

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **THOMAS WALLING PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Blakelaw, Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle upon Tyne

Unique reference number: 108480

Head teacher: (Acting) Mrs A O'Neill

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Bell  
2456

Dates of inspection: 20 - 23 January 2003

Inspection number: 246797

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lindfield Avenue Blakelaw Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE5 3PL
Telephone number:	0191 2860333
Fax number:	0191 2860333
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Laker
Date of previous inspection:	November 1977

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2456	Mrs J Bell	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it?
			Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			Science	What should the school do to improve further?
			Areas of learning for the Foundation Stage	
			Citizenship	
			English as an additional language	
11368	Mrs K Lee	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?
12631	Mrs M McLean	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Music	
18819	Mr J Atkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
			Design and technology	
			Geography	
			Special educational needs	
			Education inclusion	

27545	Mr A Scott	Team inspector	Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
			History	
			Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited  
14 Enterprise House  
Kingsway  
Team Valley  
Gateshead  
NE11 0SR

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33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Thomas Walling Primary School is bigger than most primaries and admits pupils aged three to 11. It is situated in a large estate of mainly local authority owned housing on the west side of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne. There is very high unemployment and a high level of deprivation. The school is housed in a modern building on two sites. There are now 360 pupils on roll, with 173 boys and 152 girls in main school and 35 children who attend the nursery part-time. Children enter the nursery with a broad range of attainment but most have very low language, literacy and social skills for their age. The school is part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ) and has been chosen for a Sure Start site aimed at developing pre-school education and links with parents. There are seven pupils identified as having English as an additional language, all are at an early stage of acquiring English. There are eight pupils from asylum seeking families. Fifty nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, well above the national average. There are 99 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which at 27 per cent is above average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The range of special educational needs includes learning, emotional and behavioural, speech, communication, and physical problems. Many families move in and out of the area; in the last year 42 pupils joined the school and 33 left at other than the usual admission time. There is a high turnover of staff; six teachers left the school during the last two years and six were appointed. This was due, in part, to the promotion of one teacher and the retirement of two others. The head teacher left the school in July 2002 and the deputy head teacher, who had been in post for a term, took over as acting head teacher in September 2002. The long-term absence of two permanent members of staff, one due to illness, has resulted in some classes having a number of temporary teachers.

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

Thomas Walling Primary School provides a satisfactory education for all its pupils. However there are some weaknesses. The leadership and management of the school are mainly sound and the acting head teacher has worked well with the governing body to begin to identify needed improvements. However, she has only been in the school a short time and this, together with staff absence has slowed development in key areas where the school needs to improve. In past years, key staff have had a very limited role in identifying, managing and monitoring the implementation of priorities. The effectiveness of many initiatives has not been evaluated sufficiently over time to ensure their impact on the work of the school. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in the nursery and reception classes (the Foundation Stage), and in Year 2. Although standards by the age of 11 are well below average in English and mathematics, there are high numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 and this adversely affects the school's performance. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Children in the Foundation Stage settle well and make a good start to their learning because of the good provision and effective teaching that ensures a good range of stimulating learning experiences.
- The school's supportive ethos and good relationships ensure a high level of care that promotes pupils' self-esteem and ensures that each child is valued and grows in confidence.
- The school's good provision for the moral and social development of its pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; they are supported well by classroom assistants, who work sensitively to meet their needs.
- The good provision for information and communication technology (ICT) enables pupils to gain confidence; they achieve well to reach the standards expected by the age of 11.

- The good range of visits out of school, visitors who share their expertise, and extra curricular activities, enrich pupils' experiences and enhance their learning.

#### What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science, through ensuring that teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and that teaching and learning are consistent throughout the school.
- The leadership and management, to ensure that all staff with management responsibilities provide a clear direction that ensures that the school's priorities are accurately identified and implemented.
- The assessment of pupils' progress and the use of this information to set and monitor targets for improvement, and to plan work that builds on what pupils already know and matches more closely their ability.
- The curriculum, to ensure that it is adapted to take more account of pupils' experience and background and provides more opportunities for them to investigate, use initiative and work independently.

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

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

The school has made mainly sound improvement since the last inspection in 1997, but this has not been as good as it could be. Recent changes in management, and staffing problems, have further slowed much needed developments. The adoption of national guidance means that the curriculum planning is based on a clear framework that enables teachers to plan together in their two-year groupings to accommodate mixed aged classes. These changes still do not ensure increasing challenge for all pupils in these classes. The school has improved procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress and has substantial information about the standards that pupils achieve. However, this information is not yet used well enough to plan activities to meet the full range of abilities in classes and often does not build on what pupils already know. The time allocated to subjects has been reviewed and is appropriate although the extra time allocated to English is not always planned well enough to motivate pupils and support literacy skills. Teaching has improved and there is less unsatisfactory teaching. The provision for ICT has improved with more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. Recent effective training enables all staff to teach ICT with greater confidence. The attainment of children on entry to the school is now very low and standards are lower. The chair of governors is giving a strong lead and the governing body has developed a clear action plan for developing the school. The staff and governors have the capacity and commitment to see through the needed improvements.

### 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	E	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D
mathematics	B	E	E	D	

science	B	C	E	C	well below average	E
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The attainment of many children on entry to the nursery is very low. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that these children make good progress given their very low starting point, but standards are still well below those expected when they transfer to Year 1, particularly in their early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Pupils make good progress over time in Key Stage 1. Their attainment in the 2002 national tests was above average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with similar schools. However standards in these tests were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics when compared to what is expected nationally of seven year olds. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress over time. In the 2002 tests in English and science standards were average when compared with those in similar schools but below average in mathematics. Standards were well below average in these three subjects when compared with what is expected nationally by the age of 11. The school's performance is now below the national upward trend in these subjects but there are a number of reasons why standards are low in some years, even though there is some good teaching across the age range; more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and so too few pupils attain the higher levels, children's attainment on entry is very low and there are high numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The low attendance for some pupils affects their progress and there are high numbers of pupils who move in and out of the area.

Inspection findings show that standards in English are still well below average and in mathematics are below those expected by the age of seven, however, they are average for science. Standards in current work in English and mathematics are well below those expected for pupils aged 11 but are below those expected in science, where pupils respond well to opportunities for investigative work. However over half the current Year 6 have special educational needs. Standards in English and mathematics could be higher if pupils had more planned opportunities to practise their speaking, listening, reading and writing in other subjects, and more opportunities for practical, investigative work in mathematics. Standards in ICT are improving well due to the good provision and teachers' improved expertise; pupils' standards match those expected at the age of 11. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the syllabus used in the local education authority. By the age of 11, standards are below average in all other subjects except design and technology and music, where they are satisfactory although singing is good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make at least satisfactory progress in relation to the targets set for them. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their ability. The 2003 targets set with the Local Education Authority for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are not realistic given the standards of current work and the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and respond well, particularly when the work set encourages them to find out for themselves.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. Many pupils behave well but in the classes affected by staff absence, they are not settled into routines and are easily distracted. Current supply staff, appointed to cover until staffing is resolved, are already having a good impact on pupils' work and behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The good relationships and very good support from staff ensure that pupils gain in self-esteem and are supportive of each other.
Attendance	Very low. Despite the school's best efforts a significant minority of

	pupils are kept off school for trivial reasons. This impacts on the their progress.
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The number of exclusions is high but relates to the persistent poor behaviour of a few pupils. The good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' personal development.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory with good and sometimes very good teaching in the Foundation Stage. Staff in the nursery and reception classes have a very good understanding of the ways in which young children learn. They work well together to ensure that the children have a good range of activities and experiences across all areas of learning. These enable the children to make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development, and prepare them well for work in Year 1. Teaching is mainly satisfactory throughout both key stages and pupils make at least sound progress in their learning. There is good and often very good teaching in the Year 2 class and so progress is good. These pupils respond well to the good opportunities to be involved in their own learning and to conduct investigations and solve problems. Pupils' learning is uneven throughout the school due to inconsistencies in teachers' planning from class to class. A few teachers follow the national guidance for subjects too rigidly, without checking how well it is matched to the ages, abilities and interests of their pupils. Not all staff make enough use of the substantial amount of assessment information to plan activities to meet pupils' needs. This is particularly evident in classes having more than one year group. There is inconsistent use of the day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons to adapt the next pieces of work to build on their previous learning and the same work is offered to all pupils in some lessons. The teaching of English and mathematics is sound but pupils have too few opportunities to develop and practise reading and writing skills in subjects such as history, geography, science and religious education. The teachers often rely too much on the use of worksheets that only require simple sentences or one-word answers and this limits writing opportunities. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and sometimes good. This is because they are identified at an early stage and effectively supported by classroom assistants. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make sound progress in their learning because they are often supported well by classroom assistants.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The planning of the curriculum is too rigidly based on national guidance and does not provide enough opportunities for investigative work. There is a good range of extra curricular activities and these are well attended.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The classroom assistants provide effective support for these pupils. Their work in supporting pupils with behavioural and emotional problems is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. There is a small amount of regular external support and these pupils are supported well by teachers and classroom assistants and so make satisfactory and sometimes good progress depending on their ability.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is good and is central to all aspects of the school's work. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good although prolonged staff absence has resulted in a dip in behaviour in the Year 5 and Year 5/6 classes.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. All staff provide a very good level of day-to-day care for pupils' well being. There are very good procedures for child protection.
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Provision is good for children in the Foundation Stage. The school enhances the curriculum well through a good range of visits and visitors. It analyses the results of a wide range of tests but there is limited use of assessment information in planning activities to meet the full range of abilities in some classes. The school has a good partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The acting head teacher has worked well with staff and governors to begin to identify needed improvements. However, developments have been slowed by problems relating to staff absence. In the past the leadership and management, have not been as effective as they could be in moving the school forward since the last inspection. Key staff have not had a sufficient role in deciding the priorities for the school or in managing and evaluating the progress of any action taken.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The chair of governors gives a very good lead and governors have an increasing understanding of what is working well and where improvements are needed. Although this is recent the governors have a clear action plan and the capacity and commitment to see through needed improvements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The school has detailed systems to analyse its performance that provide a clear picture of its strengths and weakness so that key priorities can be identified. However, the school improvement plan has too many priorities and so there is not enough focus on the key areas that need to be acted upon.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The governors seek to get the best value for the pupils and access and use all resources available. They make effective use of EAZ funding to support teaching and learning, particularly in ICT.

The co-ordination of the key areas of literacy and numeracy have been slowed by staff absence and recent initiatives have been hurriedly put in place and have not yet had an impact on standards. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has not been sufficiently developed to allow them to effectively monitor work in their subjects. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff but the issues related to many temporary staff need to be resolved, particularly in Year 5. The school has adequate resources for learning. Accommodation is good and is very well looked after by the caretaker. However, the library areas are not used well enough to support learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Children make good progress</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• They feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The management of the school</li> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons</li> <li>• The information about their children's progress</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> </ul>

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The 43 questionnaires returned and the small number of parents attending the meeting held before the inspection mean that these views may not be representative of all parents. Inspectors agree that pupils have good attitudes to learning and like school. Parents are welcomed into the school. Inspection findings show that teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. Management is now broadly satisfactory but there are areas that need to be improved. Behaviour is mainly satisfactory but has been affected in classes where there have been many temporary teachers. The range of activities outside of lessons is good. The information to parents is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Children enter the nursery with a broad range of attainment but many have very low language, literacy, mathematical and social skills. Many children have had a limited range of experiences before they start nursery education. However, the effective teaching in the nursery and reception classes enables children to make good progress by the end of the reception year even though standards achieved are well below what might be expected in language, literacy and mathematical areas of learning. Staff in the Foundation Stage have a good understanding of the learning needs of this age group and so rightly give a high priority to developing children's personal and social development. This ensures that the children are well settled into school routines and are confident in moving about their class bases. Standards in this area of learning are likely to reach the standard expected by the end of the reception year. The good range of activities presented to the children means that children achieve well in their creative skills, physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world about them. Standards in physical development are likely to meet those expected by the end of the reception year. However, children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them and their creative skills are likely to be below those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

2 Although pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are lower than at the last inspection and are not improving in line with the national upward trend. By the end of Year 6, standards in the Year 2002 national tests when compared to similar schools were average in English and science and below average in mathematics but were well below those expected of pupils aged 11 nationally. The school has identified this subject for improvement but the initial action taken has not been rigorous enough to make an impact on resolving the immediate concerns of raising standards. In the 2002 national tests in reading for pupils aged seven, the school's performance was above that of similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics but standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics when compared to what is expected of seven year olds nationally. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science were below average. At both key stages too few pupils attain the higher levels in tests.

