of the reception year.

### **Communication, language and literacy:**

73. The teaching is good in the nursery and in the reception classes and as a result, children make good progress from their very low starting point. Although this area remains a weakness for many children, the teachers work hard to improve communication skills and good progress is made. In the nursery, every opportunity is taken to familiarise children with their written names. A few are able to copy their names from cards and others are beginning to trace them. A few children still do not hold pencils correctly. Children enjoy looking at books and sharing stories with adults. Most are becoming familiar with the characters from the school's main reading

scheme. However, the majority of the children have either immature or poorly developed speech and this has a negative impact on their communication skills. Even with much prompting, they answer questions in one word or short phrases. They do not have a very wide vocabulary and the school recognises there is a need to address this weakness urgently. A number of new remedial ideas are due to be introduced in the near future.

74. In the reception classes, teachers plan literacy lessons to the format recommended by the National Literacy Strategy, but with appropriate differences to make it suitable for the children's ages and ability levels. There is a good focus on discussion, as the weaknesses in speech are acknowledged. For example, in mathematics, children show real enjoyment in words regarding size, such as gigantic, massive, or 'tallest in the sky'. In one very good lesson, children were encouraged to sound out the initial and end sounds of simple words before they attempted to write them. This encourages children to attempt to start writing words without too much support, although writing skills are below those expected. Many still cannot write their names without copying. Higher attaining children are provided with appropriate extension activities and learn to use full stops correctly. Most children by now have learnt how to hold their pencils correctly. They enjoy looking at books and follow a familiar story shared with an adult. The very good way teachers retell stories to the children reinforces their enjoyment of books and familiar stories. Children can, for example, tell a story in their own words following the illustrations. Teachers introduce children to phonics with actions and they enjoy this work. Homework is linked to the sounds and they are familiar with the reading scheme characters. However, the lack of good speaking skills and a limited vocabulary means that the majority of the children are unlikely to achieve the expected early learning goal by the end of the reception year.

#### **Mathematical development:**

75. The teaching is good in the nursery and the reception classes. Children make good progress from their very low starting point throughout the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, a good range of early mathematical activities is provided, and children have good opportunities for matching and comparing, using hard and soft materials. They sing number rhymes and many opportunities are taken by adults to teach them to count. A few cannot count to three or recognise numerals to three when matching birthday candles to cakes.
76. In the reception classes, teachers reinforce the children's mathematical development by encouraging a greater use of vocabulary such as more, less, biggest or smallest. Good links are made with other work. For example, models of Diwali lamps made by children are used effectively to reinforce the concept of ordering objects by their size. Good use is made of markings on the playgrounds for counting activities. Higher attainers are able to add one more to numbers to nine and can match numbers to dots. Less able children are only able to do this with support from an adult. The majority of the children are unlikely to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

#### **Knowledge and understanding of the world:**

77. The teaching in both the nursery and reception classes is good and children make good progress. In the nursery, teachers use photographs to provide clues for the location of a hidden teddy bear. Most can use these clues to find their way round the outdoor classroom area. Children use the computer confidently and show a good developing control of the mouse enabling them to click and drag items in various activities. For example, they build up the ingredients for a pizza, with support. They have a satisfactory understanding of what cameras and binoculars do following work on light and sound. They have designed and made musical instruments for babies to shake. Most children are aware of the need to keep themselves clean, clean their teeth and comb their hair. In water activities they compare and match colours, and they know the names of the primary and most secondary colours.
78. In the reception classes, a good range of visits in the local community helps to develop children's awareness of the world outside school. They learn about food at the local supermarket, and visit a baby clinic as part of a topic on how children have grown since they were babies. They are able to draw pictorial maps of the route to the supermarket and through harvest work develop some religious understanding. This is extended to other faiths during Diwali and they have a sound understanding about aspects of the Hindu festival. The majority of the children are on line to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

#### **Creative development:**

79. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good. In the nursery children have many opportunities to learn and sing action songs and rhymes, which they do with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They use paint to create colourful paintings and often show pride and care in their work. Good use is made of soft materials such as dough to make shapes. A range of collage activities, such as the creation of party hats, enables the children to develop their cutting and sticking skills.

80. In the reception classes, teachers provide good opportunities for children to select their own creative activities as well as providing focused work intended to develop specific skills. One higher attaining girl, for example, used every opportunity to choose a drawing, painting, or making activity at which she demonstrated particular skill. Good use is made of clay to make Diwali lamps. These are decorated well with paint and sequins. Using thick paint, children make a variety of interesting patterns, using card combs imaginatively. Other interesting activities include opportunities for children to choose and cut out a selection of materials to create clothes for a baby. Activities such as these successfully develop children's creative abilities. The majority of the children are likely to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

#### **Physical development:**

81. Children's attainment on entry to the school in this particular aspect is better than that normally expected. The quality of teaching is good as teachers successfully refine skills involving balance, movement, and the use of tools and pencil control. Most children are physically active. In the nursery class, children play with the bikes and on the climbing frame showing confidence in their movements. They are aware of others and their level of control in all activities is better than that normally seen for children of this age. When they sing number and nursery rhymes with appropriate actions, for example, their co-ordination is good.
82. This is built on in the reception classes in physical education lessons that develop children's skill of gymnastic movements. For example, children balance, climb, crawl, and jump at an advanced level for their age. They use apparatus safely and confidently and a number demonstrate a high level of attainment. Most can successfully do forward rolls, jump off apparatus, make a good landing, and balance very carefully on narrow beams. The progress made in the reception classes is good. In addition, children develop good skills in holding and controlling small tools, pencils, and paintbrushes. The use of construction kits and other building activities all effectively help to develop pupils' skills at using small tools with care and precision. The majority of the children are well on course to attain the early learning goals well before the end of the reception year.

