

INSPECTION REPORT

MILLBRIDGE JUNIOR, INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Liversedge

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107694

Headteacher: Mr P Wathen

Reporting inspector: Dr R Perkin
14591

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 June 2003

Inspection number: 246705

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 & junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Vernon Road Liversedge
Postcode:	WF15 6HU
Telephone number:	01924 325715
Fax number:	01924 325716
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Bennett
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14591	Dr R Perkin Registered inspector	Art Music English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further?
19446	Mrs S Wood 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?
16408	Mr C Rhodes Team inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education	The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed?
8070	Mr J Haves Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs	
29504	Mrs S Herring Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Provision for children in the foundation stage. Educational inclusion	How well are the pupils taught?
32272	Mr D Fishburn Team inspector	Science Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Yorkshire Educational Services Ltd
16 Burn Hall
Darlington Road
Croxdale
DURHAM
DH1 3SR

Tel/Fax: 0191 378 4031

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average junior, infant and nursery school catering for 3 – 11 year olds. There are 364 pupils on roll, of whom 47 attend part-time in the nursery. A significant proportion of pupils leave the school at the end of Y4. Over 80 per cent of pupils are of white British heritage and several other ethnic groups are represented, the largest being the 13 per cent of Pakistani pupils. A high proportion of pupils do not have English as their mother tongue, with about two per cent being at an early stage of learning English. The pupils come from a mixture of privately owned and council properties and about 20 per cent qualify for free school meals, a proportion that the school feels to be misleading, seeing the 44 per cent who qualify for free school meals and a clothing grant as being more representative. Overall, the socio-economic background of the pupils is well below average. A well above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs with three per cent having statements of Special Educational Need. These are for moderate learning, speech and communication and physical difficulties and other pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected. Until recently, there were many changes of teaching staff. The school has attained the School Achievement Award, the Eco-School Award, the Activemark Gold Award and is an Investor in People.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and improving school in which pupils achieve well. Standards are below average but pupils make good progress and those who have special educational needs or have English as an additional language make very good progress. Teaching and learning are good across the school and leadership and management are very good. Income per pupil is about average and achievement and provision are good so that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children get off to a good start in the nursery and reception classes and make good progress
- Pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in mathematics, science and religious education because of the good and sometimes very good teaching.
- Standards are above the national average throughout the school in physical education, helped by the very good provision for sporting activities outside of lessons
- Standards in French are above those expected by the end of Year 6 because of the knowledgeable teaching
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress because of the very good support provided for both groups of pupils
- Pupils' very good personal development and relationships are the result of very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Very good leadership and management of the headteacher, the staff and the governors has led to good levels of improvement and a very marked improvement in the quality of teaching and other areas of provision.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, especially in speaking and listening.
- Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in science by the end of Year 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in September 1997, good improvement has been made overall with very good improvements in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and provision for pupils with special educational needs. While standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are not as good, gains have been made in standards in some other subjects, particularly by the end of Year 2. All key issues have been successfully addressed and other significant advances have been made in leadership and management, provision for pupils' personal development, assessment and the accommodation.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	D	E	D
mathematics	D	D	E	C
science	D	E	E	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2002, pupils' performance was well short of the school's targets, particularly in English. Improvements over time have been broadly in line with the national trend. There were no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. In the tests and assessments for seven-year-olds in 2002, pupils' performance in mathematics was above the national average and in the top five per cent for similar schools, largely because of the high proportion reaching the above average level. Performance in reading was below the national average but above that for similar schools. In writing, standards were well below the national average but average for similar schools.

Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and reach expected levels for their age in many of the areas of learning; however, in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, in spite of making good gains, they do not reach the expected levels. For the present pupils in Year 2, standards in mathematics and science are above those expected. In English, while overall standards are below average, pupils reach expected levels in reading by the end of Year 2. Standards are good in music, physical education and religious education. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well.

Pupils in the present Year 6 show improved standards in English and science, though still below average. In mathematics, their standards remain well below average. Standards in physical education, personal, social, health and citizenship education and French are above those expected. In all other subjects, standards are broadly in line with the average. Achievement overall in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory.

Pupils who have special educational needs are enabled to make very good progress through the very good help they receive from teachers and support staff. Pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue make very good progress and are speedily enabled to play a full part in the life of the school because their needs are identified early and catered for through expert help. Pupils identified as being gifted or talented make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic to come to school and are keen and interested in what they learn in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in most lessons. Behaviour in the playground is often good-natured.

Personal development and relationships	Very Good. Pupils develop into mature and responsible people. The elected members of the school council take their roles very seriously as do those given the task of befriending children who need it. Relationships are very good throughout the school community.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The attendance rates for the school are now in line with national figures. The late arrival of a minority of pupils sometimes disrupts the prompt start to some lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with a significant proportion that is very good or better. A very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is particularly strong in the reception classes, in Years 1 and 2 in science and in French with Years 5 and 6. The quality of teaching in English is good and at times very good or excellent. The skills of literacy are taught well. The teaching of mathematics is good overall though it sometimes does not sufficiently challenge the more able older pupils. The skills of numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Teachers are particularly good at managing their pupils so that pupils concentrate and behave well and learn productively. In the less successful lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough. The school provides very well for pupils for whom English is an additional language, particularly for those who are at the early stage of learning English. These pupils receive expert support and consequently are soon able to play a full part in classroom activities. Pupils who have special educational needs also benefit from the very good provision made for their needs, which are identified early and catered for through the effective use of well trained classroom support assistants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities that fully meet statutory requirements. Pupils' learning is enriched by a very good range of activities outside the classroom, a very rich variety of visits and visitors, and very constructive relationships with the local community and neighbouring schools. The school has won awards for its work in the environment and in sports.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The needs of these pupils are identified early and they receive very good help from well trained classroom assistants and teachers who know their needs very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Early identification of their needs enables the school to provide very effective support both from class teachers and the expert staff funded to support these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are rich opportunities for pupils to take significant responsibility and initiative. Pupils clearly understand what is right and wrong and show a high degree of respect for the differences between people and their values and beliefs. The curriculum draws positively on their cultural, family and religious backgrounds and the school promotes racial harmony very well.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school provides a very caring environment in which pupils of all ages and abilities can learn. The school has effective
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	systems in place to support pupils well in all aspects of their school life. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils clearly know what is expected of them during their time at the school.
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The majority of parents are supportive of the school and the work it does. There is very good quality information shared with parents on their children's progress and other aspects of the school's life and work. The school works hard to encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very strong and purposeful leadership. He has built a strong team and has introduced initiatives that are beginning to impact on standards. Senior staff have a very clear plan of the school's future development and improvement. All staff are committed to its achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effective. Governors are well informed and ask searching questions of the headteacher and staff. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties conscientiously. The chairman and the headteacher work closely together to the benefit of the pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is extending its provision for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects by giving co-ordinators more opportunities to assess standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Grants are used effectively and help pupils to make greater progress. The school consults widely, compares its performance with other schools and ensures that the budget is spent in the most cost efficient manner.

The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The new additions to the building are well planned and have improved facilities for pupils and staff but some classrooms are cramped, the hall still has to be used as a thoroughfare by some classes, and one classroom can only be reached by passing through another. Subject resources are good overall, with particular strengths in English and science. The staff is now much more settled after many staff changes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The teaching is good • The school has high expectations of the children and they make good progress • The school is well led and managed • Staff are easily approachable and listen to questions or problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information given about their children's progress • The school working more closely with parents • The amount of homework given to their children

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents in the questionnaires they returned and at the parents' meeting. The inspection team judge that the information given to parents is of very good quality and that the school offers many opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. The school works hard to encourage parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning; many parents appreciate this. The homework given by the school is also judged to be good and the requirements are made clear for parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children enter the nursery at levels well below the national expectations for their age. Teaching is good in the nursery and often very good in the reception classes so that the children make good progress, and are well on course to reach expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development by the end of the reception year. Although they make good progress, they are unlikely to reach the expected levels for communication, language and literacy, or for mathematical development, areas in which children were particularly weak when they started school.

2. Current standards in English are below average in Year 2, mainly because pupils do not have the range of vocabulary needed to communicate at expected levels in their oral and written work. Standards in reading are in line with national averages. Standards in mathematics and science are above average as a result of the systematic and rigorous teaching of basic skills. Current standards in Year 6 reflect the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom, although they make very good progress from the very low attainment levels with which many of them started school, do not manage to reach the nationally expected standard. The results also reflect the variety in the quality of teaching they have met in past years. The number of pupils, often predicted to achieve well, who leave at the end of Year 4 to join the middle school system in a neighbouring local education authority, also negatively affects the national test results. Not enough pupils who are close to achieving the nationally expected standard do so. Many are not skilled enough in planning and carrying out their own investigations in mathematics and science, or in their use of a correct scientific vocabulary. Standards in English in Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Standards have improved in mathematics and science in Year 2, but the effects of the school's recent initiatives have not yet made an impact further up the school so that standards are not as high in mathematics in Year 6.

3. Achievement is measured by comparing how much pupils improve as they move from class to class. The school keeps detailed records, and uses them to set challenging individual and group targets for improvement. Pupils keep these at the front of their books and can record their own progress. The records and books show that pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory progress between Years 3 and 6. The current Year 6, for example, have all made appropriate progress since they were assessed in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests, and about a quarter have made good progress. However, higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have not been challenged in mathematics to the same level as they are in English. This has adversely affected standards and pupils' rates of improvement. The slower progress in Years 3 to 6 is being tackled through the school's increased rigour in raising the quality of teaching and the results can be seen in improved standards in Years 3 and 4. Given that most pupils start school at well below expected levels, they are making good overall progress by the time they transfer to secondary education.

4. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography and history are all in line with expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in physical education are higher than those normally seen in both year groups, largely because of the status the school gives to the subject, the good facilities and the large number of out of school activities in sport and games. Standards are above expected levels in music in Year 2, and in line in Year 6. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 achieve at higher than expected levels in French because of the expertise of the teacher and the support received from the neighbouring high school. Standards in religious education in Year 2 are above than those indicated in the locally agreed syllabus, and are at expected levels in Year 6. Standards in physical education and in design and technology have improved throughout the school since the previous inspection, as have standards in music and religious education in Year 2. The school has maintained previous standards in all other subjects.