3 There are a number of reasons why standards are low in some years, even though inspection evidence indicates that there is some good teaching across the age range. The pupils' attainment in tests is often lower than the national average because too few attain the higher levels. This is because more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged since there is too little use made of the day-to-day assessments of what pupils have learned to ensure work builds on previous learning. The school also has above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs, attendance is low for some pupils and this affects their progress and a high number of pupils who join the school at other than the usual admission time. This depresses the school's test results in some years.

4 Inspection findings show that, despite the good progress in the Foundation Stage and sound progress throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are below average throughout the school. This reflects low attainment on entry but too little is done to build on the good role-play opportunities in the Foundation Stage; these are not extended into Years 1 and 2. There is not enough discussion in English and other subjects to enable pupils to practise and reinforce these skills. There are too few planned drama activities. Standards in reading are currently well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2, only more able pupils read with confidence. Too many pupils

read hesitantly and refer to pictures for clues when struggling to read unknown words. They do not build words using letter sounds. Reading standards are currently well below the levels expected of pupils in Year 6. Only more able pupils are confident and fluent and few other pupils are likely to be at the standards expected by the time they are 11. The libraries are not used well and only more able pupils explain the purpose of index pages when finding information in reference books. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in writing are too low. Spelling is a major weakness and many pupils do not have strategies to help them to spell unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, capital letters and full stops are not used consistently and only more able pupils in Year 6 organise their writing into short paragraphs. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects and too much work often requires only a short sentences or one-word answers on a worksheet.

5 Standards in mathematics are below average for seven year olds and well below average for 11 year olds. Pupils make good progress by the end of Key Stage 1. However, this progress is not sustained and, although satisfactory in Key Stage 2 is slower because not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This means that they do not set work that is matched closely enough to pupils' abilities. Few opportunities are taken in other subjects, such as science and geography to promote number skills and data handling. Pupils do well in investigative activities in science but these are not used frequently enough to improve pupils' skills in mathematics.

6 Standards in science are steadily improving in Key Stage 1 since the teachers' plan for a good range of interesting activities and experiences that develop pupils' investigative skills, knowledge and understanding. By the age of seven pupils attain the standards expected for their age. Standards are below those expected at the age of 11 and this has remained the same since the previous inspection. Pupils' limited reading and writing skills often slow their progress and impact on standards by the age of 11 when they reach the end of Key Stage 2. Too few pupils produce work that is above average. This sometimes reflects unsatisfactory assessment procedures that do not identify and build on the key skills and knowledge that these pupils have already learned. Class targets set for pupils' improvement often take account of how the school performs against schools with a similar intake of pupils. This does not ensure sufficiently high expectations of what pupils could do to meet what is required nationally.

7 Since the last inspection standards in ICT have improved and meet expectations for pupils aged seven and 11. This reflects the improved resources, some funded through the EAZ, and greater staff confidence as a result of recent training. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' standards in religious education are still below those identified in the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. Standards in art and design have remained as expected for seven year olds but are now below those expected at 11. Standards in physical education have improved and meet expectations for pupils at the age of seven and 11. Standards in design and technology and music are as expected by the time pupils leave the school. There are good standards in singing. In history and geography, pupils attain standards below those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils respond well to opportunities for investigative work in subjects such as science and design and technology but these successful approaches have not yet been included sufficiently in all other subjects in order to improve standards.

8 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage where pupils' needs are closely monitored and recorded and the planning of activities is continually adapted and assessed. The staged identification, assessment and review process is well established and very effective use is made of external expertise. All pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans. The co-ordinator of special educational needs works with teachers to write detailed plans which set out specific targets that are clear as to what pupils need to learn and when. Support from very committed assistants for pupils is good and the pupils make good progress in small group situations when there is a clear programme to follow. However because not

all teachers plan work for different groups of pupils then pupils with special educational needs do not always make progress when included in whole class teaching. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make sound progress in their learning because they are often supported well by classroom assistants.

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

9 On the whole, pupils show good attitudes to their work and to their life in school and their behaviour is satisfactory. Whilst these are not the strength of the school as was judged at the previous inspection, in most classes pupils are enthusiastic, try hard and concentrate well. This helps them to make steady progress in their learning. However, the substantial disruption to pupils' learning where there have been many temporary staff has resulted in a significant number of pupils in the Year 5, and Year 5/6 classes who have not settled to class routines and do not settle to work. Their behaviour becomes unsatisfactory in a few lessons. This is now improving with the appointment of long term supply staff who are implementing the school's good procedures and there is already some improvement. In many lessons teachers support and encourage pupils to behave well in class. For example, in a Year 3/4 mathematics' lesson, pupils concentrated hard and listened carefully to the numbers as they played a Bingo game, based on adding three numbers. This was because the class teacher insisted that 'You know the Bingo caller doesn't start till everyone is quiet'. In some lessons where the work is too hard or too easy, or teachers have difficulty in managing behaviour, some pupils become restless and bored and so their rate of progress slows. In a music lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils, their attention and behaviour worsened because it took too long for all pupils to have an opportunity to play their instruments. Many older pupils show their enthusiasm for school by joining in the good range of extra-curricular clubs. For instance, 20 pupils were very keen and enjoying the lunchtime Scottish country dancing class due to the skill and warm encouragement of the teacher.

10 Most pupils behave well in the playground and when moving around the school because they are well supervised. Pupils are encouraged to follow the school rules and to understand how their actions affect others. There were nineteen fixed period exclusions in the year prior to inspection. These were used appropriately to deal with incidents of challenging behaviour of nine pupils, most with special educational needs linked to behavioural problems. There were no permanent exclusions as the school works hard with pupils and their families to include all pupils and to enable them to make progress in their learning. Relationships in school are good with most adults acting as good examples and working hard to promote pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are friendly and polite and respond well to their caring approach. With support from adults pupils can work together well, for example on computers, but they lack the skill to organise themselves and to research information independently because they are not given enough opportunities in lessons. Older pupils have some good responsibilities for school routines, for example selling fruit at breaks and helping with the younger children, which they do conscientiously.

11 Despite the school's efforts to improve attendance, the level in school is very low in comparison with other primary schools. Most pupils attend school regularly and on time but there is a significant number of pupils who have poor attendance. This is often because they are kept away from school for trivial reasons. This inevitably affects their learning and progress.

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

12 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from a good start to their school life, because teaching is particularly good in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers in these classes create a positive learning environment and provide rich opportunities to inspire children. As a result, children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage

1 with good teaching in the Year 2 class, because of the teacher's high expectations and good classroom control. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress by the end of Year 2. The teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, with a few lessons where it is unsatisfactory. This is mainly in classes where there have been several supply staff and differences in teachers' knowledge of the pupils and their expectation of their pupils in respect of work and behaviour.

13 Teaching has improved since the last inspection with less that is unsatisfactory. The school does not have sufficiently rigorous systems for subject co-ordinators to check the quality of teaching and learning and the development in their subjects. The situation is not helped by the uncertainties within staffing. Over the past year, there has been long-term absence, mainly due to illness and this has resulted in several supply staff in the Year 5 and Year 5/6 classes. The school now has temporary teachers who will be in these classes until permanent staff return and they are already ensuring improvements in work and behaviour and a greater consistency in the approaches to the teaching and management of these pupils.

14 In the Foundation Stage teaching is good. The staff in the nursery and reception classes succeed in making their classrooms vibrant and stimulating, so that children are motivated and take a keen interest in all that is on offer. Teachers quickly establish very good relationships, which lead to good progress in personal development. For example, children soon learn the importance of sharing and taking turns. Teachers use good methods of fully involving children. When singing the song of the 'Incy Wincy Spider', for instance, the nursery teacher was eager for the children to add actions and this encouraged even the most reticent children to join in. Teachers know how to make all children listen and learn quickly, often by asking them searching questions. In a story in which a boy's boots were hurting, the nursery teacher asked, 'What do you think he has done?' and the answer came, 'He has put the boots on the wrong feet.' This promoted good understanding and the teacher seized the chance to teach about left and right as well. Similarly in the reception classes, teachers have a real awareness of what children need to do to improve. For example, teachers encourage children to speak in sentences rather than accepting brief comments or single words. Teachers are swift to praise children for their contributions and support staff are good at guiding learning in focused activities and reassuring anxious children. This raises children's self-confidence and helps them make good progress.

15 The teaching in the rest of the school is mainly satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers motivate pupils through interesting and relevant topics and so produce effective learning. In some lessons, particularly those identified for extra work in literacy, tasks are often just more practice of basic skills without reinforcing these in different ways that would better motivate and challenge the pupils who already spend a lot of time working on similar examples in their English lessons. Providing more time in which to practise the same basic spelling and handwriting skills is not having the desired impact. Teachers' planning does not yet identify ways in which these skills could be developed and practiced to good effect through other subjects such as history, geography, science and religious education.

16 In good lessons, teachers prepare their plans carefully so that pupils are challenged. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the teacher varied her expectations so that lower attaining pupils practised adding two digit numbers, while higher attaining pupils tackled two and three digit numbers. Teachers spell out the aims of lessons so that pupils know what is expected of them. In a Year 4 art and design lesson, pupils were in no doubt about how to blend shades of green to produce suitable leaf colours. In the best lessons, teachers use resources thoughtfully so that pupils are immediately interested and clear about what they are learning. In science lessons on sound vibration for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher instantly caught the pupils' attention by playing the strings of a harp. One powerful resource, which many teachers deploy, is the interactive whiteboards. This computer projection allows teachers to demonstrate skills, for example, the use of calculators, and so pupils learn more easily. The Year 2

teacher used it very well to demonstrate the many uses of the computer itself. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they are teaching and this makes pupils learn well.

17 In the most effective lessons throughout the school, teachers involve pupils far more in their learning. They ask pupils probing questions to develop their thinking skills and check how much they have understood. These teachers praise pupils' answers deftly and this raises pupils' self-confidence. This in turn promotes the pupils' good behaviour, generating a positive atmosphere that promotes good learning. In an English lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher kept the pupils on their toes, checking whether verbs were in the past or present tense, so that all pupils became much clearer. Teachers work closely with support staff to make sure that lower attaining pupils, especially those with special educational needs, can participate fully. In a Year 1 English lesson, support assistants worked sensitively with higher attaining pupils, reinforcing their reading skills. Teachers often round off lessons skilfully, bringing the whole class together to share successes and clear up any misunderstandings pupils may have.