#### **ENGLISH**

83. Standards by the age of eleven are below the national average. Inspection findings match those of the school in identifying weaknesses in pupils' speaking, writing and spelling skills, largely caused by the lack of richness in their vocabulary and the under-development of their language. In addition, very few pupils attained the higher Level 5 when compared with the national average. Standards achieved in the national tests improved a little in 2001 following a steep dip in 1999 and overall, have risen slightly since the previous inspection.
84. Standards of attainment of pupils by the age of seven are below average in reading and well below average in writing. As with the eleven-year-olds, very few pupils reached the higher level in the national tests in reading and none in writing. Standards in reading improved in 2001 and have done so consistently since 1998. In contrast, writing standards have fallen since a high point in 1999. Although reading standards have improved since the last inspection, writing standards have fallen.
85. The progress made by the eleven-year-old pupils is low when compared with their results as seven-year-olds. This means that they did not make the expected progress through Years 3 to 6. In particular, their reading skills are not sufficiently developed and extended and their writing skills remain at a low level. However, a high proportion of pupils, 30 per cent, have joined the year group since the end of Year 2 and this mobility, coupled with major staffing changes, has reduced the school's results. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the seven-year-olds attainment is well above average in reading and broadly in line with the average in writing. The eleven-year-olds' attainment is broadly average.
86. The evidence of the inspection is that the recent changes to the management and leadership have already had a very positive effect on teaching and assessment procedures in English, although this has yet to work through into pupils' levels of attainment. The present Year 6 pupils are on line to repeat the results they achieved last year. Weaknesses still exist in speaking, writing, and spelling. Pupils' skills in reading are not being sufficiently extended and a significant number are still underachieving.
87. The scrutiny of work completed by pupils since the start of this year shows that progress over the term has been at least satisfactory and good in many cases. Teachers' marking skills are very good in most classes, and give pupils a very good understanding of what they have done well and what they need to work on to improve further. Where the marking is most successful, it is closely based on the learning objectives for that piece of work. Good use of literacy is made across the curriculum. In geography, for example, work on place names led to a link with suffixes. In Year 2, pupils wrote letters to the local church after a trip and in Year 6, pupils have written fictional reports on life as an evacuee, as well as some factual reporting on World War Two.

88. Insufficient progress is made in improving or enriching pupils' vocabulary to acceptable levels. As a result, standards remain well below average in speaking and below average in listening by the time pupils are seven. The school is aware of the need to improve this area and a lot of work is put into this through discussion activities, although these are not always as well-planned and targeted at particular needs as work on reading or writing. Increased involvement of speech therapists and more planned work on speech is due to be introduced shortly and this should have a good effect on present standards. Pupils' listening skills are better, and they listen to teachers quietly and with interest and often demonstrate enjoyment of whole class question and answer sessions. The lack of a wide vocabulary has a negative effect on pupils' writing and spelling skills.
89. In reading, pupils' skills are below those expected for their ages. The school is now using a phonic scheme that, together with the National Literacy Strategy, provides pupils with a good grounding in ways of sounding out unknown words. However, these skills are not taken on and most of the higher attainers throughout the school do not read with enough expression. Books are not very well matched to pupils' abilities, especially for the good readers and this is also not assisting the development of their language and vocabulary skills. The newly refurbished and organised library is a good resource, although many of the books need to be replaced with ones that are more modern. Many pupils are still unsure of how to use the library for research purposes. In one very good lesson in Year 1, pupils read together and re-enacted a fairy story with real enjoyment, very effectively learning about reading with expression. In Year 2, the higher attainers can retell the story they are reading well. They use punctuation to help give some expression to their reading and this is helped by the good communication evident between home and school in the reading diary. Older pupils tend to use the diary as a book review tool and evidence of reading at home is less obvious. By Year 4, pupils read instructional texts accurately and are learning to annotate a text. Discussions with Year 6 readers show that they read more complex books at home than they are given in school. Many have favourite authors and they can talk about the books they have written. Rowling and Dahl are particularly common. However, very few of the pupils make use of public libraries.
90. Pupil's skills in writing are below those expected throughout the school. The teaching ensures pupils learn a range of writing styles but too few opportunities are found for them to use the skills in extended pieces or writing, especially creatively, such as in poetry or fiction. During the inspection, a number of classes were learning the skills of writing precise instructions, but not enough consideration is given to the way these skills need to be extended as pupils get older. In Year 2, for example, pupils write the instructions for a recipe and can put these in the correct sequence and Year 3 pupils confidently change the tenses of verbs to change text from the past to the present. However, few of the pupils write good sentences or use capital letters accurately. Year 4 pupils understand how words such as 'next', 'now' and 'finally' can guide the reader through a piece of writing. Year 5 pupils' work on the beginnings of stories, with the focus on a younger reader. In Year 6, the less able pupils are developing their vocabulary skills using Macbeth as a script. They have a sound understanding of the modern versions for much of the text and following on from the introductory lesson, they are beginning to write their own scripts. The higher attaining pupils are very unresponsive and do not appear very motivated by their work. They understand a growing number of words from an archaic vocabulary, for example in Macbeth, and can use brackets with growing accuracy. They understand how scripts can be drawn up to show speech, directions, and characterisation. Pupils' spelling skills are unsatisfactory and the school does not have a clear policy or effective scheme of work for teaching this.
91. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. There are a few very good lessons and nothing seen is less than satisfactory. Teaching is mostly good in the infant classes, mainly because of the emphasis placed on improving pupils' linguistic skills. A major strength throughout the school is the way teachers assess lessons and the learning of individual pupils, changing their plans where necessary to follow up misconceptions or misunderstanding. The target setting for writing is very good and has enabled clearly focused teaching of skills to be more effectively targeted at individuals. However, target setting needs to be extended to reading and speaking. The setting of pupils by prior attainment in Years 4 and 6 enables teachers to plan more work appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. Use of support staff varies and, on a number of occasions, they are under-used especially during the whole class sessions. The teaching of additional literacy work to Year 3 pupils is undertaken by the special educational needs support assistant, working with small groups of pupils. Classroom displays involve a lot of literacy work and words and books have a high profile throughout the school.
92. The subject coordinator has been newly appointed to the school. She is very experienced and knowledgeable about what needs to be done to address the weaknesses that the school and the inspection have identified. She now needs time to extend her monitoring and evaluation role, to assist colleagues with ideas and to spread the good practice that exists. Resources are satisfactory.