5. Teachers make good use of literacy in other aspects of the broader curriculum. Pupils use their increasing skills as writers to write in greater depth in history and religious education, and in reporting their investigations in science. A very good example was seen in the written reports following the Year 1/Year 2 class visits to the mosque. Older pupils use their reading skills effectively to scan books and Internet websites for information. The use of numeracy skills is satisfactory. Pupils measure accurately in science and design and technology, and record their findings in graphs. Although improving, not enough planned use is made of the skills learned in information and communication technology lessons in other subjects.

6. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is because of the high levels of support that are in place. For example, the work of the school's literacy development worker provides close support for pupils in the 'better reading partnership'. Classroom assistants are clear about their roles and use lesson plans and individual education plans to ensure that pupils make good gains in their learning during lessons. Pupils who have English as an additional language also make very good progress during their time in school. They receive expert support and teachers are very well aware of their particular needs and ensure that they play a full part in lessons. The school has identified a small number of pupils who are gifted mathematically. They are given individual support when appropriate and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The good attitudes that pupils have to school come about because of the teachers' skill at presenting learning in stimulating ways and in supporting pupils of all levels of ability in their learning. Children are welcomed into a lively classroom as soon as they start in nursery and continue to learn enthusiastically because of the exciting tasks they encounter in the reception classes. They quickly learn classroom routines and are encouraged to play together, taking account of each other's feelings and learning to listen to the adults that are working with them. The teachers' classroom management skills and the consistently high quality relationships ensure that the children behave very well and begin to develop their independence.

8. Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic to come to school and are keen and interested in what they learn in lessons. Pupils settle quickly to given tasks and activities. During whole class sessions, when opportunities are given, they listen carefully and respond well to questions, giving answers that are pertinent to discussions. An example of this was seen during a numeracy lesson where pupils explained a range of strategies they could use when working with multiples of three. Pupils work quietly and, for the most part, sensibly, sustaining concentration whether they are working as individuals, in pairs or in a group. They clearly know what is expected of them and are often eager to please the teacher, although their work in books is sometimes rushed with too little attention to its presentation. When teaching is of high quality, pupils become fully engrossed in what they are learning. For example, in a music lesson where the teacher's own enthusiasm and love of the subject was infectious, pupils were excited and worked hard throughout the session to establish the difference in tempo of a variety of pieces of well-chosen music.

9. The pupils clearly know that the school expects good behaviour and that they are encouraged to show respect to each other, the resources, the buildings and the environment. They have a strong interest in the environment through their work towards the Eco-School Award. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and often very good. This is the result of good teaching that interests and inspires pupils to learn and to the teachers' consistently very good skills of class management. The school is an orderly community and the majority of pupils move around the building sensibly. Although there are a few occasions when pupils behave inappropriately, teachers quickly address the problem without distracting from the focus of the lesson and behaviour in classrooms is very good overall. Most pupils understand the impact of their actions on others and what will result from inappropriate behaviour. Pupils' behaviour in the playground is good with play being good-natured and most pupils playing together well. There has been one fixed term exclusion during the last academic year.

10. Relationships are very good throughout the school community. Pupils know the daily routines of the school and quickly respond to teachers' requests. Pupils are provided with a very wide range of responsibilities that enables them to develop into mature and responsible people. For example, pupils serve as dinner monitors and as 'Befrienders', who help children in the playground when they need comfort, support or advice. Others have the opportunity to be elected to the school council. Pupils respond exceptionally well to these opportunities and the Befrienders and school council members are very dedicated to their work. Pupils are very polite to visitors, offering to open doors or help them find the room they are looking for. Pupils are given opportunities to use their own initiative, such as making and selling bookmarks to raise funds for charity.

11. The good attitudes of the pupils and their good behaviour are the result of the very good relationships that have been nurtured by the school and these have a positive effect on the attainment of pupils.

12. The school's attendance figures are satisfactory and broadly in line with national figures. The regular attendance of the majority of pupils enables teachers to build on previous lessons and this has a positive impact on the overall attainment and progress of pupils. The vast majority of pupils consistently arrive at school on time to ensure that the school day starts promptly, although a small minority are frequently late. The school regularly emphasises to parents the importance of punctuality and reminds parents that late arrivals can disrupt the prompt start of lessons and its impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching has improved very much since the last inspection, largely because of the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning undertaken by the headteacher and senior staff. Now, much more of the teaching is very good or better and very much less is unsatisfactory.

14. Teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of literacy. While the teaching of numeracy skills in mathematics lessons is effective, teachers do not always make enough opportunities to let pupils develop these skills in other subjects. Pupils identified as being gifted in mathematics are well taught and they consequently make good progress. However, there are occasions when the higher attainers are not sufficiently stretched by the tasks they are set; this was a feature of the unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers plan to ensure that pupils can practise their skills of reading and writing across the curriculum. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in the same way, through, for example, discussing answers together in pairs before telling the teacher what they think. The chances that they do have are not always set up so that the pupil can be sure that others are listening and can hear. Opportunities for pupils to be pressed to use accurate subject vocabulary in subjects such as science are not taken as consistently as they might be and older pupils are sometimes not given enough opportunities to work independently. Information and communication technology is taught well in lessons in the computer suite but again not enough chances are taken to use it in other subjects. The work of the Advanced Skills Teacher in teaching French is very good and pupils learn very well as a result of her insistence on an oral approach that catches their interest and challenges them very effectively.

15. The teaching in the Foundation Stage, and particularly in the reception classes, is good and often very good. The teachers have produced a stimulating place for children to learn in both the nursery and reception classrooms and in the attractive and well-resourced outside play areas. Teachers are skilled at switching activities so that the children's interest is kept. Activities are carefully planned so that they reinforce and extend the learning of the whole class sessions. For example, children in reception were learning to recognise numbers and to use a line of numbers to see which numbers came before and after others. After an energetic and enjoyable session where children built brick castles to show them which number was bigger than the other, a group went to dig in the sand, where they found number cards to show them how many castles they were to build.

Other children played a number board game to help them know how many places to move their counters. Teachers plan together for the full range of abilities and use their knowledgeable classroom support very effectively to work with particular groups or individuals. Consequently, children work with very good levels of interest and concentration and develop their independence very well.

16. Teachers throughout the school are very good at managing their pupils, some of whom sometimes show challenging behaviour. Because of the very positive relationships that teachers have with the pupils and because teachers use the school's behaviour policy consistently, the pupils know where they are and so are willing to work hard. Consequently, behaviour is nearly always good and sometimes very good and, as a result, pupils learn well. In the more effective teaching, the methods that the teacher uses stimulate learning and catch pupils' interest very strongly. For instance, pupils in a Year 1 and 2 class were amazed to see their teacher appear in an Edwardian swim suit as part of a history lesson. Their interest was immediately caught and they wanted to find out more. Teachers often share their enthusiasm for their subject infectiously, as in a music lesson with a Year 1 and 2 class where the teacher's example was followed with delight by the pupils.

17. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is very good. Teachers plan, often with the classroom and special needs support assistants, for the needs of these pupils, which are identified as early as possible in their school career. Consequently, these pupils play a full part in lessons and learn very well, as when, for example, they joined the other pupils in reading a poem aloud with expression. Over time they make very good progress towards the targets in their highly effective individual education plans. The arrangements for the use of support staff are very good. They are given clear roles to support either individual pupils with statements of educational need or to work with groups of pupils alongside the class teacher. Sometimes, in whole class sessions, they record assessments of pupils' speaking or other skills. All support staff have access to training and two hold specific qualifications related to children with special educational needs. Regular meetings with the headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator provide further opportunities for their professional development.

18. The teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is very effective in ensuring that they make very good progress and learn very well in lessons. The support of the teacher who has oversight of the needs of these pupils and of the expert bilingual support assistant has ensured that pupils are rapidly able to play a full part in lessons and that their English quickly improves.

19. Teachers make effective use of volunteers and other helpers such as the high school pupils who help in games lessons. They are well deployed and demonstrate good skills both in their sport and in improving the skills of the pupils in, for example, putting the shot.

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

20. The quality of the curriculum has improved for all pupils since the last inspection and is now very good. The school has developed a well-structured curriculum embracing all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Although the school rightly places emphasis on the key areas of literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology, it is also good at making links between other subjects. In addition, sufficient time is given to developing contributions from the local community to enrich pupils' learning. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and there was no difference in the teaching of boys and girls. The wide range of learning opportunities meets the interest and needs of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs as well those pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

21. Every subject has an effective policy and scheme of work in place. In the Foundation Stage,

these relate appropriately to the early learning goals in the six areas of learning and a very good range of practical activities supports learning in all areas. There is an overall cohesive curriculum throughout the school so that pupils develop their skills consistently with little overlap in the mixed age classes.

22. The school has developed its literacy strategy well and this is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their reading and writing skills in other subjects though they sometimes miss chances to develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to make use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, though this is a developing area.

23. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is now very good because of the good improvements in teaching and the support given to these pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The inclusive and supportive atmosphere in the school has a major impact upon the progress these pupils make and they are fully included in all aspects of the school's life. This is true also of the pupils for whom English is an additional language. A poster in the school stating, "Everybody's Different - everybody deserves equal respect" best summarises the school's very effective commitment to inclusion. All pupils have full access to the school curriculum and are fully integrated into class groups. In addition, where appropriate, specific support is planned to provide individual help. The planned curriculum takes full account of the needs of pupils at different stages on the special educational needs register. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are also provided for well and consequently make good progress.

24. The school has worked very hard to enrich the curriculum in many areas and provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, largely for the older pupils. Through the school's involvement and status in achieving the Activemark Gold award and its links with the "Kids' Club", a wide variety of activities such as table tennis, football, rugby, dance and drama are offered. In addition, pupils have opportunities to enhance their musical education by joining the choir or choosing to play a musical instrument.

25. There is a good programme of school visits for all classes, and pupils in Year 6 have an opportunity to take part in a variety of outdoor activities when they go on a residential 3-day course.

26. The school fosters very good links with the local community and rightly celebrates its conservation award that focuses on 'Working Together'. The 'Share' initiative also emphasises the attempts made by the school to involve Foundation Stage parents in the benefits of sharing ideas and expectations. Relationships with local colleges and high schools are also very strong. The expertise of staff from these schools is used well to enhance pupils' learning experiences. The use of pupils from a local high school to help with games lessons also adds value to the lessons for the pupils in Years 5 and 6.