18 However, this effective teaching is not totally consistent year on year, and best practice has not been shared well enough to ensure that work is based clearly on what pupils already know or are capable of. At present, while most planning is clear about what teachers will cover and the range of activities that will be presented there is less clarity about what pupils will learn. The school's procedures for analysing data about pupils' attainment, result in a wide range of information to identify groups of pupils in need of extra support and curriculum areas needing improvement. For example the school's current focus is rightly on aspects of literacy and numeracy. However, the teachers' planning is not always changed to reflect their day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons so that the next work is more closely matched to what they have learned. This can result in work that is either too hard or too easy for pupils, particularly in mixed age classes. Assessment is still at an early stage and mainly at the end of a half term in most subjects, other than English, mathematics, science and ICT and so more able pupils follow much the same routine as other pupils, sometimes with extension work if they finish early. This can hamper their progress and dilute their enthusiasm. In a few lessons, pupils become restless and disrupt the flow of the learning. In a lesson on sound vibration for pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils preferred to twang their elastic bands erratically rather than methodically deduce the differences in pitch.

19 Most teachers have good ways of dealing with poor behaviour when it arises. However, in the classes where there has been long-term absence and several changes of staff, pupils are not as well settled into routines and this leads to some silly behaviour. The current temporary staff will remain with the school until the staffing problem is resolved and they are already setting higher expectations in terms of work and behaviour and pupils are beginning to settle and respond. The newly introduced, long guided reading sessions do not work well and create problems for teachers in managing pupils' behaviour and learning. Many pupils do not have a long attention span and many lack the reading and writing skills to work without regular adult intervention. When the teachers focus on one reading group, tasks are not always planned well enough to maintain the interest and concentration of the rest of the class. In one reading lesson in Year 1, the teacher focused her attention so much on one group that she did not realise that some pupils with special educational needs could not cope with the work. Support staff are mainly deployed well but teachers do not always make best use of their time in the whole class activities to keep pupils focused on the lesson, although they are fully involved to good effect in supporting group tasks.

20 Teaching and learning, although satisfactory, could be better if there were more opportunities to motivate pupils through more investigative approaches. Pupils enjoy practical experiences and solving problems but in Key Stage 2, teachers provide photocopied texts and worksheets as the framework for the lesson. These are not always of good quality; it was not inspiring for pupils in Year

4 to study, for example, small black and white photocopies of bomb shelters, rather than slides or posters, although the teacher did her best to add colourful descriptions. Teachers often provided worksheets that only require simple sentences or one-word answers and these limit opportunities for pupils to practise and improve writing skills. This is particularly important for older and more able pupils in Key Stage 2. There are some opportunities for pupils to carry out simple research in subjects such as science, geography and history. The school's improved provision and teaching in ICT means that pupils are taught to use CD-ROMs and the Internet to find information. This is developing well although this is mainly done in whole class lessons in the computer suite and there are fewer opportunities for independent enquiry. Literacy skills are not used as well as they might be in other subjects. For example, pupils do not produce enough independent writing or pictures in geography or history. The improved ICT provision means that they are beginning to present findings in science and mathematics through graphs, diagrams and spreadsheets.

21 The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and sometimes good. These pupils are identified at an early age and are effectively supported by classroom assistants. Some of the work done in small groups is good; enabling pupils to make good progress, particularly when support staff have a clear programme to follow that is closely linked to work done by the rest of the class. Pupils have useful individual education plans with clear targets that are regularly reviewed and updated. However, in lessons where there is no additional support, teachers do not always set tasks that are matched well enough to pupils' abilities. This results in the progress of these pupils being only satisfactory. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make sound progress in their learning because they are often supported well by classroom assistants. They have a small amount of external help but most support is school based, with extra support where needed.

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

22 The school's curriculum offers an appropriate broad and balanced range of experiences covering all subjects, including religious education. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and includes a wide range of activities and experiences. These ensure that children make a good start to their learning. Since the last inspection, the time allocated to subjects has been reviewed and is now appropriate. Opportunities for all pupils to be taught ICT skills have improved. The school has adopted national guidance for all subjects. This means that the curriculum now has a solid framework, which is enriched well by visits locally. Teachers plan together in their two-year groupings to accommodate mixed aged classes. The last inspection identified that this planning did not ensure progression for all pupils, and this remains the situation. Many teachers follow the national guidance for subjects other than English and mathematics too rigidly, without checking well enough its appropriateness to their year group or class. When they plan lessons, teachers do not always take sufficient account of what pupils of differing abilities can do, to adapt the national guidance more precisely to the needs of their pupils. The high numbers of pupils with special educational needs or joining the school mid year can have a substantial impact on what is taught year on year.

23 The school rightly spends a high amount of curriculum time on teaching English and mathematics. However, extra time allocated to English is not always planned well enough to support literacy activities since in some classes throughout the school pupils continue to practise the same spelling and writing skills they have worked on in their earlier English lesson. This begins to lose impact and there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to practise these basic skills in other subjects. For example pupils do not use their writing skills sufficiently to record their work in science, history, geography and religious education. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in subjects such as design and technology and pupils complete graphs and tables in science. ICT skills, however, are taught well in the computer suite, and pupils are encouraged to use these skills to support their work in

other subjects. In English, pupils' displayed work is often carefully word-processed.

24 The school makes good use of its links with the community to extend pupils' learning and experience. Pupils visit local places of interest to enhance the curriculum such as the Hancock Museum when they were learning about Ancient Egypt. The school takes many opportunities to invite visitors to extend pupils' personal development. For example, the dental nurse talks to the youngest pupils about teeth and the school is working with the CABS (Children against Bullying in School) team to set up a Buddy system in the playground.

25 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is a combination of individual, groups and class support by classroom assistants and the co-ordinator for special educational needs. However, in lessons where there is no additional support, teachers do not always set tasks that are matched well enough to pupils' abilities and this slows their progress.

26 There is a clear policy for equal opportunities. Most pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum with the exception of those withdrawn for additional support in literacy. This support takes place when other subjects are being taught, including religious education. Consequently, these pupils miss what their classmates have been taught in these lessons.

27 Extra-curricular provision is good. Pupils have opportunities to experience a range of activities such as a computer and recorder club, Scottish country dancing and sports. There are a variety of visits to support different subjects, and many visitors to the school such as authors and sports' coaches. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are going on a residential visit for the first time this year. These opportunities not only enrich the curriculum but also promote pupils' personal and social development well.

28 The staff have also recognised that pupils have particular personal and social needs and that many bring emotional problems to school with them. To tackle this, a programme of personal and social education, which includes health education, drugs awareness and citizenship is now in place. This provides pupils with experiences to develop their personal skills as well as their speaking and listening skills. Many now speak more confidently about their ideas and any problems and listen carefully when others are speaking.

29 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is particularly effective in developing and reinforcing pupils' moral and social developments and underpins the caring and supportive ethos of the school. This good provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

30 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is sound. Religious education lessons and assemblies help pupils to understand their own faith and the beliefs of others. Themes for the week, such as 'unity', the theme for the week of the inspection, often help pupils to think about their own life and their relationships with others. The lighting of a candle in assemblies promotes a sense of quiet and enables pupils to quietly reflect on what they hear in stories. However, during the inspection there were few opportunities for pupils to take part in assemblies that could inspire others to think about experiences and promote awareness of how others think and feel. Some lessons give pupils special experiences. For example, the pupils in Year 4 were still awed by descriptions of Narnia, in the story of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', even though it was a familiar tale. In a science lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils were delighted with the delicate sounds made when the teacher plucked the strings of a harp.

31 There is good provision for pupils' moral development. Most pupils respond well to the expectations for good behaviour and understand right from wrong. In the two classes where there has been some disruption in staffing, temporary teachers have had different expectations of pupils. This has led to some mixed messages for pupils and because they are not yet settled into good routines, behaviour in some lessons becomes unsatisfactory. This is now improving with the appointment of long term supply staff who are implementing the school's good procedures and there is already some improvement. Clear moral messages are conveyed through assemblies and at other times during the day. The good programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship gives pupils the opportunity to think about moral issues such as caring for animals. There are clear school expectations about developing supportive relationships and these are reinforced effectively through class discussion. Pupils show concern for others and in class discussions, often share their feelings about how they like to be treated and how they treat others. The school ethos promotes fairness to all and teamwork. There is close liaison between class teachers and support staff, so that consistent strategies are used when managing behaviour. The staff present good examples when showing pupils the importance of considerate attitudes to the development of positive relationships.

32 The school's provision for pupils' social development is good. It develops pupil's social awareness in a variety of ways. The policy for personal social and health education does much to develop pupils' awareness and self-image through 'circle time' lessons where relationships and personal problems can be discussed. Opportunities are made for older pupils to support the youngest pupils in the school. In many lessons pupils are encouraged to listen to one another, respond sensibly and work collaboratively. For example, in ICT lessons, pupils work effectively in pairs on the computers, supporting one another's learning. Those with greater confidence help those with less experience and pupils patiently take turns. Where pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn for extra help, they form good relationships with support staff and other pupils in their group. This boosts their learning and helps develop their confidence and social skills. The school is developing a wider range of responsibilities for pupils; older pupils are currently given a number of roles to support their class teachers. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to initiate their own ideas and to take an active role in their own learning.

33 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Local studies in history help pupils to understand local traditions and the children in the Foundation Stage have good opportunities to study the buildings in the locality. They show great excitement in the digital photographs 'That's where I live'. Pupils visit the theatre and local museums and a range of visitors come into school to share their expertise. For example, pupils are excited by links with Newcastle United Football Club and other sporting organisations for which there is strong support. The enthusiasm of the teacher who organises the country-dancing club means that pupils gain a good awareness of a range of traditional dances and tunes from all parts of the United Kingdom. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to gain an awareness of other cultural traditions in areas such as art and design. Although pupils learn about European artists there is little done to encourage awareness of non-western artists and their work. There is a similar picture in music. Whilst there are some well established links with the local church, there are few links with other faith groups. Through the curriculum, in religious education and geography opportunities are provided for pupils to be more aware of other cultures. There are useful displays relating to the traditions of other faiths and cultures but more could be done to develop pupils' understanding of Britain's multi-cultural society. The school now has pupils from asylum seeking families and staff are seeking ways of enabling them to share their traditions with other pupils as they become more settled in school.

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

34 The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. These

have continued since the time of the previous inspection. Child protection procedures are very effective with staff aware and sensitive to these issues. The school takes very good care of its pupils with clear routines and supervision throughout the day. For example, every lunchtime, midday supervisors are each responsible for one class that they look after in the dining hall and in the playground. The caretaker keeps good records of safety routines such as fire drills. The 'Breakfast Club' is a caring start to the day for up to thirty pupils who enjoy their healthy meal in a social and comfortable atmosphere.

35 The school monitors and promotes pupils' personal development well. Most staff know their pupils well and ensure good relationships with pupils, which raise their self esteem and encourage good behaviour and effort in lessons. Year 6 pupils are convinced that all pupils are treated the same, commenting 'No-one's the teacher's pet'. Parents too feel all pupils are encouraged to do well. The good programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship, taught appropriately in short daily sessions, encourages healthy living and gives pupils the opportunity to think about moral issues such as caring for animals. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for combating bullying. Pupils regard these procedures as fair and are sure that any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Individual pupils who have problems receive good support with the school having a range of strategies to cope with poor behaviour and to encourage improvement.

36 The school has very good procedures for monitoring attendance and works very hard to promote good attendance and punctuality. It monitors attendance closely with daily telephone calls to parents to check all unexplained absences that day. This is successful in encouraging most pupils to attend school regularly and is beginning to reduce the number of unauthorised absences. There is still a significant number of pupils who have poor attendance, which obviously has a damaging effect on their learning. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies to support these pupils and their families and is having some success in improving their attendance levels.