## MATHEMATICS

93. Standards are well below the national average by the age of eleven. This represents a considerable decline in the results reported in the previous inspection. Results of the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds show that compared to all other schools, they are well below average but when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they are above average. There is a noticeable difference between the results of boys and girls with boys doing better. Over the previous five years, results in the national tests have been consistently below the national average for eleven-year-olds. The picture is more positive for seven-year-olds. At the end of Year 2, pupils attain at the national average level and when their results are compared with similar schools, they are well above average. At both key stages, too few pupils achieve the higher Levels 3 and 5. Pupils with special educational needs are supported satisfactorily in the infant classes and make satisfactory and, sometimes, good progress to achieve expected levels. However, in the juniors, where classroom support from teaching assistants is limited, pupils often learn less successfully and their progress is unsatisfactory.
94. By the age of seven, pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of place value with numbers up to 20 and beyond. They are able to order numbers and can match two digit numbers to words. They investigate magic squares and number sequences, and they begin to put their mathematical vocabulary to good use in solving problems. Mental and oral skills are developed satisfactorily with pupils able to count in twos and tens with many recognising and using coins up to 10 pence to complete addition and subtraction sums.
95. By the age of eleven, many pupils have an under-developed idea of place value and some become confused with numbers beyond 1000. They understand decimals and are able to convert these into fraction equivalents but are much less secure when using the metric system and converting metres to centimetres and millimetres. Throughout the juniors, there is limited evidence of pupils developing an appropriate understanding of data handling and working with shapes and measures. Although some pupils, especially those in Year 3, are able to apply the knowledge and vocabulary they have learned to practical situations pupils in other junior classes have less well developed skills in this area. In many cases, pupils' factual mathematical knowledge such as multiplication tables, are not sufficiently well known to enable them to be a useful tool in solving problems.
96. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Too little of the teaching is above this level, especially that seen in the junior classes. No teaching that was unsatisfactory was seen during the inspection and this is an improvement on the previous inspection. Teachers' planning is good and covers all the elements in the programmes of study in the National Curriculum for mathematics. In most lessons, basic skills are taught well and teachers ensure that pupils' attention is focused on what is to be learned. Behaviour management is good. The quality of learning in the infants is usually good with some very good teaching seen. This enables most pupils to make good progress and achieve expected levels of attainment.
97. Where the teaching is good, or occasionally very good, the planning and pace of the teaching ensures that pupils have a very clear understanding of what they are to learn and what the teacher expects of them. In a very good lesson in Year 1, for example, pupils developed a good understanding of the value of coins up to ten pence and used this knowledge to calculate the cost of ingredients for a cake. Pupils that are more able were then able to work out the change to be given. Where teaching is less successful, the work provided for the most able pupils does not sufficiently challenge them and results in standards below what could be achieved. Pupils of below average ability do not always receive the work appropriate to their needs and this too leads to limited progress. On some occasions, repetitious work such as copying tables and completing calculations presents a lack of challenge for pupils and this means that little progress is made.
98. The teachers have introduced the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily. The planning and pace of the introductory mental and oral sessions is satisfactory in most classes but some teachers still do not ensure that the session is used to consolidate previously acquired factual knowledge before they begin to teach new skills. Teachers usually share with pupils what they will learn during the lesson and this is clearly stated in the planning. Included in the planning and a feature of many of the lessons seen, is the extension of pupils' vocabulary. In the good lessons, teachers consistently remind pupils of their new vocabulary requiring them to use their new knowledge when replying to questioning. The recording of pupils' work is not always of an appropriate quality or quantity to ensure that pupils' learning is at satisfactory levels or to enable teachers to assess its accuracy. In the best planning, teachers have completed assessments of what pupils know and have learned. This is used to modify plans and provide a more effective challenge for pupils. Effective use of assessment, for example, was made in the planning of a Year 3 teacher who evaluated the success of her lesson and modified it when it became apparent that pupils' learning was not meeting her aims for the lesson.
99. The school is beginning to make much better use of assessment information. An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning are now made and used to focus on areas for additional work, for example, data handling. Currently targets for individual pupils are not set but plans to introduce these are well advanced.

100. Pupils' use of mathematical skills in the other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory. Time lines showing a sequence of dates are used in history, temperatures are read in science, and accurate measurements are made in design and technology. During the inspection, information and communication technology was not used to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge in any of the lessons seen.
101. The school has failed to improve its results significantly for eleven year-olds from a level well below the national average over the past five years. With the exception of one year's results, those for seven-year-olds have remained at average levels. Governors are more optimistic in view of recent changes that have raised staff morale. The monitoring role of the subject co-ordinator is being strengthened and greater use is being made of assessment information to identify areas for improvement. However, the provision of an appropriate challenge for the most able pupils and support for the learning of the least able pupils is still a weakness to be remedied.

## SCIENCE

102. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment are in line with the national average for seven-year-olds and are below average for eleven-year-olds. The results of the 2001 national tests for pupils aged eleven show that standards are close to the national average for pupils reaching the expected level or above but well below the national average for those reaching the higher Level 5. When compared with similar schools, the results are well above average for pupils reaching Level 4 or above and close to the average for pupils reaching the higher level. Standards have improved since 1997 but the improvement has been inconsistent, with big fluctuations from year to year, mostly because of the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. The results are an improvement on the previous year for pupils reaching the expected level for their age and there is a small improvement in the proportion reaching the higher level. The key factors in improving overall standards are efforts to improve teaching, following a detailed analysis test results and better procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. These include the introduction of new materials to support class teachers and measures to boost pupils' performance in tests. However, the teaching of scientific enquiry is not sufficiently well developed and as a result, pupils' skills in conducting experiments or investigations is a weakness, especially at the junior stage. The support received by children already identified and on the special educational needs register enables them to make satisfactory progress in both the infant and junior classes. Boys performed better than girls in the 2001 national tests but in earlier years there was no significant difference.
103. For pupils aged seven, the results of teacher assessments in 2001 show that standards are below the national average for pupils reaching the expected level and close to the national average for pupils achieving above the expected level. When compared with the performance of pupils in similar schools, the results are well above average for pupils reaching the expected level and above the national average for those reaching the higher level. These results are an improvement overall on the previous year but there is a slight decline in those reaching the higher level. This overall improvement is linked to the priority given by the school to improving standards. Inspection evidence shows standards are improving.
104. Seven-year-olds have a satisfactory knowledge of scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. They can carry out simple investigations, for example, predicting what plants need to grow well, observing and recording their results using diagrams and tables and drawing a relevant conclusion. All correctly identify different materials and match them to suitable uses. They recognise and name several sources of light using drawings and make comparisons in the way bulbs work in different circuits they have constructed.
105. Eleven-year-olds have a broad knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. This knowledge has been accumulated over the four junior years. They can carry out investigations into dissolving materials predicting results and employing correct testing procedures. All record their results carefully and write their conclusions clearly. A typical example was the investigation into the speed with which sugar dissolved. In doing this, they learned terms such as hypothesis, soluble and solvent. However, the majority still need support to complete the tasks successfully. In earlier work on the human body they distinguished between activities that used energy and those that did not and drew a graph of the time they spent over a week undertaking both types of activity. However, little evidence was found that computers were used to help pupils to organise and present scientific data. All have a sound knowledge of forces and understand that gravity is a force pulling objects downwards. They can use a force meter to investigate the effects of friction as a force preventing movement. Pupils make the expected amount of progress in their scientific knowledge between the ages of seven and eleven but while investigations are carried out in every year, they are generally structured and managed by the teachers in the junior classes. This is restricting opportunities for pupils to learn enquiry techniques and limits more able pupils' opportunities to work independently and record results in their own way. This weakness is beginning to be addressed.

106. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work. Their attitudes are particularly good when they are involved in practical tasks and using scientific equipment in lessons. In a Year 4 lesson on identifying bones in a skeleton, for example, pupils' enthusiasm leapt when real skeletons were produced for a practical identification activity. In a parallel Year 4 class that included several children with behavioural problems, the frail skeletons were treated with care. Pupils also showed a good response in a Year 3 lesson on plant growth. Here it was the sense of anticipation created by the pupils' keenness to see the results of an experiment set up the previous week and heightened by the suspense created by the teacher, especially over the pot where nothing had grown that held them enthralled. In the same lesson the pupils measured their plants in pairs and then calmly replaced them for others to work on showing good cooperation. Behaviour in science lessons is satisfactory.
107. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. In order to raise standards, the acting headteacher and her staff have started to monitor and revise the strategies for teaching the National Curriculum programmes of study. Where teaching is most effective, lessons are well prepared. In a good lesson with eight-year-old pupils, good clear planning with specific reference to activities and the well-controlled use of practical resources provided a calm and ordered learning experience for pupils. In a parallel class the teacher used the relevance of her own gardening activities and a problem with her overcrowded pot plant to capture the attention of the pupils and to involve them effectively in the lesson focus. Well-developed subject expertise was apparent in a good lesson with five-year-olds where the teacher used skilled questioning to test her pupils' knowledge. Teaching is also more effective when the lesson is developed with good pace. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson on seed dispersal where the lively and enthusiastic introduction by the teacher together with a selection of seeds to examine, motivated the pupils to proceed further. Teaching is less effective when the teacher's expectations are low and when work is not well matched to pupils' abilities. The use of information and communication technology is not well developed but this issue is now being addressed.
108. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. The long-term plans provide a clear direction to the work of each year group. The medium-term plans clearly identify what is to be taught for each study unit and give a clear timetable for the teachers to follow. Very good arrangements for assessment and for tracking pupils' progress have just been introduced. Targets will shortly be set for pupils each year. The co-ordinator has also had time to monitor the work of colleagues in the classroom, enabling all to effectively evaluate successful topics or areas of weakness. Resources are satisfactory and are currently being augmented rapidly and there is sufficient space in the classrooms to allow groups to operate safely.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

109. Standards are in line with expectations for seven and eleven year olds. This was also the case in the previous inspection. Limited evidence is available from lessons but an examination of pupils' previous work and interviews with pupils confirm the judgement.
110. By the age of seven, pupils gain a satisfactory experience of art. They have experimented with colours, mixing them carefully. Pupils know how to make colours darker or lighter and are becoming knowledgeable about which primary colours to mix to produce a wider range of colours to use in their paintings. Pupils in Year 1 produce bright, jolly pictures showing a good sense of colour. They create portraits and scenes and produce good quality collage work related to the Three Little Pigs story using a wide variety of materials. By Year 2, pupils are able to demonstrate good control of a variety of media to create some good quality observational paintings of trees, plants and flowers. Some of this work is of a standard well above average showing that skills have been well taught.
111. The work of eleven year-olds shows that skills continue to be taught satisfactorily. Animals, birds, and insects are carefully observed to produce accurate drawings to enliven a display on animal habitats. Colour is sensitively used to show how some creatures use their surroundings to camouflage their presence. Skills in pencil and brush control are again well developed when pupils observe poppies with care taken to ensure good colour match through further development of mixing skills. Some work in the style of famous artists is produced but this is not extensive. Work on design is also a feature of pupils' work. Pupils in Year 4 produce carefully made model chairs and use a variety of materials to cover these, making decisions on pattern, purpose, and texture. Skills in measuring, cutting, and shaping are satisfactorily developed.
112. Teaching is satisfactory and on occasions, good. Where teaching is good, the teachers have clear aims for what pupils will learn during the lesson. Pupils are consistently encouraged to improve the quality of what they are producing and are reminded of the skills they are to use. Instruction and demonstration are good in these lessons. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, the teacher provided very clear instructions on measuring, folding, scoring and cutting which resulted in pupils raising the standards of their work using skills learned from other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of art experiences that include printing,

collage and clay work. They have also been given opportunities to arrange their own artefacts and materials prior to completing observational drawings, a further extension of design skills. Pupils' knowledge of famous artists, although satisfactory, is a weaker element of teaching. Work has been completed on Van Gogh, Magritte and Leonardo da Vinci but pupils are provided with few experiences beyond this.