27. The school reflects its aims extremely well in its provision for pupils' personal development. The development of a school council, in which all classes in Years 3 to 6 have two representatives, gives opportunities for pupils to share ideas and concerns about pupils' welfare. Regular meetings are minuted and pupils on the council act on ideas to make the school better. Through this process, the representatives take responsibility for their actions. They feel that both staff and pupils value their views. Effective policies for sex and drugs awareness education are in place. Sex education is taught to pupils as part of their healthy living topic. The 'Healthy Schools' Initiative' and 'Jump for your heart campaign' also emphasise the need for pupils to be aware of the benefits of regular exercise and sensible eating routines.

28. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. It is central to the ethos and attitudes that prevail throughout the school and is a great strength of the school.

29. The school's provision for spiritual development is good. The calm and respectful atmosphere in assemblies is carried into other areas of school life. Most pupils show respect and

courtesy to teachers and other adults by their demeanour and their general willingness to listen and concentrate well. History displays provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the courage and dedication of people in wartime. However, although there are good opportunities to celebrate pupils' achievement, other opportunities are missed. For example, in a whole school assembly, the inclusion of singing or reflective prayer, related to the main religions taught in the school, could have enhanced provision.

30. There is a very good provision for pupils' moral development. The school is very consistent at rewarding positive behaviour. Each class adapts and adopts different strategies to reinforce these basic principles. For example, a Year 1 and 2 class has imaginative systems for rewards and sanctions to which the pupils respond very well to these ideas, being thrilled to be named Star of the Day after earning most marbles in the reward jar. When pupils are given the chance to think about a situation and are encouraged to see it from different viewpoints, they generally respond well. Nearly all pupils are very well behaved and the school works very hard to lessen the effect that inappropriate behaviours have on school life.

31. The school develops pupils' social awareness in a variety of ways and this provision is very good. Pupils are treated consistently in a warm and friendly manner by all staff and this has a positive effect on their relationships with others. Pupils are encouraged to co-operate and learn together at appropriate times, to help and support each other and to recognize achievements. A 'Befrienders' system, operated by Year 6 pupils wearing distinctive yellow caps, gives pupils the opportunity to share and to record their concerns confidentially. This is an excellent way of giving pupils responsibility, developing empathy and showing a clear commitment to social issues. After-school clubs and visits provide a more relaxed learning and social climate. Taking part in the residential trip to an outdoor centre contributes greatly to the personal and social development of pupils in their final year.

32. The school's provision for cultural development is very good. Visits to the immediate area around the school and into their environmental garden as part of their work in science help pupils to understand their local culture and traditions. Many pupils have worked practically to develop this resource and staff recognise that, for many pupils, this may be their only real experience of learning about the need to care for their local environment. In art and design lessons, pupils develop an awareness of art that crosses cultural boundaries. For example, in Years 1 and 2, the printing of an Eid card, the painting of a stage for the Imam and the flag of the Mighty Zulu Nation identify the very good cultural awareness. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching of French by a Year 6 teacher, supported by a specialist teacher from a local high school, develops knowledge and understanding of language as well as creating opportunities for pupils to write to a pen-pal in France. Three staff have also visited America and, as a consequence, are introducing aspects of this experience to reward positive behaviours and to challenge pupils' achievements in writing. Visitors to the school enable pupils to listen and participate in different activities such as story telling and African drumming and dancing. Such experiences play an important part in bringing about the sense of racial harmony that characterises the school.

33. This is a very inclusive school which makes strenuous and thoughtful efforts to meet the needs of all its pupils. This is seen in the sensitive way in which autistic pupils gain the confidence to speak through the very good support from teachers and support workers. The school also provides a good level of wider support; for example, one pupil from a special school joins a class weekly in preparation for reintegration into mainstream education and this is managed well. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those who are deemed to be gifted or talented are catered for well, enabling them to make at least good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school provides a very caring environment in which pupils of all ages and abilities can learn and thrive. The school has very good procedures in place to ensure pupils' welfare and health and safety, and it deploys appropriate agencies to support the needs of individual pupils. Health and safety matters are often highlighted to pupils in lessons, as seen in a lesson developing games skills in using equipment in a sensible and safe way. A senior teacher is responsible for child

protection and ensures that all staff are aware of relevant procedures. All pupils are well known to staff and pupils feel confident to approach any adult if they have worries or concerns. The school takes part in an initiative, through the local education authority, known as the Befrienders. Selected Year 6 pupils are given the responsibility to help and support all pupils if they have worries or concerns. They take their roles very seriously, whilst respecting confidentiality, and records of concerns and actions taken are filed safely.

35. The school's procedures to monitor pupils' attendance are very good and this had a positive affect on the overall attendance figures of the school. Parents are very clear about the procedures they have to follow if their child is absent from school and the school very quickly follows up any unexplained absences. Pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance are rewarded with a certificate. The school has effective systems in place to support all pupils' needs during their time at the school. Pupil's academic and personal development needs are met well through the staff's knowledge of each individual child and they quickly recognise any change in behaviour or attitude. Recognition is given in a whole school celebration assembly for special achievement or the extra effort shown by individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for with their personal needs included in their individual educational programs. The monitoring of behaviour throughout the school is very good. Pupils are regularly reminded of the school's expectations and rules. The school clearly does not tolerate anti-social behaviour, such as bullying or racism. There are suitable systems to follow if there is any inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour and these are appropriately recorded on the rare occasions that they occur.

36. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Pupils have progress books that clearly indicate the level of their work and track individual pupils' progress. The levelling is discussed and agreed at team meetings to ensure a constant approach across the school. The marking of work in these books includes clear targets on how pupils can further improve their work. Teachers record pupils' progress and the next step for improvement concisely to enable the information to be shared with parents or to inform the planning for future lessons. The school analyses available data, including the results of statutory assessment tests and other information. This enables the close tracking of individual pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The information gained from the analysis is then used to steer the school improvement plan and is used well to inform lesson plans. The assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The individual education plans identify specific targets which are matched to on-going work, so that progress is clearly identified. Class teachers, support staff and the co-ordinator for special educational needs track and record individual pupil progress at regular intervals.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The school and its work are well thought of by the majority of parents.

38. Parents receive weekly information through good quality letters. Some teachers send home curriculum sheets to inform parents of areas to be studied during the forthcoming term, although this is not consistent across the school. Home and school diaries also help parents to support their children's learning. Parents also enjoy and appreciate opportunities to share in their children's achievements through attendance at school productions and class assemblies celebrating the work and achievements of the children. The school holds information evenings and an annual open day, which enables parents to work alongside pupils on a chosen subject, such as mathematics. The school also provides courses for parents, such as 'The Share Project' to enable parents to understand the work the children are doing in school. Despite the efforts of the school, there are a small number of parents who seem reluctant to support and become involved in their children's education.

39. The parents are informed of their children's progress through annual written reports. These are very well presented and clearly inform parents of their children's progress and areas where they need to develop. Targets are shared with parents, enabling them to support their children. Three parent and teacher consultations are held during the school year, enabling parents to look at their children's work and discuss their progress and overall development in more detail. Parents of children who have special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress and

are involved in regular reviews. They are consulted at all stages to ensure a full understanding of their children's needs. These parents have good access to information and support. They are consulted at regular intervals, know what targets apply to their children and have opportunities to attend review meetings and parent consultations.

40. The school's open door policy enables parents to feel comfortable to approach the staff at anytime if they have worries or concerns.

41. A small number of parents, grandparents and governors help regularly in classes. The school makes them feel welcome and they feel comfortable and valued for their work by the pupils and staff. The school is very well supported by the 'The Friends of Millbridge School', which organises a range of social and fund raising events to help provide additional resources for the school, such as playground benches and computer equipment. These have a strong positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning and on their standards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher has a very clear vision of an outward looking, thinking school in which pupils are enthusiastic learners. This is strongly supported by the governing body and all the staff, and is evident in all aspects of the school's daily life. Because of the many staff changes that characterised the three years immediately after the last inspection, the headteacher has had a relatively short amount of time to develop his team and ensure that his initiatives have a positive impact on standards and provision. However, their effects are already being seen in the strong progress being made by children in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, where standards have improved significantly, and there are signs of improved standards for the pupils in Years 3 and 4. The lack of continuity of teaching and the varying quality experienced by pupils presently in Years 5 and 6, however, along with the proportion of potentially higher attaining pupils who leave the school at the end of Year 4, mean that overall standards for these pupils are still below average. The strong partnership between the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior staff and governors has a positive impact on all aspects of the work of the school because it is based on a commitment and determination to improve. The standard of management is equally high. Systems are understood and effective, and the school functions very smoothly. The high standards of leadership and management reported in the previous inspection have been maintained.

43. The senior management team is very effective because it represents all parts of the school equally and has genuine authority. It reflects the headteacher's commitment to delegation and has successfully addressed concerns in the previous report about the role of senior staff. It plays a key role in setting out the school's future direction based on an analysis of the responses from the four 'teams' of teachers within the school, and the headteacher's own perspective of current strengths and weaknesses. The four 'teams', the staff in the four different age bands, feel consulted and involved in the overall forward planning, and also feel that their ideas will be welcomed.

44. Subject co-ordinators are equally committed to improvement. They work effectively to support their colleagues and assess standards through scrutinies of planning and pupils' work. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have observed teaching and learning in their subjects and, with the appointment of an extra teacher, opportunities will be created for other subject leaders to extend their monitoring as well.

45. The improvement plan is a well-organised document that sets out clearly how the school plans to develop and move forward. It is firmly based on an annual review of current standards and achievements, which include interviews with all members of the teaching and support teams. Action plans are detailed, have clear success criteria and timescales, and are securely founded on an accurate assessment of the school's most urgent areas of need. It includes a thorough programme of periodic review that involves all key staff, governors and the local education authority.

The governing body receives a termly update of progress towards achieving the school's targets. The staff training programme is linked directly to school improvement priorities.

46. The governing body is very effective. It fulfils all its statutory duties efficiently. Particular strengths include the very good knowledge individual governors have of the strengths and weaknesses of the school from personal visits or from the headteacher's detailed termly reports. Governors are actively encouraged to challenge and ask 'difficult' questions. A recent example has been concern over pupils' attainment in mathematics, and included a discussion of the ways in which the school was working to raise standards. The headteacher and staff welcome governors' interest and commitment, and see the partnership as very positive. There is a strong and effective partnership between the Chair and headteacher, based on mutual respect and a commitment to improvement. Committees are used successfully to consider items in detail so that the full governing body can concentrate on the main issues.