37 The school has sound procedures for assessing pupils and maintains substantial information about the standards that pupils achieve. The school analyses the results of previous national assessment tests and uses this information to identify areas of the curriculum that are a priority for improvement. However many teachers make unsatisfactory use of the information from assessments when planning activities to meet the full range of abilities in class, particularly where there is more than one age group. This means that the learning needs of all groups within the class are not always met and insufficient focus is paid to areas of individual pupil's weaknesses. Although the school set targets for improvement for groups of pupils it does not monitor their progress on a regular enough basis so that teachers can amend their planning and grouping of pupils. This means that pupils are not aware of what progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.

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

38 The school has a good working partnership with parents. While this is not excellent as was described at the previous inspection, it is particularly good with the parents of the youngest children and with parents whose children need special help for their learning or behaviour.

39 From the small number of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire and meeting, the majority are very supportive of the school but with a few concerns about some aspects of the school's work. For instance, most of these parents feel strongly that their children like school, that the school expects them to work hard and achieve their best and also helps them to become mature and responsible. The inspection team agrees with most of these positive views. It finds that the achievement of the youngest pupils is good and is satisfactory for all other pupils. A few parents are not happy with the behaviour in school or the extra-curricular activities. They are also not sure that the management of the school is good. The team finds that the management of the school and the behaviour of pupils are satisfactory overall, although there are areas to be improved. There is a good range of clubs that pupils enjoy and which help their learning and social development, for example the ICT club and Scottish country dancing.

40 Most parents are pleased to find that the school is approachable but a few parents do not think that the school works closely with them or feel well informed of their children's progress. Parents receive useful information on school matters and events in letters and in the homework files. There are regular open evenings for parents to discuss their children's progress with the class teacher. Parents are happy that they can talk to the acting head teacher and staff at the beginning and end of the day. Annual reports on their children's progress give parents good information on what they can do and on their personal development. The school works closely with parents whose children need support for learning or with behaviour problems. It keeps them well informed of their progress and parents are fully involved in the decisions for their support.

41 The school tries to involve parents in their children's life in school. This is having some success as parents feel welcome and that they are encouraged to help in school. For example, the parents' notice board in the nursery gives parents lots of information on how they can be involved and so nine parents have signed up for a course on 'Making books with your children'. The parents who do come in regularly give good support. By monitoring the corridors at the start of the day and helping in class, parents support small groups of pupils to settle into school happily and work hard in class. Many parents volunteer to accompany on class visits to local places of interest, which enables the school to take many good opportunities to extend pupils' learning and experience. On the whole, parents are less involved with their children's learning at home. While parents support the school's homework policy, fewer parents listen to their children read at home, which could help to raise standards. Many parents come to the regular coffee mornings where they have the chance to see their children's work and play games such as word searches with their children. A group of parents has just started a Parent, Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA), which they hope will increase the links between home and school.

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

42 The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory but there are some weaknesses. The acting head teacher joined the school in April 2002 as the school's deputy head teacher and in September 2002 was made acting head teacher. At the same time permanent members of staff have been absent and therefore the acting head, with very limited experience in that role, has had to manage a school with significant challenges. During this period the acting head has provided sound management of the school and given good support to staff resulting in a stable learning

environment. In past years key staff have not had a clear enough role in identifying priorities, deciding how they will be managed and in monitoring their implementation. This means that many of the initiatives that have been put in place over recent years have not been monitored and evaluated sufficiently well to ensure their impact on the work of the school. For example, not all the issues from the last inspection have been fully resolved; the school still has more work to do on the uses of information from day-to-day assessments of pupils' effectively to inform teachers' planning of the next pieces of work.

43 The school improvement plan clearly identifies the priorities to be tackled that will guide the long-term direction of the school. However they contain too much detail of actions to be taken and there is insufficient focus on the most important priorities to improve the school and how it will happen. The school has established sound systems for monitoring the teaching and the curriculum of the school. There is regular observation of teaching but the findings of these observations are not yet evaluated well enough. Subject co-ordinators work hard to support colleagues but have not had enough opportunities to monitor work in classrooms and lead improvements in teaching, learning and developments in their subjects. Currently the school has temporary leadership in key areas in which the school needs to improve but this will be resolved soon when the head teacher is appointed.

44 The chair of governors is actively involved in the life of the school and very committed to the aims and values of the school. Although he has only been chair for a relatively short period of time he has made a thorough assessment of the school's strengths and areas for development and has a very clear vision of the direction that the school need to take if it is to improve. Governors are committed to helping the school to improve the standards of achievement and to involving the wider community to support the staff in the opportunities that are offered to pupils. The governing body is effective in monitoring the budget and ensuring that the school achieves value for money on major items of expenditure. The governing body gains an overview of the curriculum through links of individual governors to key subjects and special educational needs. More could be done to enable the governing body to be involved in checking on the performance of the school over time.

45 The school is efficient in its strategic use of resources. Financial planning and control are good and day-to-day financial controls; procedures and administration of financial matters are good. There are comprehensive methods for accounting for monies collected, checking invoices and ensuring that unauthorised expenditure does not occur.

46 The school's financial and administrative procedures are efficient. Given their very low starting point, the high numbers of free school meals and pupils with special educational needs, achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. The school cares for its pupils very well, making good provision for their social and moral development. Taking these factors into consideration the school provides satisfactory value for money.

47 The school has an adequate number of teaching staff. However, there has been substantial, long-term staff absence and this has resulted in many changes of supply staff, particularly in the Year 5 and Year 5 and 6 classes. This has impacted on pupils' progress and behaviour. However, current supply staff will now remain with these classes until the staffing problems are resolved and are already providing greater stability that is leading to improved work and behaviour. The number of support staff is good and their work has a positive impact on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The school ensures that teachers receive satisfactory training to upgrade their skills; training for ICT has been very effective and is beginning to raise standards.

48 The accommodation is good with ample space for teaching and learning in all subjects. The buildings and grounds are spacious and are well maintained and kept beautifully clean by the caretaker

and his staff who have an obvious pride in their work. The school has a modern computer suite and, in the infant building, a pleasant library area. This area is attractive and inviting, but no pupils were seen using it during the inspection, nor did older pupils use the Key Stage 2 library. Most work on finding information is done in the classroom or in the computer suite using the Internet and CD-ROM and this is a lost opportunity for developing pupils' independent library skills or emphasising reading for pleasure. While there are some good displays of pupils' work in corridors, there are few in classrooms for pupils to compare and so see how they are improving. The school's policy that displays in classrooms are to be posters or teaching prompts means there is little of pupils' work in class bases to celebrate their achievement.

49 Resources in the school are satisfactory overall. ICT has a good range of equipment available. This is used well to support pupils' learning and the impact is evident in raised standards since the last inspection. However, artefacts to support teaching in religious education and history are unsatisfactory, and impact on standards in these subjects.

50 Resources for English are variable. They are good in Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory for Years 3 to 6. In these year groups there are insufficient attractive and challenging texts for pupils to read for pleasure. Non-fiction books are often in a poor condition, or out of date. Classroom libraries are sparse; books are not well organized and do little to encourage pupils to read.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 In order to improve standards and the quality of education for all pupils, head teacher, senior staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:-
  - ensuring that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve;
  - developing more consistent approaches to teaching and learning that builds on the good practice already in the school;
  - ensuring that teachers rely less on unchallenging worksheets and that planning identifies opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects;
  - planning for more opportunities for pupils to learn through investigative and problem solving activities that enable them to take a more active role in their learning.  
(Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15, 18, 20, 23, 72, 73, 74, 76, 78, 81, 84, 85, 87, 91, 94, 95, 101, 109, 112, 116, 136)
  
- (2) Improve the leadership and management of the school by:-
  - strengthening the roles and responsibilities of key staff in monitoring the effectiveness of the school's work;
  - ensuring that they have a role in identifying and monitoring the key areas needed to develop and improve teaching, learning and the implementation of the curriculum;
  - ensuring that they have full involvement in deciding how issues will be resolved and in ensuring that this happens.  
(Paragraphs 42, 43, 79, 86, 96, 102, 107, 118, 128, 136)
  
- (3) Use the information gained from the wide range of assessments to:
  - set targets for individuals and groups of pupils and support and monitor regularly their progress against them;
  - make more effective use of day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons to plan work that builds more closely on what they already know.  
(Paragraphs 3, 6, 18, 37, 72, 78, 82, 85, 87,)
  
- (4) Further improve curriculum planning to make work more relevant to the needs of all pupils by:
  - ensuring that national guidance is adapted to the needs of the pupils in each class, particularly where there are mixed ages;
  - planning the curriculum in all subjects to take greater account of the background, experience, age and interests of the pupils.  
(Paragraphs 4, 18, 19, 21, 22, 79, 84, 91, 96, 102, 113, 118, 136)

In addition to the issues above, the governing body should consider the following less important issue when drawing up its action plan:

Continue to work with parents and outside agencies to improve the attendance of the significant minority of pupils whose progress is limited by frequent absence from school.

(Paragraphs 3, 11, 36, 71)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	24	27	4	0	0
Percentage	0	7	41	46	7	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	325
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	228

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	95

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.6
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	24	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	20	20
	Girls	25	29	29
	Total	41	49	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71% (78%)	84% (83%)	84% (94%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	24	29	29
	Total	44	50	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76% (81%)	86% (94%)	96% (92%)
	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	20	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	16
	Girls	16	12	22
	Total	25	21	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53% (59%)	45% (48%)	81% (91%)
	National	75% (75%)	73% (71%)	86% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	18
	Girls	17	18	22
	Total	27	29	40
Percentage of pupils	School	59% (70%)	62% (51%)	85% (96%)

at NC level 4 or above	National	73% (72%)	74% (74%)	82% (82%)
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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	282	20	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	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	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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*

### *Financial information*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	30

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

Total number of education support staff	7
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Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	829,148
Total expenditure	817,059

Total aggregate hours worked per week	127.5
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**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	18

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Expenditure per pupil	2,522.
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,871
Balance carried forward to next year	23,960

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	360
Number of questionnaires returned	43

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	49	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	53	9	5	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	54	2	2	0
The teaching is good.	46	49	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	37	14	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	42	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	42	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	49	7	5	7
The school is well led and managed.	33	49	7	5	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	42	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	51	26	5	5

## **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**

52 The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good and so they get a good start to their education. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Children are admitted into the nursery after their third birthday and attend part-time. They transfer into the reception classes in the year of their fifth birthday. The overall attainment of children on entry to nursery is very low; many have limited language, literacy and social skills. Most children have had a limited range of experiences prior to starting in the nursery and little knowledge of the world about them.

53 There is a successful induction programme. Parents and children visit the nursery on an 'Open Day' and there is a range of visits before the children are ready to start. On these occasions, the children gain confidence and join in the exciting activities on offer. The warm welcome of staff does much to inspire parents' confidence and allay children's fears. The Foundation Stage staff provide parents with useful documentation so that they know what their children will learn and have guidance on ways to help at home. Transition from the nursery into the reception classes is eased by the good links between the classes, where staff become well known to the children over the two years in the Foundation Stage. The good liaison between the nursery and reception classes, and the effective joint planning ensures that learning is built upon as children move through this key stage.

54 The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good in all the areas of learning. The teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of how best these young children learn and provide a wide range of stimulating activities to meet their needs. They monitor carefully the children's progress and use the information gained to ensure that tasks are matched well to the children's needs as they mature and move through the key stage. All staff take a complementary role in teaching and plan for a good balance between teacher-led activities and those chosen by children that enable them to practise skills independently.

55 The nursery and reception staff establish good links with parents, who value the opportunities to talk to staff at the start and end of sessions. Accommodation is good, with sufficient space for the range of practical activities needed to underpin learning for children of this age. The provision for outdoor play is adequate but the range of equipment is limited because there is insufficient storage for large apparatus. This limits some opportunities for outdoor physical activities but staff compensate by using the school hall. The reception classes have regular timetabled sessions and there is flexible use for the nursery.