113. The co-ordinator has recently been appointed and although an examination of pupils' work throughout the school has been completed, no monitoring of teaching has yet taken place. The use of sketchbooks is being reviewed and revised. Visual resources such as books and posters are limited but otherwise the level of resources is satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

114. Standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils generally achieve well and make satisfactory progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs who make satisfactory progress in relation to their previous levels of learning. This is a similar situation to that at the time of the previous inspection but there have been changes, which have improved the provision for design and technology. The most significant of these has been the introduction of a detailed programme of work, the absence of which was noted during the previous inspection. The programme of work, firmly based on the latest national guidance has been carefully introduced with the help of Local Education Authority advisory teachers to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered and that a suitable period of time is allocated to the subject. The new programme ensures that pupils' skills and learning are systematically developed. It also allows opportunities for the assessment of pupils' learning.
115. By the time that they are seven, pupils are able to make designs for products like puppets, using annotated drawings. They consider what would be suitable materials for making their puppet. They make templates and then, using these as a guide, cut out material shapes. They are able to join these shapes using simple stitching techniques. Below average literacy skills hinder the pupils, particularly when they make lists of materials they need, or attempt to write a series of instructions stating clearly how they will approach the task of making a product.
116. By the time they are eleven, pupils are generally enthusiastic about the subject. They speak enthusiastically about past projects and obviously value things they have made. They are able to draw designs using annotated diagrams. They are able to list materials and tools they will need. All show an understanding of the qualities of different materials and know why these qualities are useful for the product they are making. They use a range of tools and equipment including those involved in food technology activities carefully and safely. For example, pupils in Year 5 bake a biscuit, learning about the necessary ingredients and equipment and then use these ideas to make a biscuit which appeals to their own tastes. Pupils in Year 4 experiment with different types of stitching to test which is likely to prove stronger and more suitable but generally the idea of evaluation of products and methods is not so well developed as other aspects of the subject. Pupils have few opportunities to use and develop their information and communication technology skills to support their work as few classes have their own computer.
117. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers use the new programme of work as a basis to plan together in year groups. In good lessons, teachers plan tasks for pupils of different abilities. This helps the learning of all pupils including those with special educational needs. Teachers, particularly those of infant classes, plan worksheets so that pupils' relatively low literacy skills do not significantly hinder their progress. At the same time, they use the work to promote pupils' literacy skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 write instructions for making puppets. They refer to their individual literacy targets as they work.
118. Design and technology is well used to support other areas of the curriculum. For example, a Year 5 class making biscuits supports their work in science by looking at healthy eating; in English by making lists; in art by designing wrappers; and in mathematics by weighing ingredients.
119. Teachers prepare well for lessons, arranging tables, materials and equipment to maximise the use of time in lessons. This preparation includes the good use of parental help in lessons. Parents complete questionnaires listing their interests and skills. They work well with small groups of pupils helping the learning of individuals and ensuring that tools are used safely and correctly. Preparation extends to giving parents instruction before the lesson so that they are able to instruct pupils correctly. One parent, for example, had spent the previous evening practising backstitches so that he was able to correctly instruct Year 4 pupils. Teachers support their good preparation by giving pupils clear demonstrations and instruction. An example of this occurred when pupils in a Year 6 class were shown how to make strong joints for the three dimensional structure they were making. Occasionally organisation is not so strong and too many pupils are left waiting for help.

120. Teachers use questioning well in the group situations to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. 'Why is this instruction not helpful?' asks a Year 2 teacher. 'Why do you think this joint is based on a triangle?' Year 6 pupils are asked. Teachers generally extend their questions in plenary sessions, which are well used to consolidate learning in the lesson. Occasionally opportunities are missed to question and assess pupils' learning. For example, in a class of junior pupils, the teacher moved amongst the pupils correcting their work but did not take the opportunity to discuss the work or ask pupils about what they were doing to encourage them to assess their own learning.
121. Teachers are generally positive about the subject and this attitude is transmitted to the pupils who respond well. They enjoy the work and often become engrossed. This was illustrated when a group of Year 4 pupils sang quietly in unison as they practised their sewing.
122. Resources are adequate to support the curriculum but not all are of suitable quality. Year 6 pupils attempting to saw lengths of wood accurately are not helped by saws which are too blunt or not of a suitable design; this makes the task much more difficult than it should be. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology and this remains an area for development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

123. During the inspection, only one lesson was seen but additional evidence was available from the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils, scrutiny of teachers' planning, discussion with teachers and displays. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. This is similar to those found at the previous inspection. The latest national guidelines are now in use and are effectively supporting the teaching of the subject. However, the use of geographical enquiry, based upon fieldwork and the exploration of different sources of evidence such as the Internet or aerial photographs is not well developed in some topics. The teaching effectively develops the learning of boys and girls equally, but higher attaining pupils are not always given tasks with sufficient challenge. The support received by pupils already identified and on the special educational needs register enables them to make satisfactory progress.
124. Progress is satisfactory over both infant and junior stages. Seven-year-old pupils make detailed plans of their journey to school. They undertake a simple survey on how they travel to school and use the results to construct a graph. They use a variety of materials to produce a landscape sketch and a map of the imaginary island of Struay. They can distinguish between human and physical geography and features on the island and can express their likes and dislikes about life there from the available information. All know terms like bungalow and three-storey house because of field study observations made in the local area.
125. By the age of eleven, pupils have some knowledge and understanding of geographical enquiry, their home area, selected contrasting places in the world, some natural features such as rivers and of environmental management. Pupils quickly and competently locate selected places on a world map showing a sound knowledge of continents and countries. They can describe the water cycle using a diagram and locate rivers on a map. In work on settlements, they identify geographical patterns using features on maps that link older settlements and the present landscape and learn to use terms such as copse and coniferous. By explaining their views about a proposal to close a local store, they demonstrate their ability to understand the impact of change in the environment. Their map skills include the ability to use map symbols, directions and coordinates. Their use of computers, however, is not well developed.
126. No secure judgement can be made on the overall quality of teaching because too few lessons were seen. In a good Year 4 lesson on the topic of settlement, however, there were a number of strengths. The lesson was well planned with clear objectives that were communicated explicitly to the pupils. The teacher made good cross-curricular links with English as pupils wrote about people's requirements to live in villages. A scrutiny of work shows that involving English skills and those from other subjects are widespread. Throughout this particular lesson, the teacher gave pupils good support and maintained a good pace. As a result, all pupils worked productively. Well-differentiated tasks meant that all pupils were challenged appropriately.
127. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post but is keen to improve the quality of teaching in the subject. The termly planning has been revised and discussed with teaching colleagues to help eliminate repetition from year to year and ensure pupils build progressively on their learning. Resources are not well developed but a programme of renewal is under way to remedy deficiencies in large-scale maps, aerial photographs, case study materials, and computer software. A formal assessment system has just started that will clearly record the attainment and progress of individual pupils.