47. The school nurtures and develops its staff very effectively. There are good systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning at a whole school level, but most subject co-ordinators are not yet fully aware of standards through direct observation of lessons themselves. Performance management discussions for teachers concentrate on raising standards as well as assisting individual members of staff to develop their own professional expertise. There are very secure systems to support teachers new to teaching or to the school, as well as those who may be experiencing professional difficulties.

48. The school secretary manages the day-to-day finances very effectively. The school budgets systematically for all its expenditure and governors ensure that all budget decisions relate to the school's agreed targets. The recommendations in the most recent auditors' report have been fully addressed. Specific grants for special educational needs and the professional development of staff are used effectively. The school makes good use of new technology for office administration and is extending its range of computer programs so that pupils' progress over time can be plotted and used more quickly.

49. There is a good match between teachers and support staff and the demands of the curriculum. The school benefits from the support to its teaching of French given by a local high school. The support teacher and the bilingual assistant allocated to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language also provide valuable help to other pupils. Classroom support assistants are regarded as co-professionals and are deployed effectively, especially in the support of individual or groups of pupils with special educational needs. The skilled information and communication technology support assistant, for example, makes an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning and the efficient technology technician ensures that hardware problems are solved quickly so that pupils' learning is not interrupted.

50. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a clearly defined role and carries this out very efficiently. The headteacher now assumes more responsibility for special needs as less non-contact time is now available for the co-ordinator. The school governor, with responsibility for monitoring special educational needs provision, has a very clear view of current needs and of progress achieved. There are close links with outside agencies and partner institutions.

51. The fabric of the building is well maintained by the caretakers and cleaning staff. The school is not yet fully accessible to pupils with disabilities. There are attractive displays of pupils' work throughout the school. The new additions to the building have been sensitively matched to the style of the original, and have greatly improved facilities for pupils and staff. Teachers and other staff work effectively to ensure that the limitations of the older accommodation do not affect the learning of the pupils. The information and communication technology suite is a welcome and useful addition to the school's resources. The resources available to teachers are generally good, with particular strengths in English and science. The book stock, fiction and non-fiction, is distributed across the school in classrooms and resource areas. The small central library is well placed but is not in regular use or equipped as a learning centre. This limits pupils' opportunities to develop study

skills or greater independent learning. The school grounds are extensive and are very well used to extend pupils' opportunities for learning, especially in environmental science and physical education.

52. Governors implement best value principles. They make a detailed analysis of the results in national tests and compare the school's academic performance with that of other schools nationally. They consult widely over spending and other decisions and ensure that the school gets best value when purchasing goods or services. The pupils' good overall achievement and behaviour, the good quality of the curriculum and teaching, the very strong leadership and management, mean that the school is effective and provides good value for money. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. In order to improve standards and the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (i) Improve standards for all pupils in English by creating more planned opportunities for speaking and listening across the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 14, 22, 79, 83 and 86)
- (ii) Improve standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:
 - raising the overall quality of teaching to the level of the best;
 - raising teachers' expectations for both average and more able pupils so that they achieve the next level; and
 - making more effective use of assessment information to provide intensive support for those pupils who are falling short of their targets.*(Paragraphs 2-3, 14, 89-90 and 93)*
- (iii) Raise standards in science by the end of Year 6 by:
 - enabling pupils to develop their scientific knowledge and understanding more independently; and
 - giving pupils more opportunities to explain and interpret their observations using scientific terminology.*(Paragraphs 14 and 98)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	15	30	14	1	0	0
Percentage	3	24	48	23	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point

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)	24	317
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	95

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	44

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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
	2002	21	17	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	19
	Girls	13	16	16
	Total	29	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (77)	84 (77)	92 (91)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	17
	Girls	16	15	15
	Total	34	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (86)	87 (82)	84 (80)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	28	24	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	18	20
	Girls	14	13	20
	Total	26	31	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (68)	60 (57)	77 (74)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	20	20
	Girls	16	14	16
	Total	35	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (65)	65 (63)	69 (71)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	252	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	46	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.1
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	329

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	1

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	778,906
Total expenditure	752,144
Expenditure per pupil	2,143
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,644
Balance carried forward to next year	63,406

Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
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Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	365
Number of questionnaires returned	76

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	38	3	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	50	8	4	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	49	17	1	1
The teaching is good.	57	39	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	36	13	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	33	1	5	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	41	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	38	43	9	8	1
The school is well led and managed.	51	42	0	4	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	45	4	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	39	9	0	9

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

54. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and meets the needs of young children very well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with the well-planned and successful introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum, the building of a new suite to house the reception year and the close co-operation between nursery and reception to build a coherent unit. The Foundation Stage provides a very good start for all children and promotes positive attitudes to learning.

55. The Foundation Stage is made up of a nursery class, which provides two part-time sessions a day, and two reception classes. Children normally enter the nursery in the September or January following their third birthday and move on to reception after three terms. Consequently younger children only have the benefit of two terms in the reception. There are good induction procedures, including home visits by the nursery staff and opportunities for children and parents to visit the nursery, helping children to settle quickly in to school life. The nursery and reception classes are each staffed by qualified teachers who are very well supported by skilled and enthusiastic full time support assistants, one in the nursery, who is a trained nursery nurse, and one in the reception unit, and by an effective bilingual assistant. A strength of the Foundation Stage is the close co-operation between all the adults, providing very good role models for the children. Nursery and reception each benefit from direct access to their own high quality outdoor play area and this contributes well to learning particularly in children's knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.

56. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery represents a wide range of ability but is well below the standard expected for their age, especially in spoken language and social and emotional maturity. A number of children enter nursery with English as an additional language and the good support they receive helps them to make good progress by the time they finish reception. Consistently good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage, and a rich curriculum based on appropriately practical activities, enables all pupils to achieve well. The high emphasis rightly placed on children's personal, social and emotional development enables them to achieve very well in this area. By the time children start in Year 1, the majority make very good progress in reaching the recommended Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Good progress is made in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, but nevertheless attainment is just below average in these areas.

57. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage with a high proportion of very good teaching observed in the reception year. Planning is meticulous and the purposeful, practical activities lead children to make very good connections in their learning. For example, listening to the story of the Hungry Caterpillar helps reception children to decide that the very small, live caterpillars in the tank will get bigger if they eat, and watching the way the caterpillars move helps children to make an articulated caterpillar with card and split pins. Every opportunity is taken to involve children in their own learning. For example, the nursery teacher outlines all the activities they can choose from for the session and there is a good balance between directing children to activities such as baking and giving them the freedom to choose. Very good assessment sheets at each activity help to keep a good track of what children have done each day to ensure that they experience the full range of learning opportunities. All adults are aware of the need to develop children's speaking and listening skills and take every opportunity to talk to children throughout the day, be it discussing hot colours whilst mixing paints or discussing choices at snack time. Good support is given to children identified as having special educational needs and children for whom English is an additional language and this enhances their learning well. This was seen in the nursery when the bilingual assistant encouraged one boy very discreetly to help him to join in the role-play in the vet's waiting room.

58. The Foundation Stage is managed very well by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator who leads by example and by valuing the views and expertise of all the Foundation Stage team as they plan the curriculum together. Her calm and organised approach and the considerable effort made by staff have enabled children to benefit very quickly from the new reception suite. The assessment procedures are very good, and the comprehensive Records of Achievement plot children's progress very well and are used effectively to plan the next step for each child.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. This area of learning is rightly given a high priority by teachers and so children make very good progress, the majority attaining the expected level by the end of reception. This is because the quality of teaching is very good.

60. Children are encouraged to develop independence from the very start in the nursery as they match personal pictures to their drinks ready for snack-time. This continues in reception, where, for example, children are expected to choose another activity where they can filter in when they have finished the initial task. Children are motivated to learn by the exciting range of interesting activities on offer, be it playing hopscotch in the nursery or exploring the wild life area to find small creatures in reception. They learn to maintain concentration for an increasing amount of time. In reception children were seen regularly to be totally absorbed in an activity for long periods of time, one girl, for example, being engrossed in examining the interesting wild life tray for about half an hour. Teachers have a high expectation that activities will be tidy at the end of each session and this is achieved without fuss. Good behaviour is developed well through the good relationships apparent between all adults and staff and consistent application of the behaviour code. Children develop an increasing awareness of the needs of others, as when, for example, they are reminded of the need to respect all creatures and not to harm the aphids they are observing but to release them gently back to the flowers. Children co-operate well with each other when playing games or taking turns to be the receptionist in the animal surgery. They respond well to the requirement to get themselves ready for physical education, though help is at hand to tie laces if needed.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Teaching is good overall and means that children make good progress in developing speaking and listening skills from a low starting point on entry to nursery, though standards are still below average by the time they start in Year 1. Standards in reading and writing are close to average by the end of reception.

62. Staff take every opportunity to speak to children and to invite a reply. This ranges from the regular expectation of 'please' and 'thank you', to listening to the story and answering a good variety of questions. Throughout the day, whatever the activity, teachers talk to children about what they are doing and children become comfortable in speaking to adults and to each other. The majority of children have a limited vocabulary, though adults seize every chance to extend the range whenever possible. This was seen in an outdoor activity when a child was asked why greenfly are green, and he remembered a previous lesson to reply, "Because it is camouflage." Staff try various ways to promote enjoyment in a story and to develop listening skills. This was seen in the nursery when children were eager to listen to the story of The Lost Teddy, as the book had been left out temptingly to build up anticipation. The children were eager to hold the doll representing a storybook character and many were keen to talk about the cover of the book. All children listened attentively and about half responded to questions about how they would feel if they were lost. Good support is given by the bilingual assistant to help those children for whom English is an additional language to understand.

63. Children are encouraged to develop a love of books from the earliest age by sharing a book with the teacher and taking books home regularly to share with parents. Children in reception each have an appropriate book from the well-structured reading programme, which they enjoy reading

regularly to the teacher and at home. Some very good teaching was seen in the reception when good use was made of puppets to teach the initial sounds of words. The majority of children can read simple sentences and explain the pictures well. Lower attaining pupils develop confidence as they retell the story from the pictures, and higher attaining pupils can read accurately and sound out words they have not seen before. Phonic skills are taught systematically and well, helping children to develop these important skills steadily from the start. Nursery children enjoy repeating the sounds and matching them to the appropriate object, and also take home a sheet to practise at home. This continues through reception and good records are kept to give support and challenge where needed. There is a good partnership between school and home and this makes a good contribution to children's progress in reading.