56 The provision for children is enhanced by the very effective work done by a nursery nurse, funded through the EAZ. She works very effectively with groups of less able children from the reception classes. Many have language and communication problems and benefit from oral work based on stories that enable them to act out roles and become familiar with the order of events. The children grow in confidence as they retell stories, gain pencil control and make books of stories. These sessions are planned to develop skills and enhance the children's experiences across all the areas of learning. These sessions are key to their ability to work more confidently in the larger class group.

57 Children with special educational needs are well supported. The effective support given to these children by teachers, nursery nurses, classroom support assistants or other specialist staff ensures that they make good progress in relation to their ability.

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

58 This area of learning is promoted well and given a high priority within all activities because staff see this as the key to enabling children to want to learn. The good teaching ensures that the children gain in confidence and feel comfortable in expressing their ideas and feelings. The children settle quickly into class routines and move confidently between activities, both indoors and at outdoor play. Relationships are very warm and supportive and the staff work well as a team; they provide effective examples for the children. The children make good progress because of the good routines and clear expectations of the staff. By the time the children reach the end of the reception year, many achieve the standard expected for their age in this area of learning. They learn well through the well-organised classrooms that provide a wide range of learning experiences that are accessible to all children and actively encourage their independence. Children are learning to take out equipment and to tidy up, helped by the way areas are organised with photographs and templates of how things should be stored.

59 Teachers encourage children to observe carefully and talk about what they see. In one activity the nursery children worked with an adult and blew bubbles. She encouraged them to look at the different shapes that were formed and the children were entranced with the colours as the light caught the bubbles. One child whispered 'It's like a little rainbow.' The children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted very well. All staff are sensitive to children's needs and encourage them to be aware of the feelings of others. The nursery nurse working with small groups of lower attaining reception children used very effectively the story of 'The Rainbow Fish' to explore feelings of loneliness and how others can help. In the reception classes, teachers increasingly reinforce basic class routines such as not shouting out, and putting up a hand to answer a question. Children learn to take turns and work well together to use construction materials to create their own imaginary scenarios. They gain an awareness of each other's feelings as they move up through the Foundation Stage. By the time they are in the reception classes they are becoming self-sufficient and undress and dress themselves for physical education lessons with minimum adult help.

60 Staff encourage children to listen to each other and there are planned opportunities at the start of the day for children to share ideas. They respond well to the well-timed intervention and praise given by all adults and grow in self-esteem. Children start nursery with limited concentration but, because they enjoy the stimulating activities, they learn to make choices and persevere with their tasks.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

61 By the end of the reception year, many children are likely to attain standards well below those expected for their age in this area of learning. This reflects good achievement over time from their very low attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage. This results from good teaching in both classes. Children have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers and support staff are skilled at encouraging children to express their ideas and use questions that encourage children to extend their vocabulary and communicate their ideas more effectively. Staff plan role-play areas to encourage imaginative play. For example, nursery children used their experiences from home to set out a table for a meal and to prepare and 'cook' food. Staff intervene well and ask children about the names of foods and encourage them to talk about favourite meals. In the reception classes the children worked in the 'Post Office' and took turns at dressing as the postman and delivering letters others had written and put in the post-box. They took great delight in carrying the post-bag and making their deliveries. Other children entered into role and 'wrote' invitations or letters. Some included recognisable individual letters and, occasionally, whole words.

When asked by one child if there was any mail the 'postman' replied 'You had two letters yesterday, that's enough.' Teachers and support assistants plan well to ensure that children's speaking and listening skills are reinforced within all activities. They use effective strategies at the end of lessons to encourage children of all abilities to listen carefully and then to talk about their work.

62 Teachers show that they enjoy books and read stories well, assuming different voices to match the characters. This encourages the children to enjoy books and helps develop early reading skills. In the nursery the book area is well organised. 'Snack time' provides good opportunities to encourage children to sit quietly, choose books and 'read', either independently or with a friend. After one session the nursery teacher read the story 'Alfie and his Wellingtons'. The teacher read the story well and involved all the children in looking at the pictures and predicting events. The teacher took every opportunity to build on what the children already knew and ensured their understanding of vocabulary 'What does a 'pair' mean?' Children quickly volunteered 'It means two boots.' One child decided 'I've got a pair of red shoes' and displayed them proudly. Work on letter sound is begun in the nursery where children learn to identify objects beginning with a particular sound. A few children successfully identify these correctly but many are still not able to distinguish sounds and make wild guesses. This work is built on in the reception class where children are beginning to know initial letter sounds and find words that start with particular letters. They are beginning to recognise commonly used words in their class book and show they know their meaning by making up simple sentences to tell the rest of the class. For example, a child chose 'help' and correctly used it in 'Help, I've hurt my hand.' Children take books home and some parents help by reading books with them at home. They sometimes write useful comments in their child's reading diary, which informs the school and helps to encourage children to read at home.

63 Children are given many opportunities to develop their writing skills. In the nursery, early writing skills are developed well as children 'write' in their role-play and take 'telephone message or write shopping lists. In the reception class children trace over letters, make them in play-dough or successfully join dots to form the letter. In the 'Post Office' children practise their letter writing and address envelopes. Most write their name and others can copy their name accurately. They are developing sound pencil control and most can write recognisable letters. They are beginning to copy sentences that they have dictated to their teachers and a few more able children can write a simple sentence.

### **Mathematical development**

64 The teaching is mainly good but many children's mathematical development is likely to be well below the standards expected for their age by the time they transfer to Year 1. This represents good progress from their very low starting point when they start in the nursery. In both the nursery and reception classes, staff reinforce counting skills in all activities. On entry to the nursery they are introduced to a wide range of experiences and practical activities that promote an enjoyment of working with numbers. They practise counting by threading beads, attempting to make repeat patterns, identifying the colours, and a few children count accurately to ten. Teachers use every opportunity to reinforce mathematical concepts. For example, children in the nursery played with the doll's house and when a child wanted to make a blanket for a doll's bed the fabric was too large. The teacher skilfully worked with the child to reinforce the concept that cutting the material in half would result in two pieces of equal size. A strength in the teaching was the time the teacher gave to enabling the child to think through the problem and to independently come to a decision on where to cut the fabric. Staff are skilled at developing children's mathematical skills in other areas of learning. In one session, children created patterns by drawing round two-dimensional shapes. The teacher's skilful questioning enabled the children to name accurately shapes such as square, triangle and circle, and to recognise the colours of the shapes, red, blue, green and yellow.

65 Reception teachers build on this good foundation and continue to ensure counting skills are reinforced throughout any relevant activity, such as counting the children at registration or counting the stamps needed for letters in the 'Post Office'. Teachers use number lines to explore the concept of 'one more' than a given number and encourage children to talk about how they reached their answer. The teachers use effective strategies to reinforce the children's learning through games that reinforce their understanding of the match of numbers to objects. The children enjoy mathematical games and love to win as they take it in turns to place their numbers accurately in a 0-20 grid. They recognise simple shapes such as circle, triangle, rectangle and square, and are learning about cubes, cylinders, spheres, pyramids and cones. Teachers ensure children have opportunities to reinforce mathematical skills and knowledge in songs and number rhymes. Lessons and activities are well planned, to develop early concepts of number and shape. Children consolidate this learning as they work at rolling play dough to make numbers and shapes or constructing models with different shaped blocks. They are learning to use mathematical language to describe position and size and can name 'large/small' and 'long/short'. Children accurately order plastic bears in order of size, 'small', 'medium' and 'large'. When completing their weather chart, most children join in and say the days of the week with their teacher and a few make an attempt to recall which day was yesterday and what day it will be tomorrow. The children enjoy practising and consolidating their mathematical skills using matching or sorting games on the computer. For example, more able children can count different numbers of objects in boxes and identify a match with a given number to five.

66 The introduction to numeracy lessons is used in the reception classes to prepare children for Year 1 and to encourage the children to begin to count numbers from zero to 20. However, while children join in teacher led activities they do not yet have sufficient skills to go beyond working on sorting and matching objects to total 10. For example some children find it difficult to relate counting to objects and count some twice or miss others and for example find five objects and say 'I have seven here.' Teachers use these opportunities well to reinforce counting by encouraging children to touch and say the number of each object. Teachers use classroom displays effectively to reinforce the shapes of numbers and many children write random numbers in their role-play. They copy teachers' numbers to five and a few children in reception can produce well-shaped, recognisable numbers.

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

67 There is mainly good teaching in this area of learning in both the nursery and reception classes. This ensures that children make good progress but the limited experiences many children have before starting school means that most are on course to be below the early learning goals identified for their age by the end of the reception year. A wide range of interesting activities and visits is planned, such as those to local parks and shops. Visitors include a wide range of people, for example, linked to the topic 'People Who Help Us'. Many children make rapid progress in using ICT and work very confidently with the computer programs. Many have sound basic skills and know how to move objects on screen using the mouse to move cursors or drag items into position. The children are beginning to work sensibly in pairs and to help each other. A few children can select the option they need to access the game they need from a simple menu.

68 In both classes children have opportunities to bake and this reinforces their scientific understanding as they describe how heat changes the cake mixture or dough. Teachers plan for a good range of activities linked to the natural world and by the end of the reception year they understand that plants need food, light and air to grow. Children learn about the ways things change over time by looking at photographs of when they were babies and what they could do then and contrasting them with how they look now and the wide range of skills they have now. In role-play they learn about the world of work and use their knowledge from home to act out the work of the

postman and post office counter staff. In the reception classes, the staff used a walk in the surrounding area, and took digital photographs of the shops, houses and other features. The children studied these photographs and recalled the location of different buildings. They observed carefully and chose from a range of boxes and other waste materials to make and paint models of what they had seen. They talked enthusiastically about features for example, 'look this is the big window in the shop'. All adults extend children's learning through well-timed questions to help them consolidate what they know and to challenge them to investigate for themselves. For example, children are encouraged to plan and make choices of equipment and materials when making models and to say what could be improved.

### **Physical development**

69 The teaching is at least satisfactory in outdoor play and in formal sessions in the hall. Children make good progress in their physical skills of running, jumping, skipping and use the large space of the hall confidently. In the nursery, children have opportunities to use wheeled vehicles and control them appropriately as they play imaginatively following routes and avoiding obstacles. The nursery children begin to get used to the space in the hall and this prepares them well for work in the reception class. All staff ensure that children work at their own level so that they are confident in trying new activities. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers give clear directions so that children know what is expected of them. Safety rules are established from the beginning so that children learn to use space without danger to themselves or others. The staff supervise these activities closely; they reinforce children's personal and social skills well as they impress upon them the need to take turns, and behave sensibly and safely. In the reception classes, children learn to listen well and to respond quickly to instructions as they run, skip, hop and jump around the hall, changing speed and direction on a signal. Most show sound control and hand/eye co-ordination as they throw and balance beanbags. Children enjoy physical activities and join in enthusiastically. Where children are less confident, staff support them sensitively until they are ready to take part. Throughout the nursery and reception classes, children use tools appropriately when they paint, join objects together and cut shapes from paper. Adults observe carefully and do not intervene too quickly to do the work for them. When the children have difficulty in manipulating materials they guide them to practise their skills and enhance their learning. Although most have sound manipulative skills, few still find it difficult to cut round shapes and cope with joining materials.