## HISTORY

128. During the inspection, four lessons were seen in the junior classes but only one brief observation was possible in the infant years. Further evidence was obtained from the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with staff, discussion with pupils and the scrutiny of displays. On the basis of this evidence, standards are above those generally found nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. This represents an improvement on those found in the previous inspection and confirms parents' views about the subject expressed at the pre-inspection meeting. The latest guidelines are being used well and these are supporting the teaching of the subject by providing the basis for a clear programme of work, which promotes the systematic development of skills and knowledge. A very good formal assessment system has just been implemented throughout all years. This is a significant improvement and is in response to a major weakness identified in the previous inspection. Information is used well to guide teachers planning and this effectively develops the learning of boys and girls, equally. It also highlights the support required by pupils identified as having special educational needs and enables them to make satisfactory progress.
129. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the age of seven, pupils can describe features of homes and toys in the past. They can describe the main facts about the work of Florence Nightingale. Most are able to sequence events and write up a diary of events of the Great Fire of London. They can also name famous people of the period. Through their work on holidays in the past and by comparing them with today, pupils are able to contrast events from the past to today, developing a good sense of chronology.
130. By the age of eleven, pupils confidently research information from a variety of sources to develop their knowledge and understanding of the past. This knowledge has been accumulated over the four junior years. They use maps and pictures to illustrate the importance of the River Nile to the Ancient Egyptians. They use artefacts and books to gather information about burial rituals of the Ancient Egyptians and to enable them to explain why possessions were placed in tombs. All demonstrate a good level of knowledge of the Romans' lifestyle, describe and compare the lives and dwellings of rich and poor people in Tudor times and write in detail about the blitz during the Second World War. Their knowledge of the characteristics of Sparta and Athens in Ancient Greece and understanding of the origins of the names of the gods clearly demonstrates the breadth of their historical knowledge.
131. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about their work on the Ancient Egyptians. The death rites, belief in an after-life and lifestyles of the pharaohs have made a big impression on the pupils. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils were well motivated and involved in their tasks by the teacher's good class management, brisk pace, and interesting resources. They were fascinated by the artefacts and questioned the teacher with great enthusiasm. In a Year 6 lesson, experiencing the sounds of an air raid in a blacked out classroom captivated pupils. The pupils enjoy visits to places such as a Roman fort and from visitors, such as an evacuee. Behaviour is invariably good as they show interest and concentrate well on their work.
132. Teaching is good, overall, with some of it being very good and none less than satisfactory. Teaching is effective when the past is brought to life for the pupils. This strongly supports the pupils' abilities to describe events and motivates them to explore the causes behind the happenings. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils dressed up in Victorian clothes and acted out going to bed in the mock up of a Victorian cottage with lots of artefacts. In a Year 6 lesson, the teachers created wartime experiences with sounds and pictures, adding much interest for pupils. Teaching is also effective when the teacher uses expressive delivery and exudes enthusiasm, as in a Year 3 lesson on the Ancient Egyptians. Teaching is less effective when the teacher's exposition is long and fails to check that the pupils are fully engaged and comprehending the subject matter. As a result it does not develop a rich and meaningful information base from which the pupils can develop their ideas. It is also less effective when the tasks set present insufficient challenge to the pupils. Computers are used for some activities, but in general, limited use is made of them during history lessons.
133. The two co-ordinators are relatively new to the post and while they are very willing to support colleagues, they have only some recent background training in the subject. They are further hindered in their role by being based in the nursery and in reception class and therefore are not personally involved in teaching the National Curriculum subject. Together, they have usefully updated the medium-term plan in consultation with colleagues. Resources are only just satisfactory but are set to improve with additional funding being made available. A formal assessment system has recently been implemented that will very effectively record the progress of individual pupils.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Standards are below those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. This is similar to the situation at the time of the previous inspection. However there have been considerable changes in the provision but these have not yet been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on standards. Despite this, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and the progress of pupils including those with special educational needs is sound. Progress is not entirely consistent and is directly connected to the confidence and knowledge of individual teachers. Pupils' standards are higher in certain areas of the subject than others, notably word processing.
135. Since the previous inspection, the school has established a computer suite. This ensures access of all pupils to a computer for specified periods each week and has improved staff confidence. However, it means that most of the computers are concentrated in the suite. The low numbers of computers in the classrooms means that pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop and consolidate the skills that they have learned in the suite. In addition, just under half of the computers are too old to be linked to the Internet connection, which is available in all classrooms. Pupils' use of the Internet is mostly confined to their periods in the suite and this limits their opportunities to research in other areas of the curriculum. The lack of suitable programs or projection devices means that teachers are not able to show clearly groups of pupils how to perform operations other than by holding up keyboards or showing them on individual computers. The computer suite is insufficiently ventilated, which means it becomes very warm and this leads to lethargy amongst the pupils and occasionally an inability to sustain concentration over an extended period.
136. The school has recently introduced a detailed programme of work based on the latest national guidance. This ensures full coverage of the curriculum and allows for the systematic development of pupils' skills. It also provides opportunities for the assessment of pupils' progress. Some teachers have had training but this has not been entirely satisfactory and the school plans to repeat and extend this to improve staff confidence and knowledge.
137. By the time that they are seven, most pupils are able to type a sentence or short piece of writing. They are able to use the shift key, space bar, and delete key. They use information and communication technology to support their work in literacy. Few pupils are confident about saving and retrieving their work. They have had few opportunities for control because there is not sufficient working equipment for pupils to be able to experiment with controlling the movements of programmable toys.
138. By the time they are eleven, pupils are able to discuss how computers affect their lives. High attaining pupils know about things like the millennium bug. Pupils have had no opportunities to use e-mail at school but are able to speak about its strengths and weaknesses when compared to the postal system. They are able to combine text with pictures and add sound effects. They draft their work using the computer, rather than merely producing copied pieces of work and this is a strength of the provision at the school. Lower than average literacy skills mean that pupils often produce relatively little in the time available but, for example, Year 6 pupils produce advertisements for their disco, job descriptions, and applications for jobs around the school. However, about a fifth of pupils are still not confident saving or retrieving their work. Keyboard skills vary and for a few pupils mouse control is still uncertain. Pupils have some experience of using the Internet and CD-ROM to research. For example, Year 6 pupils researched material on the New York disaster and found information about the weather to support their work in geography. They have had some experience of control using a computer to control a system of lights but this remains an area for development.
139. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In good lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to help pupils. They are confident in dealing with problems so that learning is not hindered. They use information and communication technology well to support learning in literacy. They are imaginative in the ways they present pupils' work building self-esteem and encouraging further effort. For example, a teacher of a Year 2 class translates text produced by pupils into speech bubbles on pictures of characters. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are not always high enough particularly in terms of the higher attaining pupils who often do not produce sufficient work in the time allowed. The school does make use of staff expertise by arranging for teachers confident with information and communication technology to take classes other than their own for the computer suite sessions.
140. Teachers show good class management skills, which means that pupils behave and concentrate well and means that they can allow pupils to experiment and discover for themselves some of the facilities of the computer. This helps to consolidate pupils' learning. They use plenary sessions well to revise the objective of the lesson and to emphasise the main features.
141. Management of the subject is satisfactory with good procedures in place to monitor standards and the quality of teaching. Teachers' planning to develop pupils' computer skills is satisfactory. However, opportunities to use