64. Children learn how to form their letters in the nursery through making letter shapes and by tracing letters in the sand and on paper. Many children make a good attempt at writing their own name on their work. There is a carefully structured approach to writing in reception with children first tracing, then copying and then writing independently. By the end of reception, the majority can write a recognisable sentence and higher attaining children can write two or three sentences unaided, with the spelling mainly correct, as, for example, "I went to my nanas to play football....." Children are encouraged to write in a variety of activities such as recording appointments to see the vet in the imaginary play area or writing a sentence about their own painting.

Mathematical development

65. Teaching is good overall and as a result children make good progress but their attainment is on course to be just below average as they enter Year 1. Teachers rightly adopt a suitably practical approach to helping children learn and this is successful in developing understanding well. However, those younger children who only have two terms in reception do not have sufficient experience of simple recording to achieve the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals.

66. Children in reception extend their counting skills well in the introductory oral session of numeracy lessons, so that, for example, most children can place their number cards in the correct order and respond well to such questions as asking for the number between four and six. In a very good lesson in reception, a very well planned series of tasks and suitable intervention from the adults helped children to solve simple problems. For example, one boy recognised that he only had six bricks to build his "9" castle and so needed three more. Children for whom English is an additional language are supported well to help them develop mathematical language and understanding.

67. Children develop a sound knowledge of shape through matching shapes and completing shape puzzles and repeating patterns in the nursery such as printing a pattern of alternate shapes. Pupils in reception can recognise and name the common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and learn something of their properties as they use the solid shapes to build models. Children learn to solve problems by looking at graphs they have made, as when, for example, nursery children decided which was their favourite pet whilst reception children discovered which was the favourite sandwich.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Teaching is good overall and children achieve very well as a result so that the attainment of the majority is at the expected level as they enter Year 1. Teachers plan a very good variety of activities in this area which are focussed well on what the children are intended to learn. Simple but clear records are kept to track that all children have the chance to participate and also to record anything of significance for each child and these are used well to determine children's overall progress.

69. Children are given good opportunities to develop confidence in information and communication technology as they have daily access to the computer and reception children benefit from working alongside the skilled technician. This was seen as children learned how to use a colour program to design a striped rug and how to print their finished work. Good use is made of visits to the park and to the science museum to enrich children's knowledge and understanding and a visit from a veterinary nurse really captured children's attention. The outside play areas are used well to improve learning opportunities. For example, children in reception painted the concrete with water and watched in amazement as their pictures evaporated on a sunny day. An excellent resource is the environmental area in the school grounds. Nursery children enjoy their seasonal walks to observe changes around them and reception children learn a lot about small creatures and their habitats as they search for wood lice and other creatures. They have good support from a knowledgeable environmental worker and the teacher maximises their learning as a good range of magnifiers, cups and information books is made available to help identify what they have seen. This work is extended well as children observe the changes to their caterpillar and track the life cycle of a butterfly in their books.

70. Children have good opportunities to construct models throughout the Foundation Stage. For instance, reception children make models of local shops using discarded boxes. Children are skilled in using scissors and are confident to use split pins to make their caterpillars move. Both nursery and reception use a good range of construction toys and have daily access to play in sand and water to extend their knowledge of materials. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning and behave very well.

Physical development

71. The teaching of physical development is good and so children make very good progress and achieve the expected standard by the end of the reception year.

72. In both nursery and reception, very good use is made of the outdoor areas to develop children's physical skills. Nursery children ride and cycle around, taking care not to bump into each other. Adults provide good support, encouraging their independence but ensuring their safety. The reception class children make good use of the space in the hall when learning how to use a bat and ball accurately. The teacher enthusiastically demonstrated how to dribble a football carefully and children showed good levels of control as they repeated the action. Learning is enhanced significantly in these sessions as the children respond to the high expectations of behaviour and are made aware of any safety issues.

73. Children learn to use a wide range of implements such as knives when making sandwiches, scissors and paintbrushes with increasing control and accuracy. Good attention is paid to holding the pencil correctly and this improves writing skills well.

Creative development

74. Teaching is good overall. The children make very good progress, enabling them to achieve the expected level by the start of Year 1.

75. Children in the nursery enjoy painting freely and also experience a wide range of materials to make colourful printing patterns and pictures. For example, following their spring walk, children printed with their fingers to create a picture of birds in their nest. This good practice is continued in reception as children paint detailed pictures of animals to match with the appropriate animal home. Children are encouraged to look carefully at what is around them and this helps them to produce very detailed observational drawings of spring flowers using pastels. Skills are taught systematically, as when, for example, children are taught to mix colours slowly as they combine yellow and red to make orange.

76. The imaginary play areas are interesting and inviting and children readily fall into role as they enter the animal surgery. Children develop an enjoyment of music as they listen to the instruments in the nursery and compare high and low notes from tambourine and cymbals in reception. They know a good range of songs by heart and join in class singing with gusto.

ENGLISH

77. The 2002 national tests for seven year olds indicated that standards in reading were below average and in writing well below average. Standards in reading improved between 2001 and 2002, but remained unchanged in writing. The 2002 national tests for 11 year olds indicated that standards in English were well below average and had declined in comparison with 2001, despite previous improvement. The relative performance of higher attaining pupils was better than that of the whole year group.

78. The results from inspection indicate that standards are now improving for both seven and 11 year olds. Reading standards are broadly average for both age groups, indicating very good achievement. Standards in writing are below average, but higher attaining pupils achieve average standards by age 11. Speaking and listening skills are below average at age seven and 11, although there are a number of pupils who speak fluently. By age seven, all pupils make good progress. By age 11, higher attaining pupils make good progress, pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make very good progress, whilst the remaining pupils achieve satisfactory progress. The school has identified reasons why a number of pupils failed to achieve expected grades in 2002. As a result, specific teaching programmes have been introduced to provide further support for middle ability pupils.

79. By the age of seven, most pupils listen carefully and the more able use extended sentences in reply to questions. However, a significant proportion of pupils offer brief responses to questions and do not always speak clearly. In lessons, the good quality of questioning skills helps to raise standards and, when prompted, pupils use a good range of adjectives. For example, when discussing holidays in Florida, the more able pupils selected 'fantastic' and 'exciting' to describe their emotions. During an excellent lesson on information texts, pupils used extended sentences to explain why pets need injections. On other occasions, however, pupils struggle to express themselves clearly, lacking fluency and sufficient vocabulary to provide convincing responses.

80. Most pupils read accurately, with higher attaining pupils demonstrating fluency and expression. The majority of pupils employ successful strategies to identify and pronounce difficult words. They offer valid opinions on story content, identify different characters and use non-fiction books successfully to select information. A minority of pupils, whilst reading accurately, are not fluent and have difficulty in expressing opinions about their reading. They also struggle to locate information in non-fiction texts. Reading standards are improving because the school ensures all pupils have regular opportunities to read in class, both in literacy and in other subjects. Homework provides a regular reading focus and pupils are encouraged to choose texts which interest them. Resources for reading are very good and meet most interests.

81. Standards in handwriting are improving, but there are still too many pupils whose letter formation is inconsistent in size and shape. Most pupils use basic punctuation accurately, but only the more able pupils confidently extend this beyond full stops and capital letters. Spelling standards are variable. Through good teaching, pupils are encouraged to explore different forms of writing. These include descriptive and imaginative prose, letters and story recall. Careful marking ensures that pupils know how to improve their work.

82. The overall quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good. Staff apply the literacy strategy effectively and plan lessons carefully. The very positive relationships and the management of learning and behaviour ensure that most lessons proceed at a good pace, resulting in good progress. During the inspection, all teaching staff presented ideas clearly and ensured that

the needs of all ability groups were met. Support staff work hard and, with guidance, complete a range of essential tasks, such as day-to-day assessment of pupils' contributions during whole class discussion. As a result, pupils respond positively to learning and behave well, because they know exactly what is expected of them.

83. By the time they are in Year 6, higher attaining pupils speak fluently. However, there is a wide range of ability with a significant proportion of pupils with a limited vocabulary, lacking understanding of words such as 'confidential' and 'intently', for example. Pupils do not use Standard English sufficiently and employ colloquialisms instead. On occasion they misinterpret language or do not recognise specific styles, such as irony. However, pupils do communicate in lessons and are prepared to offer ideas when asked. They join in when opportunities arise, but teachers do not always challenge them to extend their responses sufficiently. As a result, pupils do not always reveal all they know about a topic.

84. Most pupils enjoy reading and employ effective strategies to understand the text. As a result, they read accurately, some with fluency and expression. The more able readers discuss character and plot effectively. They are able to name different authors and make valid comparisons between them. The majority of pupils read a range of fiction and all have their favourite authors. When challenged, the most able pupils justify their preferences in a determined manner and express themselves clearly. These pupils are attaining above average standards in reading. Most pupils have appropriate library skills. They know how books are catalogued and use the contents page and index to locate and interpret information effectively.

85. Standards in handwriting vary from above to below average. The most able pupils write fluently in a cursive, joined script. However, a significant proportion of pupils do not join their letters consistently and the weaker writers do not maintain a consistent shape or size with individual letter formation. Most pupils use basic punctuation appropriately, with the more able employing quotation, exclamation and question marks correctly. At all levels of ability there is a good range of work, which includes poetry, dialogue and imaginative and descriptive prose. This is an indication of carefully planned teaching. Pupils are encouraged to use language for effect and are introduced to differing styles. For example, in a lesson on Kipling, pupils explored his story openings and then went on to replicate his style in their own work. This provided them with good opportunities to explore how authors manipulate language.

86. The overall standard of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and pupils of all abilities are presented with appropriate learning opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and the inclusive nature of teaching enables those with severe learning difficulties to be fully integrated into class work. The extra support provided for those pupils who have English as an additional language enables them to take a full part in lessons and to make very good progress. The result of this good teaching is that behaviour is good and pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. Where teaching is particularly good, specific learning needs are quickly identified and addressed; for example by, modelling handwriting and correcting non-standard English. However, not enough time is given to discussion in some lessons and therefore pupils are not challenged sufficiently to think issues through. As a result, pupils do not always use clear and precise vocabulary in their spoken replies and written responses.

87. The English curriculum is of very good quality and range. It fully meets the requirements of the national literacy strategy. It provides a wide range of additional learning experiences for all pupils, including visiting performers and writers, poetry competitions, drama workshops and educational visits. School drama productions provide good support to all areas of literacy. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development effectively. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning. The differing booster programmes now in place provide effective support for specific groups of pupils. Assessment procedures are thorough and draw upon a range of information.