### **Creative development**

70 The children achieve well given that many have had few opportunities before starting in the nursery and although they learn through regular opportunities to experiment with a wide range of materials they are on course to be below the goals set for their ages in most aspects of this area of learning by the end of the reception year. The sound programme of practical activities and experiences includes art and design, model-making, singing nursery rhymes and songs, and music making with a range of un-tuned percussion instruments. Children in the nursery have regular access to paint and choose this as an independent activity. They experiment with colour and different textures to create pictures and patterns. Children learn to convey ideas in collages and, for example, nursery children have used paint, paper and fabric to create their interpretation of characters from 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Others tried to colour in templates of 'teddy bears' but were limited by the constraints of the outlines of the pre-printed picture. Many children do not yet have the skills to paint within a limited shape. The teaching is at least sound in both classes. The staff plan a range of activities through which the children explore different media, such as when they mix colours, or roll and flatten play dough. The adults often offer good support for the children's learning as they talk to individuals or groups. However, more opportunities could be planned for direct teaching of basic skills in art and design. In some art and design activities older children could benefit from experimenting with different

size brushes for a particular purpose when making observational paintings. Children enjoy music making and can clap out rhythms. The nursery children already join in simple action songs and the reception children know many of these by heart. There are good opportunities for the children to act out roles and create imaginary scenes. These activities are planned well so that adults are sometimes involved and the children's vocabulary is extended and their language is more confident.

## **ENGLISH**

71 Standards in English are well below what is expected of seven and 11 year old pupils. The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been slow and standards have dropped. There are reasons why standards are lower; children now enter the nursery with very low standards for their age, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs has risen, the poor attendance of pupils from a small number of families slows progress and the school admits many more pupils at other than the normal admission time. More than half of all the pupils in the present Years 2 and 6 have specific learning difficulties in language and literacy or behavioural and emotional problems.

72 Many children start in the nursery with very limited speaking skills. Despite the good progress they make in the foundation stage, and steady progress throughout the school, their limited language and literacy skills never catch up for their age. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills or to practise their writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum such as science, history, geography and religious education. This contributes to the low standards in these subjects. A key issue for action in the previous report was to use assessment to help teachers' short term planning. Although some work has been successfully done on analysing tests results to identify groups of pupils for extra support, this remains an area for improvement. This is because too often work in lessons is either too easy for more able pupils, or too difficult for others since teachers' planning does not build on pupils' previous work. As a result, the progress of pupils is seldom better than sound, and there are often low expectations by a few teachers in Key Stage 2 of what pupils can achieve.

73 The school has a number of initiatives in place, some of which are funded by the EAZ, aimed at raising standards in literacy. There is good support for small groups of pupils when withdrawn for specific support to reach the expected standards for their age, and for those identified with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress when working in small groups with effective support. However, progress is only satisfactory overall for these pupils when taught with their classes. Although classroom assistants are well deployed to support these pupils in classes, the work is often too difficult because class teachers do not always use day-to-day checks of pupils' progress in lessons to build on previous work. This results in work often being unfinished, and impacts on their overall progress. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well by classroom assistants and make sound, and sometimes good, progress in relation to their ability.

74 By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in speaking and listening are below average. In lessons where pupils learning patterns have been disrupted due to many changes of teacher due to staff long-term absence, they often talk over the teacher and do not listen to instructions. Pupils often talk in short phrases and find it difficult to choose the right words to answer questions. When some Year 2 pupils were reading to an inspector they occasionally just shrugged their shoulders in answer to questions. By Year 6, pupils have made steady progress. They talk together about their work in small groups, and more able pupils listen to each other's suggestions, but they are less confident talking to an audience. The school has recently introduced lessons aimed at encouraging pupils to share their opinions with classmates, but there are still too few opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. The good role-play opportunities in the Foundation Stage are not extended into Years 1

and 2 and there are few opportunities for pupils to speak in front of an audience. The previous report commented on the lack of drama in English lessons, and there is still little planning for drama activities. Pupils do not present 'class' assemblies to the rest of the school and during the inspection pupils were usually silent observers during assemblies. Teachers do not use the end of lessons well enough to let pupils tell classmates about the work they have been doing.

75 By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in reading are well below average. In Year 2, only more able pupils read with confidence. Too many pupils read hesitantly and refer to pictures for clues when struggling to read unknown words. In Year 6, only more able pupils are confident and fluent, reading with appropriate expression. These pupils name few authors other than J.K. Rowling and R.L. Stine and they have difficulty explaining their preferences. Other pupils still use a finger guide and do not correct errors, such as reading 'scrapping' for 'scraping'. Less able pupils are still working through the school's reading scheme even though the books are not always matched to their interest, age or ability; they have few opportunities to be heard reading to an adult. This results in their slow progress. Only more able pupils explain the purpose of index pages. In Year 4, some pupils had little idea how to use a dictionary and this was commented on in the previous report. There are few planned opportunities for pupils to regularly sustain reading for pleasure.

76 By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in writing are too low. Spelling is a major weakness and too many pupils continue spelling unfamiliar words as they sound. By Year 2, capital letters and full stops are not used consistently and many pupils still need adult support in writing activities. Even by Year 5, a few pupils still write capital letters incorrectly in sentences. More able pupils in Year 6 organise their writing into short paragraphs, but there are few examples of pupils planning and organising writing at length. Pupils in Year 6 wrote formal letters of complaint. These were set out correctly and pupils used word-processing skills to present their letters well. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when ICT was not used to aid writing. Pupils do not practise their writing skills enough in other subjects. As a result, their progress is seldom better than sound. Although handwriting is variable from class to class, there is an emphasis on raising standards. Several pupils in the Year 2 class are joining letters when they write, and in the Year 6 class the majority of pupils' writing is joined and fluent.

77 Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory, with consistently good teaching in Year 2. Where teaching is good, for example in the Year 2 class, planning identifies appropriate work for different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Classroom assistants are deployed well to support groups of pupils. Teachers throughout the school often use a good range of resources, including interactive whiteboards, and these support learning well. Pupils are usually managed well in lessons. Good questioning skills impact well on the learning of more able pupils because they are usually eager to answer.

78 There are some inconsistencies amongst teachers as to their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Marking of work does not always indicate how pupils are achieving. There are good examples in the school that could be shared with all staff, for example in the Year 2 class, where marking is very clear about what pupils need to do to improve. Activities are not always matched well enough to what pupils have previously learnt. This is because not all teachers use the end part of lessons to check how well pupils have learnt and so cannot use this information to plan future lessons. Where teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory in the classes where there have been many staff changes, this is because too much time is taken up managing pupils. This results in unsatisfactory learning in these lessons.

79 The leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory, although this will be resolved when the new head teacher is appointed in the next few weeks. The recently appointed

subject co-ordinator has temporarily taken on the role of acting head teacher in the school and this limited her role as co-ordinator. She is very knowledgeable about English, and has identified what needs to be done to raise standards in this subject. Some initiatives, such as a full hour given to guided reading, have been put into place too quickly, and some teachers are not yet confidently following these. The checking of teachers' planning and the quality of pupils' work is not yet rigorous enough to identify the weaknesses in the match of work. The extra time given to practising basic literacy skills just involves pupils in repeating similar exercises in basic spelling and handwriting that they have done in their English lessons and so this repetition does little to motivate them to improve.

80 Resources to teach English are satisfactory overall. They are good in Years 1 and 2, where many reading scheme books have recently been purchased. However, only the Year 1 classroom has a pleasant book 'corner' for pupils to sit quietly and enjoy books. The library area is attractive and inviting, but no pupils were seen using it during the inspection. This limits opportunities to encourage reading for pleasure and to teach pupils how to use books to find information. There are insufficient attractive books for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Some pupils bring books from home to read, and Year 6 pupils often have to go into another classroom to choose books they have not already read. In some classrooms bookcases are very untidy. In the non-fiction library there are a number of books which need replacing. No pupils were seen using this library during the inspection, limiting their research skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81 Standards in mathematics are below average for seven year olds and well below average for 11 year olds. Standards have declined in the past two years. Pupils start school with significant weaknesses in their basic number skills. Pupils make good progress by the end of Key Stage 1. However this progress is not sustained and, although satisfactory in Key Stage 2 is slower because not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and therefore do not set work that is matched to what pupils are capable of. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress but when given additional support in classrooms or when working in small groups on structured learning programmes, with either a teacher or specialist classroom assistants, then they do better. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported by classroom assistants and make sound, and sometimes good, progress in relation to their ability. Their progress can be rapid in regard to mathematical skills once they have mastered the language.

82 Standards of attainment are low for a number of reasons. Teaching is not always sufficiently well planned in all classes to make sure that all pupils are working to the best of their ability. Teachers do not always use the assessments of pupils to plan the work of different groups of pupils. The limited use of day-to-day assessment means many teachers are unaware of what individual pupils need to do to improve. Few opportunities are taken in other subjects, such as science and geography to promote number skills and data handling. However, these are used to good effect in ICT.

83 Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 build upon the good start made in the reception and nursery classes where children acquire an interest in and enjoyment of mathematics. Year 1 pupils are beginning to count to 20 with confidence. Most pupils are competent with simple number bonds and are able to carry out addition and subtraction sums with numbers up to ten. By the end of Year 1 most pupils can sort, count, match, identify and sequence numbers up to ten. They recognise coins up to ten pence but are not yet able to work out change. They recognise two-dimensional shapes such as a square, a triangle and a rectangle. By Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of their two and five times tables. Pupils are very enthusiastic in mental arithmetic and number work; for example in selecting two numbers that total ten. They recognise the features of two-dimensional and three-

dimensional shapes; for example some pupils know that a solid square is a cube. Pupils are developing skills in working with money and can calculate the cost of a number of items that they could purchase for up to 20 pence and work out the change. Pupils can add up three numbers and investigate the different ways that it is possible to make 12 from three numbers.

84 At Key Stage 2 the implementation of the numeracy strategy is not yet contributing well enough to improving standards. Pupils' mathematical thinking is not well developed and Year 6 pupils struggle to multiply decimal numbers by ten and 100. Pupils use a range of strategies to make calculations and this is having a positive effect on their confidence with number. Pupils have a sound understanding of the properties of different shapes and can work out the area of such shapes. They recognise and work accurately with a variety of angles such as right angles, acute, obtuse and reflex. Pupils in Year 5 have a sound recall of multiplication facts but are unable to make mental calculations involving several operations. Their skills in measurement are satisfactory and more able pupils are able to work out the area of a number of different shapes. Pupils in all years make unsatisfactory progress in constructing, collating and analysing bar charts, line graphs and pie charts. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and can work out the area and perimeter of different shapes. There are good opportunities for Year 4 pupils to carry out mathematical investigations and use and apply their mathematical understanding in a variety of contexts. Pupils in all year groups do not have enough opportunities for practical activities, investigative work or problem solving; areas that motivate these pupils well and so improve standards.

85 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where teaching is very good, teachers have good mathematical knowledge themselves, high expectations of how pupils will behave and what they will learn and a very good understanding of different pupils' abilities. This leads to the planning of tasks that are carefully matched to pupils' needs and results in pupils working hard, concentrating well and enjoying the challenges of mathematics. In the best lessons teachers captivate pupils' attention with their own enthusiasm and provide opportunities for pupils to learn from errors. This results in pupils having positive attitudes in class and participating willingly and enthusiastically in oral and mental calculations. Good teaching has a balance of class, group and individual work and whole class mental arithmetic work has a good pace resulting in pupils being attentive. However some teaching, while satisfactory could be better. Pupils are not always set work that challenges them or the explanations of what they have to do are not clear. This means that, at times, pupils find the work too easy or they are confused about how to carry out the required calculation. When pupils quickly finish the task set, they are not set further work that would challenge and help them to reach higher standards. An improvement since the last inspection is the use of ICT to aid the teaching of mathematics. A commendable aspect of teaching is the good relationships between adults and pupils and this leads to pupils having good relationships with each other and being able to work well in pairs.

86 The leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory. The acting head teacher has currently taken over the management of the subject as a temporary measure since the subject has lacked a co-ordinator for two terms. This means that the monitoring of pupils' progress during the year has been unsatisfactory and many teachers have not set targets to help individual pupils to improve their standards of attainment. The priorities for improvement have been identified but the initial action taken has not made an impact on addressing the immediate concerns of raising standards and improving the consistency of teaching.