computers as an integral part of all lessons are not always included in termly planning for all subjects by all teachers. The unsatisfactory level of resources limits pupils access to computers in the classrooms and is adversely affecting standards and the consolidation of skills learnt in the well-equipped computer suite.

## MUSIC

142. Standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. This represents a fall in standards since the previous inspection when they were above average. This is the result of a lack of musical expertise amongst the teaching staff. For example, the quality of singing has deteriorated because of the absence of a pianist on the staff to lead singing sessions. This situation has been rectified with a recent temporary appointment and support from the Local Education Authority providing very good music teaching in the classes of older pupils. This improved teaching expertise has not been in place long enough to have yet had a major impact on standards.
143. Despite this fall in standards, all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, achieve well and make sound progress. Recently, progress of pupils in classes in Years 5 and 6 has been very good as a direct result of very good teaching resulting from an expertise in subject knowledge. There has also been a recent improvement in the quality of singing throughout the school because group singing sessions are now being conducted by a teacher who is an accomplished pianist and who is able to offer help in singing techniques.
144. There have been some changes since the previous inspection, including the introduction of a nationally recognised programme of work. This helps with the systematic development of pupils' skills. The introduction of this programme has been supported by material and training supplied by the Local Education Authority, designed to boost the knowledge and confidence of teachers who do not have musical expertise. The Education Authority also helps to enrich pupils' experiences of music by providing concert workshops featuring a variety of ensembles and workshops concerning the work of local composers.
145. The absence of school based instrumental tuition and a choir, means that pupils are not able to develop their musical ability to a higher level. However, pupils have opportunities to participate in musical performances. For example, Year 6 pupils perform a medley of World War 2 songs before parents and members of a neighbouring residential home. There is also a weekly performing arts group after school and approximately 40 pupils attend this regularly.
146. By the time that they are seven, pupils understand and can demonstrate the difference between pitch and volume. They are able to sing, showing a sense of melody and maintain a beat. Nine-year-olds know about the pentatonic scale and can name the notes. They work well in the groups to compose a simple tune using tuned percussion instruments.
147. By the time they are eleven, higher attaining pupils know about composers such as Mozart and Beethoven and can recognise some of their works. However, musical appreciation is not yet taught well. Assembly sessions feature a composer of the week but the music is not yet directly linked to the curriculum, although there are plans to do this. Pupils sing a variety of songs but are not so competent at singing rounds that are more complex or multi-part songs. Pupils have little knowledge of musical notation. However, they are able to maintain a rhythm using a variety of instruments and can add a second rhythm on top of the basic beat. They are able to interpret music through movement.
148. The quality of teaching is good, overall. Teachers generally work hard to overcome their lack of specialist knowledge. Where teachers do have specialist knowledge, the quality of teaching is high. Good class management ensures that pupils concentrate in lessons and this helps their learning. Teachers return continually to the focus of the lesson, helping to consolidate pupils' learning. They adopt a good physical approach to music. For example, Year 2 pupils close their eyes and then raise or lower their hands to indicate the pitch of a note. This helps the teacher to assess the extent of pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils improvise movements in time to Caribbean music. Teachers make good links with other subjects, notably science. For example, Year 4 pupils note how the length of the bars in glockenspiels affects the pitch of the note. Opportunities are occasionally missed as when Year 5 pupils, being given pointers on different methods of striking a drum, do not make the link between vibration and sound. The quality of teaching in the junior section of the school is very good. A combination of very good subject knowledge, which enables teachers to improve pupils' singing by offering useful pointers on body positions, high expectations, particularly in pupils' diction, and a lively pace, which ensures pupils are fully engaged and concentrate well are the main features. These help to ensure that pupils make good progress.
149. There is no music co-ordinator at present. In effect, however, a teacher with much experience in teaching music is leading the subject. This teacher's input both in terms of direct teaching throughout the school and

help and advice to teachers, is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and teachers' confidence. The temporary nature of this leadership brings into question the capacity of the school to maintain standards in the future.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

150. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils aged seven and eleven. This represents a drop in standards since the previous inspection when standards were above average for both seven and eleven year olds. This fall in standards is explained, in part, because, at the time of the previous inspection, a high number of the older pupils had considerable athletic talent and this resulted in the school winning a series of inter-school sporting events. Despite this fall in standards, pupils still achieve well and make satisfactory progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs because teachers take care to ensure that they are fully included in lessons. Progress is not entirely consistent across the year groups and, for example, accelerates in Year 4 where a combination of good class management and good subject knowledge by the teacher help pupils to make good progress.
151. There have been some improvements in the provision. The introduction of a nationally recognised scheme of work allows for the systematic development of pupils' skills throughout the school. It also ensures that pupils cover the full curriculum, including the non-statutory outdoor and adventurous activities such as problem solving and orienteering exercises, which are planned into the programme for children in the junior classes. It also includes an assessment programme, which helps teachers to track the progress of pupils achieving below or above the expected levels.
152. Pupils in Year 5 go swimming but, because of a lack of space at the pool, tuition is limited to non-swimmers. These pupils benefit from expert tuition with the result that most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. It means, however, that most pupils who can swim do not have the opportunity to practise personal survival skills or develop a range of strokes.
153. Standards in dance are not as high as other areas because of a shortage of suitable resources and a lack of confidence in the teaching of the subject amongst teachers. Year 6 pupils are able to develop a short sequence of expressive movements in pairs but are not able to extend this into a longer routine in groups.
154. A strength of the programme is the pupils' knowledge of the effects of exercise on the body. This knowledge is given practical relevance by the teachers, who nearly always start lessons with vigorous and sustained warming up sessions, which extend pupils and leave them breathing hard. Young pupils know that the heart beats faster after exercise and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can take their pulse and know about oxygen being carried around the body in the blood. By the time they are in Year 4, pupils know about the reasons for stretching muscles before exercise.
155. Pupils are given opportunities to develop a range of skills. Pupils in Year 1, for example, practise various methods of moving around and over a range of different types of apparatus. In Year 2, pupils effectively develop their throwing skills. Year 3 pupils learn the correct methods for striking a ball with a bat. In good lessons, teachers use good coaching techniques to extend pupils' learning. Year 4 pupils, for example, are taught how to grip a hockey stick correctly, allowing them to practise successfully in pairs and small groups.
156. Pupils have opportunities to apply their skills in the games situations and develop tactical awareness. For example, Year 5 pupils develop attacking and marking skills in small-sided games situations, while using a variety of passing techniques. The good range of sports teams gives pupils opportunities to develop these skills in competitive situations.
157. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' performances are not well developed. Teachers use demonstrations by pupils well to illustrate points but do not always show how the pupils' performance might be improved or give pupils the chance to comment themselves.
158. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are examples of good teaching. Teachers use the new scheme of work as a basis for planning their lessons, ensuring that pupils encounter a range of increasingly extending activities. They dress appropriately, emphasising the importance of the subject, setting a good example, which is generally followed by pupils. In good lessons, teachers show good class management techniques, ensuring that pupils pay close attention and work hard, helping to consolidate and extend their skills and learning. They also ensure pupils are aware of health and safety issues. Pupils in the junior classes are careful not to raise their hockey sticks above waist level, for example. Good lessons are conducted at a good pace but sometimes the pace of lessons is allowed to drop, reducing the time and opportunities available for practice. For example, in infant classes there are sometimes too many pupils at a particular piece of apparatus meaning that pupils

have to wait. The combining of classes of older pupils for games sessions means that when these lessons are conducted inside, there is not sufficient space and this means that only a small proportion of pupils can practise their skills at any one time. Occasionally the pace drops because insufficient resources are provided for the lesson. For example, in an infant class practising throwing and catching, a shortage of balls meant that not all pupils were able to participate at the same time. The school does, however, have sufficient resources to support the curriculum. These include a good-sized field and a playground marked for various activities.

159. The curriculum is enriched by the input from outside agencies. For example, coaches from a local netball association offer expert tuition to all pupils in Year 6. Although the school makes use of sponsored award schemes to promote and encourage performance in athletic activities, it does not use the national initiatives Top Play and Top Sport to improve pupils' performance by enriching the programme and extending teachers' knowledge and confidence. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are generally positive and this helps their learning. Parents also make a positive contribution by running extra-curricular sporting activities and by providing transport for school teams.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

160. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectation of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The previous report found them to be good at the end of Year 2 but in line at Year 6. Evidence was gathered from lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work and from interviews with both teachers and pupils. This indicates that although the standard of pupils' written work is below average, their understanding of both Christianity and other world religions is above average. This represents an improvement in this aspect since the previous inspection.
161. Over their time in the school, pupils learn satisfactorily about the teachings, religious practice, sacred writings and festivals of the major world religions. They have opportunities to investigate religious artefacts, hear and read extracts from written sources, discuss the ideas and teachings of other faiths and reflect upon how religions can contribute to the development of values, attitudes and life in the contemporary world. Pupils in Year 2, for example, have been on a visit to a local church and written about the visit in their own words. Younger pupils learn about the beauty of God's work through their study of the world around them, and learn of God's love for them. Pupils in the junior classes begin to learn about characters from the Bible such as Moses and Joseph and this leaves a lasting impression on them. Pupils can recall, in good detail, these stories. They show good recall of events in Jewish history such as Passover and know about the Seder Meal. Throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to listen to stories about the lives of famous people and organisations and the impact they have made. These include Florence Nightingale, Mother Theresa and the work of the Salvation Army. From the New Testament pupils show a satisfactory recall of stories such as the Good Samaritan and can explain what such stories teach us about attitudes today. Many of the stories pupils recall are from assemblies where stories are used skilfully to increase pupils' understanding of their world.
162. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at both key stages. In the lessons teachers were confident in teaching the subject and are aware of the need for sensitivity when discussing the beliefs and teachings of other faiths. This sensitivity and attitude of respect for the beliefs and ideas of other people is shared with pupils and makes an important contribution to their spiritual development. Most pupils listen attentively and participate willingly in discussions. Their answers are usually thoughtful and contribute positively to their developing understanding and learning. Planning of the lessons seen focused clearly on specific learning objectives. Time in lessons is used well. Where teaching is strong, questions are used well to stimulate learning and raise interest. Teaching is regularly undertaken and is regarded as an important part of the curriculum. However, pupils' work is not always appropriately recorded, especially when work is copied rather than written in their own words. Improvements in this area would help to increase pupils' writing skills.
163. The subject is well managed. Staff planning is checked but the quality of teaching is not yet monitored. Clear systems for assessment, a weakness noted previously, have been introduced and information usefully guides teachers' planning. Although visits are made to Christian places of worship this has not been extended to visits to places of worship for other religions. Resources are limited in some areas such as artefacts used in world religions. The subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.