88. The very good leadership of the co-ordinator promotes literacy effectively throughout the curriculum and she is ably supported by all staff. She helps to improve the quality of teaching

through her lesson observations and the feedback she provides. The literacy governor gives good support to the school. Resources are very good and enable all staff to introduce pupils to a wide range of literature. Overall, standards are rising, because the quality of teaching is good and because the school carefully addresses the specific learning needs of all pupils. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

MATHEMATICS

89. The results of the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 2 show that standards were above average when compared to all schools nationally and were very high when compared to schools with pupils from a similar background. Standards for pupils in Year 6 in the 2002 tests were well below average when compared to all schools nationally and average when compared to schools with pupils from a similar background. Inspection evidence shows a similar picture in the current year. This good improvement in Year 2 since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory, is due to an improvement in teaching and the very good example and leadership of the mathematics co-ordinator who now leads the team in Year 1 and Year 2. The decline in Year 6 since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below average, is due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in these classes, considerable disruption to their learning because of previous staff changes and insufficient challenge for pupils of average and above average ability in Year 6.

90. Achievement is very good for all pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 because of the consistently good and often very good teaching and the interesting range of practical activities which motivate pupils well and promote understanding. Pupils achieve well in Year 3 to Year 5 because of the good level of challenge and good teaching. Achievement is less marked for the average and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 because insufficient use is made of the good assessment information available to target those pupils who are predicted to fall just short of the average or higher level, and to sustain the challenge and support needed to enable them to achieve the appropriate standard. All pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve very well because of the very good level of support they receive individually or in small groups. The school has identified two pupils as being gifted mathematically and each is receiving good support, with challenging work related to the class topics, to help them achieve well.

91. Good counting activities, the good use of resources such as number lines and 100 squares and the focussed attention paid to developing an awareness of patterns in number help pupils to gain considerable confidence with basic number skills by the age of seven. The strong emphasis placed on questioning pupils and asking them to explain how they have worked things out helps to develop a depth of understanding which is above average for their age. This was seen in a lesson for Year 1 and Year 2 where good use of the 100 square led pupils to appreciate the related patterns of $\times 2$, $\times 4$ and $\times 8$ and explain the process of doubling. The imaginative use of pupils' previous learning helped lower attaining pupils to make the connection between the story of Noah's Ark to counting in twos. The vast majority of pupils are confident with numbers to a hundred and higher attaining pupils work happily with numbers to a thousand. Pupils have good experience of measuring to solve problems on time and to weigh in grams and kilograms, with lower attaining pupils able to decide which object is heavier or lighter. Pupils develop a good knowledge of the names and properties of three-dimensional shapes in a range of work across the subjects. For example, they looked at cylinders when making a winding mechanism in design and technology. Pupils can display and read information on a variety of graphs and charts, as when, for example, they sorted shapes into different types and displayed the information clearly in a diagram.

92. Pupils continue to develop their number skills through the school through regular practice in the introductory mental sessions at the start of each lesson and are achieving close to the expected level by the end of Year 5. However, whilst pupils are making satisfactory progress in Year 6, this is not sufficient to overcome gaps in their skills and knowledge which have accrued during some unsettled periods in their education. Pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs are making

good progress because of the high level of intensive support they are receiving. By the age of 11, most pupils have a reasonable recall of tables and can multiply larger numbers by a single digit. Higher attaining pupils can work out long multiplication successfully. The school's focus on developing understanding through solving problems is helping to improve their skills in making the connection between fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils have a sound understanding of different units of measurement and can calculate area and perimeter using the formula. Pupils continue to solve problems to develop understanding as when they investigate the number of faces which would be painted on the outside of a cuboid made from plastic cubes. Pupils can program the floor robot to turn through a right angle but a weaker area is the opportunity to draw and measure angles with greater accuracy. Pupils can find the mode and median of a set of data and understand probability in terms of no chance and certain. They are confident in drawing graphs to display information and use their line graphs to work out the cost of a particular weight, in pence.

93. Teaching is good overall with examples of very good teaching seen in Year 1 to Year 4, and one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. In the best lessons, pupils are challenged to think and this accelerates their learning. This was seen in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 on symmetry when one pupil studied her information and concluded that if it was a regular shape the number of lines of symmetry must be equal to the number of sides. Pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations. For example, some pupils in Year 2 were invited to continue the doubling pattern and worked out double 256 mentally. The best lessons are well structured and a strong feature is the use of appropriate practical activities to help learning, as when, for example, younger pupils developed a better understanding of multiples of 2 by making a concertina book with 2 objects on each page. A key feature in the very good lessons is the knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher which inspires pupils to participate and want to try their best. Relationships are generally very good and this is an important factor in the very good management of pupils and is a major contribution to the quality of learning. Marking is generally good and the advice given helps pupils to improve. A relative weakness is a lack of a consistent approach to how pupils present their work, which is often untidy and can inhibit efficient working and calculation. The pace of lessons is generally quick and this improves pupils' arithmetical skills well. Where the teaching is less successful, the pace of the mental session is too leisurely to develop pupils' arithmetical skills and the activities are not sufficiently challenging to raise pupils' enthusiasm. On one occasion, calculators were used inappropriately as many pupils were not sufficiently secure in their understanding of place value or ratio to interpret the answers. Homework is used well to support and extend learning. Very occasionally teachers pitch the level of classwork too closely to the older pupils in the mixed age classes and this causes a little confusion for some younger pupils. This was seen in a class of pupils from Years 1 and 2 when younger pupils found the concept of generalising about adding odd and even numbers beyond their comprehension, though the subsequent group activities were better matched.

94. Pupils have sound opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects. Year 2 pupils measure distances in science using a metre stick, and older pupils measure liquids and their rate of evaporation in science. On a field trip, they carefully measured out the quadrant for investigation when studying plants in their habitat. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support learning in mathematics.

95. The subject is well led and managed by a very knowledgeable co-ordinator. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and monitoring of teaching and learning has had a positive impact on standards, particularly in Years 1 and 2. This is now permeating through the school but has not yet raised standards sufficiently in Year 6 because of some inherited gaps in learning. The monitoring of teaching has identified areas for development well but has not yet been able to raise the quality of the satisfactory teaching to match the very good practice found in other classes. Test results are analysed thoroughly and areas of weakness identified. For example, following a recent analysis, the school has focussed clearly on pupils using and applying their skills in mathematics. The results of this are evident in most lessons and it is having a good effect on pupils' understanding. There are good assessment procedures and the progress of individuals is tracked through the school. However, this information is not always available in a sufficiently helpful

form to enable the school to focus attention on raising standards for particular groups, such as, for example, identifying those pupils who are just falling short of their targets at the end of Year 5 to help them reach the required level at the end of Year 6. The school is now working to computerise these procedures to use the information more effectively.

SCIENCE

96. Standards in science are good at Year 2 and below average at Year 6. Standards overall have improved and are now below rather well below national averages.

97. Teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teachers follow a balanced curriculum that ensures that all strands of the subject are taught systematically. For example, by the end of Year 6, pupils have an understanding of solids, liquids and gases, understand how to record shadows and recognize conditions that can lead to decay and can reflect upon the importance of refrigerating foods. However, this is at a lower level than typically expected for their age.

98. There are strengths and weaknesses in the way science is taught, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teachers understand the importance of teaching through practical activity and provide plenty of opportunities for practical experiments. For example, pupils use their environmental garden as a resource for investigating and understanding the processes involved in making compost. Generally, pupils work co-operatively and some groups have good strategies for taking turns and sharing views though sometimes one individual can dominate a group. However, pupils are too often told exactly what to do and are not given enough opportunities to plan and test for themselves, or to try different approaches to solving problems and record their findings in their own style. When summarizing lessons, teachers miss opportunities to use specific scientific vocabulary to clarify understanding and extend the pupils' speaking and listening skills.

99. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils attain above average levels. Pupils have many opportunities to experiment, to find things out for themselves and to share their understanding and learning with friends and teachers. This enables teachers to assess what the pupils have learned and to provide harder work for higher attaining pupils. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson on forces, pupils initially experimented with a range of large play equipment and small wheeled toys. Pupils were then asked to consider the results of pushing a small car 'harder' or 'weaker'. Experimentation with a 'pushometer' enriched the pupils' learning about how to conduct a fair test. Questioning of good quality and the structured recording of pupils' responses resulted in pupils making very good progress. Good organization of resources and detailed planning identified activities that were well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers develop pupils' numeracy skills by encouraging accurate measuring and recording through charts, graphs and diagrams. Pupils' literacy skills are enhanced when they are encouraged to write up their investigations in their own words.

100. In all lessons, teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are given additional support to help to take full part in the practical activities and very often a classroom support assistant gives extra support; as a result these pupils learn well. In the same way, pupils who are learning English as an additional language are fully involved in activities because of the effective support they receive.

101. There have been several co-ordinators of this core subject since the last inspection. However, the present post holder has developed a clear policy and scheme of work and gives clear guidance related to expectations in teaching, learning, assessment, recording and reporting. Consequently, leadership and management are sound with a strong capacity for improvement. There have been good initiatives for staff development and pupils' learning. For example a member of staff attended a 5-day science course, Year 1 and Year 2 staff has received advice and support from the local education authority and Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have received additional support

through science “booster” classes. The school’s ‘Eco Award’ status and good practical resources are making important and evolving differences in the way science is being approached and taught. However, there are still not enough regular checks made on teaching, and on pupils’ work, for teachers to be clear about where weaknesses lie and how to raise standards. In addition, there is not enough expectation of pupils to use correct scientific vocabulary when investigating or discussing work. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm and vision of the co-ordinator combined with the willingness of staff to plan in teams mean that the school is well placed to make further improvement in its provision.

ART AND DESIGN

102. Standards are at expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils achieve well. Pupils have opportunities to work in a good range of media and have experience of a broad variety of art and artists. They develop their skills systematically as they progress through the school so that the simple observational drawings of plants seen from Year 1 pupils lead on to more detailed and accurate drawings of creatures seen during a river walk in Years 5 and 6 or a delicately coloured study of an apple in water colour. The simple pots made by younger pupils are followed in Years 5 and 6 by more elaborate clay work where pupils use slip to stick on handles and even figureheads. Younger pupils use carefully graded browns and reds in an autumn painting. Older pupils use the works of Kandinsky to inspire their colourful geometrical paintings. Pupils use their sketch books well to experiment and practise and their progress is helped considerably by the constructive comments of the teachers that identify good practice and suggest ways of improving.

103. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use art to support learning in other subjects. Pupils use painting and drawing programs in information and communication technology to produce work in the style of Mondrian, for example. Portraits of Tudor monarchs help pupils appreciate the beautiful fabrics that they wore and the difficulties this presents in conveying them accurately in paint. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils’ understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Painting a picture representing the Mighty Zulu Nation in Year 2 helped pupils understand the significance of the sections of the flag and creating and printing a card for the celebration of Eid conveyed the meaning of that festival clearly. The quality of observation that is encouraged by the teachers enhances pupils’ appreciation of natural things and so contributes to their spiritual development.

104. The quality of teaching is good and some very good teaching was seen. Teachers, well supported by the subject co-ordinator, have good subject knowledge and are confident in sharing their skills with the pupils. Teachers plan a good variety of stimulating activities which catch pupils’ interest well so that they work hard and productively. Pupils enjoy their work and are often proud of what they produce. A pupil with learning difficulties, for example, once he was reassured that his clay pot was a good effort, was pleased to tell a visiting adult all about it. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported in the subject and the choice of topics and activities are motivating for pupils from the variety of cultures represented in the school. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also very well supported and make good progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils are attaining standards which are broadly average for their age, though skills of designing and making are more advanced than evaluating their own work to suggest improvements. This overall improvement since the last inspection is due to the appointment of an enthusiastic co-ordinator to lead the subject and the subsequent introduction of a clear scheme of work and improvement in resources.

106. Pupils’ achievement is good overall and pupils benefit from interesting activities which are

planned well to make the most of the time available for the subject. In addition, discussions between staff, and support and advice when needed, have helped to improve teachers' confidence and improve learning.

107. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experience of a good range of construction toys and discarded materials and they learn how to join different materials using glue or sticky tape. They practise how to make hinges and incorporate this into making cardboard houses and also realise that they have to use transparent material to make the windows. They learn how to make a wind up mechanism for a model by first studying a good range of commercial products. They celebrate the end of their topic on making puppets by putting on their own puppet show. Higher attainers produce work that is well finished and of good quality. Less able pupils produce less polished but sound work.

108. Pupils build steadily on their skills from Year 3 to Year 6. They develop skills of sewing and cutting as they design and make money containers and photograph frames. A good feature is the development of food technology through school and the emphasis placed on safety and hygiene. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the importance of examining existing products before designing their own, by, for example, tasting pizzas or looking at Christmas or Eid decorations. A good range of planning sheets helps pupils to plan work carefully, from the original outline to measuring and recording their ideas in more detail and from different angles. Designs for a shelter are imaginative, with importance paid to details such as being waterproof. Pupils discuss their own work regularly but do not routinely examine ways in which improvements could be made.

109. Teaching is good overall and this promotes learning well. Pupils who have special educational needs are helped effectively and teachers and other staff ensure that those for whom English is an additional language understand the specialist language used. Good use is made of appropriate vocabulary from an early age so that pupils gain an understanding of terms such as 'axle' early on and this helps them to explain their work. Pupils respond well to examining a good range of products before starting their own design, as, for example, when Year 1 and Year 2 pupils looked closely at the winding mechanism on a well and also speculated about where the winding mechanism might be on the toy helicopter. Lessons are well organised with a strong emphasis on safety; for example, pupils looked carefully at a range of pizzas but were not allowed to touch any before it was time to taste. Teachers take a lot of thought to make the introduction to a new topic interesting, as when, for example, the teacher used a computer presentation to generate enthusiasm and give Year 5 and Year 6 pupils some ideas and inspiration at the start of the fairground topic. Occasionally the balance of a lesson becomes distorted as teachers spend too much time talking rather than letting pupils get on with the task and so they become a little restless.

110. There are good links with literacy as pupils label their diagrams and also when the teachers assemble helpful word banks, for example, when commenting on food flavours. Similarly pupils develop numeracy skills by careful measurement and working out quantities of ingredients. The use of information and communication technology to enhance learning in the subject is underdeveloped.

111. The subject is well managed and a useful scheme of work is now in place. The co-ordinator has monitored progress by compiling a portfolio of pupils' work. The introduction of an after school club has stimulated pupils' interest in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

112. Standards of attainment meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the standards seen at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Progress is satisfactory amongst all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

113. By the end of Year 2, pupils identify the differing characteristics of towns, countryside and coastline. They make good use of photographic evidence to identify buildings, fields and beaches. They recognise that the land usage in each may vary. Pupils comment appropriately on leisure activities and recall their own holidays, offering valid comments on their journey and describing the

environment of their destination. The more able pupils write effectively to describe these characteristics. Through good teaching, pupils make connections between different environments, by answering focussed questions. The careful management of learning and behaviour ensures that all groups of pupils are fully included in this work. Both teaching and support staff are effective in promoting good rates of learning amongst all pupils. In response, pupils behave well and work hard. The overall standard of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good.

114. By the end of Year 6, pupils have acquired an appropriate range of knowledge and understanding across a range of issues. A study of the locality includes an opportunity to follow the course of the local river and investigate erosion. Work in the school's wildlife area provides rich opportunities for pupils to study ecology. This is effectively linked to the 'eco-award project'. Pupils gain a good understanding of river systems in different regions of the world and use appropriate vocabulary to describe how the river reaches the sea. A study of rain forests helps pupils investigate climate and the impact of human activity upon a fragile environment. The more able pupils recognise the differing arguments concerning the destruction of forests and climatic change. These areas of the curriculum are taught effectively, with pupils gaining access to appropriate information and being challenged to consider the implication for mankind of major environmental questions.

115. As pupils progress from Year 3 to 6, they steadily acquire a range of mapping skills. For example, they move from using two figure to six figure grid references. Whilst understanding the principles of accurate mapping, pupils do not always apply these effectively when drawing maps and this area of work does not always reach the required standard. This is because there is not always sufficient demand made on pupils in this area of their work. However, the overall standard of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and because of this pupils behave well, work hard and make steady progress.

116. The quality and range of the curriculum is good. Pupils are introduced to an appropriate range of topics, based upon national guidelines. In Years 3 to 6, a two year cycle of topics helps increase the breadth of the curriculum. However, there is some loss in the continuity of learning, when only one topic is taught in the school year. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of numeracy in the school. However, there is insufficient use made of information and communication technology.

HISTORY

117. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards of attainment meet national expectations, as was the case at the last inspection. The work of a number of higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 exceeds national expectations. Progress is satisfactory amongst all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress because of the support that is available for them.

118. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, make good use of a visit to a local museum where they investigate a Tudor manor House. They write clear accounts of their visit. Pupils in Year 2 write in some detail to compare their own experiences with those of people long ago. A visit to the Toy Museum helps give pupils a sense of chronology. In further work, through a very good lesson on the Victorian seaside, pupils continue to develop their understanding of change over time. Here the very imaginative teaching, with the class teacher and support staff using role-play, provided good opportunities for pupils to compare their own experiences on holiday with those of children one hundred years ago. Pupils learn to sequence holiday photographs and begin to use these effectively to compare changing fashion, leisure pursuits and transport. Teaching and learning is good overall for these year groups, with imaginative resources and approaches helping enrich the curriculum. Pupils work hard and are well behaved in class.

119. By Year 6, pupils acquire an appropriate range of skills as they study a contrasting range of topics. Their work on Egypt is very detailed and a number of more able pupils complete project folders to a high standard. This gives all pupils a good sense of the complexity of an ancient civilisation and also supports the development of their mapping skills effectively. In extended written work, pupils explored the role of the archaeologist in revealing the past. Good use is made of local

maps to help pupils understand how their local area has changed through the centuries. This work is taught effectively and to a good standard, with a range of historical skills being developed. In other work, pupils in Years 3 and 4 cover contrasting topics, Roman Britain and aspects of World War II. Whilst this usefully develops the wider skills of empathy and historical investigation, it does reduce opportunities for developing a secure sense of chronology. Overall teaching is good. Teachers have confident subject knowledge and present their material in ways that catch and maintain the pupils' interest. However, on occasion, opportunities are missed to develop independent thinking skills through discussion. This, in turn, limits the overall quality of subsequent written work. Pupils work hard and collaborate effectively on group tasks and behaviour is good.

120. The curriculum is of good quality and meets statutory requirements well. It is enriched through educational visits and visiting speakers. There are useful cross curricular links with, for example, geography, art and music. The curriculum promotes the development of literacy effectively. The use of information and communication technology requires further development, particularly for supporting pupils' independent research. Overall, pupils' personal development is supported effectively; for example, in promoting cultural awareness.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Standards of attainment are in line with expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6, and have improved in line with nationally rising standards since the school was previously inspected. Increased staff training and confidence, the new information and communication technology suite, the employment of specialist support staff and a wider range of hardware and software, have all contributed effectively to the establishment of an improved and enriched curriculum and higher standards. Pupils make good progress in response to the good teaching. Those with special educational needs or English as an additional language also do well because they are fully included and well supported in whole class lessons, and receive individual assistance in the computer suite.

122. Pupils in Year 2 are learning to sort data effectively. Their individual records demonstrate that they can use a word processing program correctly to enter text, save, load and print their own work. They have programmed a floor 'robot' so that it follows a particular predetermined route correctly. A file of past work illustrates that pupils have used CD ROMs to find out information, and to download illustrations and text about favourite animals. They have drawn effective line pictures, filling in the colour, and efficiently recorded an interview with the cook on a tape recorder. Higher attainers show more independence in their work and lower attainers progress well with help.

123. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have completed a very successful e-mail project with a school in Derby. This enabled them to use their literacy skills to write informative text, the digital camera to illustrate their letters, and the full range of skills needed to send and receive mail.

124. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the many ways information and communication technology is used in every day life. Higher attaining pupils, for example, explained that the magnetic strip on a debit card carried information that enabled shops to communicate with banks. All pupils are familiar with basic word processing techniques but few use more than one finger to enter text. This slows down their rate of progress and can be frustrating. Some pupils with special educational needs are not confident users of the spell-checking tool, and spend too long finding correct spellings. All pupils use the Internet confidently. Most could use search engines correctly to find out the day's weather in Glasgow, sites that explained the differences between Indian and African elephants, or the dollar equivalent of a pound sterling. Current work on the use of spreadsheets has included an imaginative task that requires pupils to combine their numeracy and information and communication technology skills to work out how much the food for a class party will cost, and finding the best value for money by comparing prices on the Internet home-shopping pages of a major supermarket.

125. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection.

Teachers and support staff have a secure understanding of the subject material, and give pupils confidence to ask questions. Good relationships mean that pupils are managed very well, even when individual behaviour is potentially unsatisfactory. Teachers use a good technical vocabulary effectively, and introduce new words very carefully so that pupils understand and use them correctly in their answers. Lessons move forward at a brisk pace, but pupils are given enough time to understand each stage before moving onto the next. A good example was seen in Years 3 and 4 when pupils learned to sort complex data manually before their introduction to a computer program that would take a fraction of the time.

126. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and determined to continue to raise standards. She has overseen a period of rapid change and improvement effectively. Although she uses teachers' evaluations of past work to identify strengths and weaknesses, she does not have enough opportunities to observe the quality of teaching and learning at first hand. An assessment sheet is used throughout the school and enables teachers to follow individual pupils' progress year on year, and to make sure that skills are taught progressively in mixed-aged classes. Resources are good. The specialist assistant is a great asset. Teachers' planning is effective, and enables her to work very productively with small groups within lessons or in the computer suite. This gives all pupils regular opportunities to use computers and develop their skills. Good use is made of the information and communication technology technician who visits the school regularly to deal with system problems. There are appropriate safeguards to ensure that pupils cannot access inappropriate sections of the Internet. Although there are several exceptions, teachers do not provide enough planned opportunities for using information and communication technology skills in other subjects. Where they do occur, in designing and printing repeating designs for wrapping paper, for example, the pupils make greater progress.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

127. Pupils attain good standards in French by the end of Year 6. The subject is not taught to younger pupils.

128. The scheme of work based on six half-termly topics each year enables pupils to develop skills progressively, building up with what they know and understand. It incorporates all aspects of French and is conceived with the interests of children at its heart. Resources for learning are good and are carefully matched to support the curriculum. The Advanced Skills Teacher award gained by the co-ordinator recognizes and celebrates the very good subject management and leadership at Year 5 and Year 6.

129. The quality of the teaching is very good and the teacher has high expectations of what pupils can learn. Teaching is rigorous and not a moment is wasted. It is taught in a confident, lively and well-accented way and pupils' learning benefits from the teacher's ability to correct pupils' mispronunciation. Pupils enjoy basic conversational exchanges. For example, in work about the four seasons of the year, all the instructions were in French and the pupils were intellectually challenged by the puzzle. Pupils had greater difficulty in ordering the seasons than pronouncing them, nevertheless they make good progress. Team teaching with a teacher from a local high school works well and pupils react very positively to the "drill" of recitation when linked to a fun poem about months of the year. Pupils with English as a second language are fully included and are able to sustain pre-planned conversational exchanges with appropriate accent. There is also good social and personal links between girls and boys and they converse easily with each other.

130. The very effective co-ordinator teaches the three Year 5 and Year 6 classes every week and ensures that the policy's aim that French should be 'fun and active' is very well fulfilled. The links with the specialist secondary language college also enhance the pupils' learning of modern foreign languages. Good individual record sheets identify levels of achievement and indicate pupils' abilities and progress. The European link with a French school continues to give opportunities for pupils to

correspond and to learn about different cultures and to share similar experiences.

MUSIC

131. Standards are above average for pupils in Year 2 and at expected levels for pupils by the end of Year 6. This marks an improvement in standards for the younger pupils since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 respond very positively to the enthusiastic lead given by their teacher in singing songs in a variety of styles. They listen well and are able to discuss the quality of the music's tempo and other aspects of its style before joining in clapping its rhythm appropriately. They sing a variety of songs well. Older pupils too have positive attitudes to the subject, largely because of the stimulating ideas used for teaching the subject. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were, for example, very disciplined in playing a game of musical tag, where you can move only on the first beat. They learnt to count accurately in order to know when to move and catch out the other pupils. Through activities like this, and through opportunities to play instruments to accompany an adult playing a pavane on the clarinet, the pupils developed their awareness of rhythm and beat well. The quality of singing for the older pupils is broadly at expected levels. Pupils have opportunities to sing in a choir and to perform at special occasions such as Christmas or in the Kirklees Festival. Several pupils learn to play the guitar and other learn woodwind as part of the school's provision.

132. Teaching is good throughout the school and sometimes excellent for the younger pupils. Lessons have a good pace and the teachers seen showed well developed knowledge of the subject. They use music imaginatively to shed light on other subjects so that the work on a pavane related well to the topic of the Tudors. Another lesson with pupils in Years 3 and 4 helped develop pupils' awareness of the popular culture of music through playing and, in some cases, devising singing games. Pupils were actively engaged in musical activities for the whole lesson. While music is played while pupils enter and leave assemblies, it is not always discussed in order to help pupils learn about the composer or appreciate its quality. When such discussion does take place, as when the headteacher discussed the music's description of the lark ascending, pupils benefit from the experience and appreciate the music all the more.

133. The subject co-ordinator takes music for all the classes in Years 5 and 6 and is developing the skills of those teachers who are less confident in teaching the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. Standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Swimming is taught in Year 5, pupils make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils can swim 25 metres. The school policy and schemes of work incorporate all areas of the curriculum and the provision for extra curricular physical activities is very good. Indoor accommodation is adequate and the very good outdoor facilities include the school playgrounds and a nearby sports field. The school provides a very rich range of physical opportunities and this subject is a strength of the school. The school has attained 'Active Mark Gold' standard for 2002- 2005 for promoting the benefits of physical activity and school sports. Very constructive sports links with a local high school and community sports bodies such as, for example, Huddersfield Football Club and after school dance clubs show the school's involvement and commitment to both in-school and after-school activities. In addition the 'Healthy Schools Initiative' ensures that pupils are aware of the need and benefits of sensible eating and regular exercise. Yearly reviews and individual self-assessment for pupils in Years 3 to 6 identify strengths and weaknesses in their performance and indicate areas for improvement.

135. The quality of teaching overall is good. This is because teachers plan lessons well and have a clear understanding about what the pupils are going to learn. These aims are developed through individual, paired, small group and whole class activities. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 gymnastics lesson, pupils were asked to explore how their bodies could twist, curl, pull and stretch.

In response, the pupils created simple sequences of movement that had a start and an ending. They progressed to working with a partner and then performed their sequences to other pupils who assessed and commented upon their efforts. Throughout the lesson, the brisk pace and clear directions given by the teacher helped pupils to achieve and make progress. Similarly, in a Year 5 and Year 6 athletics lesson, good teaching, good resource management and effective support from Year 11 pupils from Spen Valley High School, meant that pupils achieved better than average standards. Many of the pupils showing good technique in throwing the discus, for example. This led to good gains in skills in all the events represented. Pupils enjoy their lessons and attitudes and behaviour are generally good.

136. The subject strongly reinforces personal, social and citizenship development. For example, pupils participate in the Cycling Proficiency scheme and, in addition, they regularly represent the school in local sports competitions. Year 6 pupils also attend a 3-day residential outdoor and environmental course at Cliffe House and are given further opportunities for personal, social and sporting enrichment and development.

137. The subject is very well managed and led. In addition, by gaining the nationally recognized Active Gold Award, the school is in a very strong position to maintain and further extend existing standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Standards are above the levels expected in the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and are in line in Year 6. This is an improvement in Year 2 since the previous inspection. The level of work seen in Years 3 and 4 indicates that standards are rising steadily as pupils get older, especially when higher attaining pupils are given an opportunity to think and work with more challenging materials. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as the rest of their class because they are fully involved in all the learning activities, but their written work tends to be shorter and of a lower standard when they have difficulty with writing or spelling. Those whose faith is other than Christianity feel valued and willingly share their knowledge with the rest of the class, and make good progress. The school is particularly skilled and sensitive in working closely with families and pupils whose beliefs require them to be especially aware of the content of lessons.

139. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the Christian symbol of the Cross. "Jesus showed us how much He loved us," explained one. They recalled their visit to the local mosque with great pleasure. "We felt happy. It was wonderful." They have made good links with their work in art and design, for example, in illustrating the Christian and Islamic views of the Creation, and drew pictures to show how a Muslim would describe Paradise as a beautiful garden.

140. Pupils in Year 6 have a basic knowledge of the major world faiths including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. They know which faiths share a belief in one God, and the sacred texts used in each religion. They have a good recall of the events in Jesus' life, including the importance of Easter to Christians, but little real understanding of the meaning behind some of the better known parables. They have studied the life of Muhammad and the Five Pillars of Islam, and compared modern Christian and Jewish family celebrations. Pupils respond movingly and positively to opportunities to reflect on the deeper issues of life, especially where they have been touched personally by, for example, the death of a very close relative. Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills, for example, when they wrote first person accounts of the 'Journey of a lifetime' to Mecca.

141. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. Very good teaching is seen when key vocabulary is introduced effectively and the teacher's skill as a storyteller catches the pupils' attention. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 3 and 4 lesson on Abraham and Isaac. Pupils listened avidly. A higher attaining pupil was able to explain the two ways in which the story illustrated Abraham's trust in God. The teacher asked pupils to

retell the story in pairs which gave them a very good opportunity to reflect on Abraham's feelings and get to the heart of the story. Teaching is less effective when the pupils sense that the teacher is not secure with the subject material and not enough time is given for reflection before a writing task. Much of the written work in pupils' books is similar and indicates that the same task is set for the whole class. This limits the opportunities for higher attaining pupils to deepen their understanding and knowledge through more detailed thought or research. A similar concern was expressed at the time of the previous inspection. Very good support was given to pupils whose first language was not English in a Year 5 and 6 lesson because key vocabulary was written in Urdu as well as English on the work sheets and enabled all pupils to make prompt start to understanding the written task.

142. The subject is led very effectively. The co-ordinator has a very clear idea how the subject should develop and is keen to be part of its achievement. She is trialling an assessment scheme so that attainment and progress can be measured more accurately, and has sought pupils' opinions on the new teaching Unit about Judaism. She does not currently have an opportunity to assess standards of teaching and learning in other classes. The library and classrooms contain an appropriate range of books and other resources to extend pupils' understanding. Good use is made of visits to the local parish church and mosque. Although some use is made of information and communication technology for research or work presentation, not enough planned opportunities are included in the main sections of the work.