## **SCIENCE**

87 Standards are below those expected at the age of 11 and this has remained the same since the previous inspection. However, standards have improved in Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven standards match those expected for pupils of this age. Standards vary year on year and are

sometimes depressed due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs in some years. Pupils' limited reading and writing skills often slow their progress and impact on standards by the age of 11 when they reach the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils achieve well at the age of seven, and make good progress so that a significant proportion often attain higher standards in investigative work. Progress is satisfactory throughout Key Stage 2 but by the end of Year 6 few have made gains on their standards at the end of Key Stage 1; too few pupils produce work that is above average. This is sometimes the result of unsatisfactory assessment procedures that do not identify and build on the key skills and knowledge that these pupils have. Although, pupils are assessed regularly and targets set for their improvement these are often set against what might be expected in schools with a similar intake of pupils. This does not ensure sufficiently high expectations of what pupils could do to meet what is required nationally. For example, the school carries out optional tests at the end of Year 4 and the co-ordinator for science identifies pupils as working at the level expected in national tests at the end of Year 6 but they do not build on these standards to achieve more highly by the end of Key Stage 2.

88 Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and are well supported in classes where there is extra support in reading and completing worksheets. They often receive help and support from other pupils when working in mixed ability groups. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported by classroom assistants and make sound, and sometimes good, progress in relation to their ability. Their progress can be rapid in regard to science skills once they have mastered the terminology.

89 Teaching is broadly satisfactory throughout the school with some good teaching in Years 2 and 3. In these classes, work is planned well to enable pupils to learn through first-hand experiences. They respond well to opportunities to investigate and to be involved in their own learning. For example, the Year 2 teacher started a lesson on 'forces' at a very practical level and a discussion on what makes things move was made relevant to pupils by taking them outside to look at how the power of the wind moved objects such as tree branches, leaves, papers and even ruffled pupils' hair. Back in the classroom, her very effective questioning enabled her to gain a good knowledge of pupils' recall of different 'push' and 'pull' forces and to group them accordingly. Many pupils had a sound recall of previous work and used examples from the world about them when they volunteered ideas of how sailing boats moved and how toy cars could be pushed or pulled along. One boy indicated that some objects can be move by power generated through batteries. After well-planned investigations to create water and sand wheels, pupils had a secure grasp of the forces involved. Recording tasks were well matched to the wide range of abilities in the class and pupils with special educational needs were supported well, but still struggled to complete a worksheet requiring them to identify forces shown in pictures, for example, a shopper moving a supermarket trolley.

90 By the age of seven, Key Stage 1 pupils carry out simple investigations about different materials and learn new vocabulary to describe textures and uses of objects. Pupils begin to learn the concept of the need for a fair test and are working towards ways of setting up such a test. They have experimented with growing things and have tested and found the optimum conditions in which plants thrive.

91 At the age of 11 pupils make simple circuits using switches and some are beginning to draw diagrams using symbols to represent the components. They learn about light and how it passes through different materials and how others reflect it. They have a sound knowledge of solids, liquids and gases, and identify the conditions needed for evaporation and condensation. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, most pupils have a basic understanding of the human body and know the work of different organs and what they need to do to stay healthy. However, they have limited skills in applying this knowledge to the wider world and their own experiences. Pupils' work is often recorded on worksheets and frequently is unfinished. They have limited opportunities to develop their

own investigations and write up experiments; as a result many pupils do not develop sufficiently well their skills in setting out work in science. Although broad targets are set for pupils, they do not know what they need to do to improve and teachers' marking does not refer to the appropriateness of pupils' answers or develop their understanding.

92 Numeracy is used appropriately as pupils make bar charts and graphs to record their findings. The school's ICT provision has improved substantially and pupils use the Internet to find information on science topics. The use of interactive whiteboards has improved whole class teaching and pupils are eager to locate the icons to open files and to change displays on screen. By the end of Year 6, teachers involve pupils in using a spreadsheet as a way of recording and adding to data in an ongoing topic. Sensing equipment is very new and pupils do not yet have enough experience to enable them to use ICT to monitor and control experiments in science.

93 Pupils mainly enjoy science and respond well when the work is matched to their experience and interests. For example, in a class with Year 3 and 4 pupils the teacher used the pupils' interest in animals to explore what different types of animals eat. She skilfully used the interactive whiteboard to show how the groups could be characterised, for examples by whether they were carnivorous. The teacher's planning was good and the lesson was well resourced with books, leaflets and photographs. However, the pupils' poor literacy skills slowed their work as they tried to list animals in different groups and show what they eat. Much was copied inaccurately and pupils have not yet learned to record in their own words. However, the teacher handled very sensitively the session at the end of the lesson to enable pupils to show what they had learned. Although many less able pupils lacked confidence, the teacher and class patiently waited as they collected their thoughts and showed they knew more than they had written down. An able group, described in detail the experiment they had set up to put out a range of different seeds in a tray and to monitor which the birds liked best.

94 In the best lessons, teachers often introduce a good range of activities that interest pupils and the introductions to lessons are imaginatively planned and resourced. In a Year 5/6 lesson on how sound vibrates, the teachers instantly caught the pupils' attention by playing the strings of a harp. The pupils thrive on opportunities for practical, investigative work and where this is planned regularly, and well, they make more rapid gains in their learning. This way of working is not consistent throughout all classes, and sometimes when investigative approaches are planned, the teachers take too great a role in doing the experiments. In some classes, where there has been disruption due to teacher absence that has resulted in the recent hurried reorganisation of classes from specialist teaching to whole class teaching, as in the Year 5 and Year 5/6 classes, pupils get over excited; work is not well matched, behaviour is not always well managed and so learning is limited.

95 Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject. However, a few are less confident in developing skills, conducting experiments and giving pupils' opportunities to be independent learners. This is particularly true for older pupils where teachers' expectations are sometimes too low. The co-ordinator for science has run training for staff to improve their confidence but there have been many staff changes so not all have had access to these. Teachers' day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons is not used well enough in all classes to enable pupils to record their work in ways appropriate to the ability. Although writing skills are weak for many pupils, the use of simple worksheets requiring one-word answers does little to encourage them to learn how to set out science work correctly or to understand and use the correct scientific terms.

96 The subject co-ordinator is giving a good lead but has insufficient opportunities to manage whole school developments in the subject. She has limited opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning or to ensure that the national guidance used is fully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed age classes, where too often the same work is done by all pupils, whatever their

age or ability. The co-ordinator has worked hard to enhance work in science through visits out of school, involvement in Northern Electric 'Think Energy' project that has enhanced learning for the oldest pupils. A competition to grow sunflowers was well received and generated much measuring and discussion on growing conditions among the younger pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

97 The attainment of pupils by the age of seven is average. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. However, by the age of 11, pupils' attainment is below what is expected for pupils of their age. They benefit from a range of artistic influences but do not acquire good enough skills to create their own effective work. This means that attainment is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection.

98 By the age of seven, pupils have satisfactory skills in drawing and painting. Their recent work on self-portraits showed that pupils can produce a face in reasonable proportion with obvious features, like eyes, noses and mouths. They can add emotions, like happiness and sadness. Pupils know how to use other media like pastels and chalk and how to blend colours together to produce a hazy effect. They can use computers successfully to design figures like snowmen and Christmas creatures, although the figures sometimes lack detail and care. Pupils' creativity in design is not as good as it should be because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to explore their own ideas.

99 By the age of 11 pupils do not have good enough skills or creativity and standards are below average. They appreciate a suitable range of artistic influences by studying major artists like Van Gogh, Cézanne and Monet. These certainly have an impact and higher attaining pupils, in particular, learn how to reproduce their styles in landscapes and still life. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have produced silk pictures of butterflies and flowers showing a good eye for colour. They have also made recognisable wildlife figures from willow twigs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make competent quilt designs and simple tapestries. They have also used a computer program to design their own wallpaper. However, pupils do not develop enough different techniques to help them create effective art and design work. This is because teachers do not systematically demonstrate the skills and insist that they are practised. For example, during lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teachers simply asked pupils to draw hats, from a variety in the classroom, without drawing their attention to the use of line, proportion or shading. In still-life pictures of fruit bowls, pupils coloured apples, for example, as solid green without much feel for colour variation or sheen. In addition, teachers do not allow pupils enough freedom to produce innovative designs and so pupils' work tends to be quite similar.

100 Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers and are well supported in classes where there is extra help. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other pupils in relation to their ability.

101 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers introduce pupils to different influences and so generate interest in their work. In the work on hats, for instance, pupils were certainly eager to begin designing. This creates a positive atmosphere in classrooms. Teachers use resources well to focus pupils' minds. In one lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher used an interactive whiteboard to outline the key areas for learning. Therefore, pupils were quite clear what they had to do. They question pupils well to make sure they understand new ideas and support staff help lower attaining pupils thoughtfully on an individual basis. However, a few teachers sometimes do not control the pupils as well as they should. As a result, noise levels become high, there is too much movement around the classroom and the pace of work slows. Most importantly, teachers do not show pupils the key techniques in art and design, which will enable them to produce detailed and sensitive designs and pictures. Teachers' expectations are, therefore, not sufficiently high.

102 The school has not improved the quality of art and design in the school since the last inspection because there has been little training to boost the skills of staff and the school does not celebrate the subject enough. The pupils' best work is displayed in corridors around the school but the quality of presentation does little to set it off and praise the achievements of all pupils. The leadership and management role of the co-ordinator is broadly satisfactory but she has no opportunities to monitor teaching, learning and development. Therefore there are no clear plans to develop the subject imaginatively and this is a weakness.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103 Judgements about design and technology are based on a small number of observations supplemented with an analysis of pupils' work on display, discussions with teachers and pupils and an examination of teachers' planning. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is just in line with that expected of 11 and seven year olds and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers and are well supported in classes where there is extra help. They often enjoy the practical making tasks. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other pupils in relation to their ability.

104 At Key Stage 1 pupils make simple drawings of their plans for their designs. They work with a variety of materials such as paper, card, straws and fabric. Year 1 pupils created a house from different shapes and materials. Year 2 pupils know that there are a variety of means of joining materials such as glue, sellotape, stapling and brass paper fasteners. Pupils use this knowledge to design and evaluate a moving picture.

105 In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to plan and make a product accurately using a variety of tools and materials. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils made their picture frames. Pupils produce clear labelled sketches of their initial ideas, modify them to take account of any problems and conclude with a final design. Generally pupils know how to evaluate and improve their work and they make informed choices about materials. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 developed their own designs of a moving mechanism based upon the principles of a moving toy. In the most recent topic on products and packaging Year 5 and 6 pupils showed good skills in evaluating and analysing the functions of a number of products with unusual designs. They displayed a good use of technical language and effectively used the opportunity to write up their ideas.

106 Teachers' planning is satisfactory. Resources and materials are well used to stimulate and sustain pupils' interest. Pupils enjoy creative and investigative work and planning their ideas for the future. They are able to discuss their work with other pupils, share resources and acquire good collaborative skills when working in pairs or groups. As a result pupils' attitudes to their work are good and pupils are able to work with commitment and enthusiasm. They respond positively to constructive criticism and modify designs accordingly.

107 The subject is led and managed well by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. However, he has no opportunities to monitor teaching, learning and development. Therefore there are no opportunities to identify what is working well and where there are areas for improvement.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

108 Judgements about geography are based on a small number of observations supplemented with an analysis of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils and an examination of teachers' planning.

109 By the ages of seven and 11 pupils are working at a level that is below what is expected for their age. Their limited writing skills mean that many have a greater knowledge than they can show in recording their ideas and findings. Teachers often use worksheets that require only short answers and this leads to work being poorly presented with very little development in pupils' writing skills.

110 Pupils in Year 1 are able to recall what members of the class observed on a journey in the community and name places that they like to visit. Year 2 pupils are able to name the countries in the United Kingdom. They can describe their journey to school and express their opinion about the play area that they like and how it can be looked after. Year 4 pupils can read a map of the area and work out their journey to school but their understanding of different features of a world map is very limited and shows little geographical understanding. Year 3 pupils have a limited knowledge of major cities in the United Kingdom but can locate places using two grid references.

111 Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their peers and are well supported in classes where there is extra help. They find work difficult in whole class lessons because weak reading and writing skills often slow them.

112 The teaching is broadly sound and the one observed lesson was satisfactory. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and topics are organised in a thoughtful sequence. Teachers make effective use of visits to stimulate the pupils' interest and as a result pupils enjoy working in the community. Teaching does not make good enough links with other subjects and provides very limited opportunities to support the development of the pupils' numeracy and literacy skills.

113 The co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the subject well by monitoring the planning and knowing what resources are required to improve the curriculum and pupils' standards of achievement. The geography curriculum is planned by adapting a national scheme of work but needs to pay much more attention to the particular needs of the school and experiences of the pupils.

## **HISTORY**

114 Pupils' attainment is below average by the ages of seven and 11. Although pupils have a reasonable knowledge of key historical facts, they struggle to present them clearly and older pupils have few skills in discovering information for themselves. This reflects a very similar picture to the findings of the last inspection.

115 By the age of seven, pupils have some understanding of how life has changed over time. They appreciate, for example, that children's toys have changed since Victorian times. Pupils know that children used to play with little steam trains and spinning tops, whereas the inventions of plastic and technology have provided the modern child with such delights as Game Boys and water pistols. They do not really understand, though, the concept of time and tend to think of the past as thousands of years ago. Pupils find it hard to show their knowledge of history because their writing skills are not good enough.

116 By the age of 11 pupils have a more secure knowledge of the areas they have studied. They appreciate the rigours of life of children in the 19th century, with the likelihood of their having to work in awful conditions and eat a poor diet. Many pupils talk sensibly about the hardships suffered during the Blitz in World War 2, and can describe details of Anderson shelters and the need for evacuating children from cities. However, some pupils and especially those with special educational needs have some difficulty in recalling facts and being coherent about what they do know. Few pupils present their knowledge well on paper to show and explain why events happened in the past. This is because teachers provide too many worksheets for the pupils and pupils are not required or motivated to

produce their own writing or pictures. Sometimes, pupils simply colour in parts of the worksheets. In addition, pupils do not have good enough skills in finding and presenting facts for themselves by using reference books, databases or the Internet.

117 Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their peers and are well supported in classes where there is extra help. They find work difficult in whole class lessons because weak reading and writing skills often slow them. Those with English as an additional language often lack the background knowledge of the history topics that are based on this country and local studies.

118 The co-ordinator provides sound leadership and management and monitors the planning. However, there are few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning or to check that the curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils, particularly in the mixed age classes. The school has adopted national guidance but does not check that the suggested units of work are appropriate to what the pupils already know.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119 Standards are in line with expected levels by the time pupils are seven and 11 years of age. This shows a substantial improvement on those reported in the last inspection. Since then the school has made a great investment in establishing a well-resourced computer suite, buying new computers for each class and obtaining a wide range of software. This, together with well-planned teacher training has enabled the school to raise standards and to ensure that ICT is increasingly used in all subjects. The funding and efficient on site technical support provided through the school's inclusion in an EAZ makes a substantial impact on the ongoing curriculum development in this subject. All pupils have access to the computer suite with a lessons on ICT skills and another linked to work in to subjects such as English, history, art and design or mathematics. This regular development and practice of skills is used well to enable pupils to link their learning to other subjects. For example, in a well planned Year 2 lesson, work reinforced skills in mathematics as pupils used the Logo program. The teacher used the interactive whiteboard linked to her computer to show the class how to open the program, choose a character such as a turtle or bird as their pointer as they gave directions 'forward', 'right turn', 'left turn' to draw a square or a capital letter such as 'E' or 'F'. The teacher's good questioning ensured that pupils quickly learned to dictate the moves to create a square. Initially some muddled terms such as 'left' and 'right', or miscalculated the number of moves forward to make even sides to their squares. The very effective adult support, from the teacher and classroom assistant and technical support assistant, enabled all pupils, including the least able and those with English as an additional language, to cope well with the correct commands needed to manipulate the pointer through its 90 degree turn to face the right direction. All pupils worked well in pairs and took turns sensibly, with more confident pupils helping others.

120 By the end of Year 2, most pupils know how to log on, open programs and save work into their folders. Most can exit and close down programs although a few need adult help. Pupils use the mouse confidently to control cursors and to locate icons that enabled them to drag and position text and images. They know how to word process their work using different fonts and colours and by Year 2 they know how to print their work. By the age of seven, pupils have sound basic keyboard skills and know the function of different keys, such as 'shift' and 'spacebar.' They use these to good effect when writing sentences and short stories.

121 Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and although the older pupils have not had sufficient opportunities in previous years to acquire a wide range of skills to match the demands of the curriculum these gaps are being rapidly filled. The result of this is that standards amongst the oldest pupils now broadly match the expectations for their age. Teaching is at least satisfactory and teachers balance well their direct teaching of new skills and opportunities for pupils to practise and experiment. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to plan work that enables pupils to develop ICT skills and to learn the benefits and occasional drawbacks, of real-life applications of computers. For example, in art and design work on the computer mistakes can quickly be remedied as pupils construct pictures in the style of Mondrian, but they cannot learn the skills of brushwork and colour mixing, or light and shade in this way. Teachers use their expertise well when using interactive whiteboards to stimulate discussion or demonstrate skills. This was shown in an effective Year 3 lesson where the pupils learned about databases and achieved well through the brisk pace of the lessons as they learned to set up a branching database on different fruits asking sensible questions such as 'Has it got a stalk?' 'Can it be red?'

122 The good balance between the direct teaching of skills and opportunities for pupils to practise enables them to make good gains in their learning. The teachers organise the lessons well and the pace of learning is good. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of word processing and can locate and move text and pictures from CD-ROMs or the Internet to enhance their work. They

use spreadsheets to order and use information to answer questions. Pupils are very eager to learn and some build well on skills developed at home and share these with those less confident. Pupils have had some experience of modelling programs and are just beginning to use external sensing equipment, but this is very new. However, they are now broadening their experience, and their competence in using PC's for finding information is improving. They use the Internet and CD-ROM to support work across the curriculum; for example, in history and science. The school has good procedures to safeguard pupils' use of the Internet.

123 Teachers promote a wider range of learning opportunities because they now have the confidence to do so. They are beginning to actively plan opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum. They have sufficient knowledge and understanding to identify a range of opportunities for all pupils. However, more use could be made in using ICT in the bases linked to the classrooms to enable pupils to work independently.

124 The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has identified priorities to further develop the subject. The school has achieved considerable improvements since the previous inspection and standards are rising. All pupils enjoy a wider range of experiences than four years ago and as a result they are making good progress.

## **MUSIC**

125 Few music lessons were seen during the inspection, but there was sufficient evidence from assemblies, an extra-curricular activity, and discussions with teachers and pupils for judgements to be made. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' standards match what is expected for their age, and are good in singing.

126 By Year 2, pupils sing tunefully. In assemblies they maintain the melody and rhythm of well-known hymns and songs without any accompaniment. By Year 6, pupils know some musical terms such as 'ostinato'. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils explained the term as "repeated patterns". Pupils sing well in assemblies. They maintain two part rounds with good attention to melody and they keep the rhythm well. This was also evident in Year 4, where pupils not only sang in two part rounds but then some pupils sang, others clapped and others played untuned percussion instruments.

127 Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers follow the national guidance and their subject knowledge is satisfactory. However, the pace of lessons slows when teachers spend too much time managing the behaviour of pupils. This sometimes happens because pupils are handed out instruments at the start of the lesson. They then have to listen to the teacher talking and quite often find the temptation not to touch the instruments is too great. Pupils enjoy music activities, and the majority respond well in lessons. Only a few pupils are inattentive when the pace of lessons is too slow.

128 The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable. She teaches groups of pupils to play the recorder as an extra-curricular activity. These pupils are taught to read musical notation and pupils in Year 6 play with good expertise. Pupils also practice singing to an audience in regular school performances such as the Christmas pantomime. Music chosen to introduce assemblies is shared with pupils at the start of the week. These opportunities support the curriculum well. The role of the co-ordinator is not yet developed well enough to include rigorous checking on the quality of planning for lessons or the work pupils do, although this is identified in the school development plan. However, leadership and management are satisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

129 During the inspection it was only possible to observe gymnastics skills and country-dance activities. Discussions with the co-ordinator, other staff and pupils, plus the examination of documents and teachers' records, demonstrate that all areas of the physical education curriculum are taught according to the season. From this, lessons and other activities seen, it is evident that by the ages of seven and 11 pupils attain standards that match those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school provides extra-curricular clubs for football, athletics and country dancing. There are opportunities for coaching, for example through initiatives linked to Newcastle United Football Club. Year 5 pupils have worked with The Falcons for rugby skills and Year 6 have learned basketball skills through work with Newcastle Eagles. After school clubs are well attended and the initiatives run by these professional organisations in school are very well received. Pupils use the skills they learn in these sessions to improve their performance in lessons. Pupils in Year 5 learn to swim and are joined by any pupils from Year 6 who have not reached the required standards. By the time they leave the school most pupils swim a recognised stroke for at least 25 metres and many swim beyond this.

130 From the lesson and activities seen, and the standards achieved, it is evident that teaching is satisfactory across all strands of physical education. The teaching in the country-dance club is very good and these pupils achieve very well and thoroughly enjoy the activity. The teacher's great enthusiasm and skill ensure that these sessions are very popular and most pupils access them in lunchtime clubs when they reach Key Stage 2. By the age of 11, pupils develop satisfactory and sometimes good co-ordination. Most have sound control and sustain rigorous activity in warm-up sessions at the start of lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils learn to use equipment safely and are aware of the impact of exercise on staying healthy. In a Year 6 gymnastics lesson, the teacher's clear instructions ensured pupils performed forward rolls safely as they practised different movements to create a sequence. The teacher's well-timed intervention, and use of pupils to demonstrate to others, enabled all to refine their performance. Pupils sensibly appraised the work of others and applauded spontaneously when they saw particularly good handstands or cartwheels. They worked well in pairs to support each other in practising handstands and their work improved because the teacher demonstrated the correct foot position to ensure safety. The pupils make very clear that they enjoy physical education. They achieve personal success and this supports their self-esteem. Pupils co-operate well in pairs and teams; this has a positive impact on their personal and social education as they develop teamwork and support each other. For example, pupils with special educational needs work at the level at which they feel comfortable and are often supported well by classroom assistants and other pupils. Those for whom English is an additional language achieve well and attain standards that match their abilities.

131 The good work established in the Foundation Stage is built on throughout the school and pupils make sound, and sometimes good, progress in relation to their physical ability. The teachers have sound subject expertise that has improved since the last inspection through training provided by the subject co-ordinator and links through the 'Top Sport', 'Top Play' and 'Top Gym' initiatives. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and gives a good lead, which has enabled the school to improve since the last inspection. EAZ funding is used very well and is having a positive impact on subject management and the development of initiatives that will lead to further improvement. For example, the residential visit will be re-introduced later this year, where the oldest pupils will have opportunities for outdoor adventurous activities. There are also planned opportunities for pupils to take part in orienteering.

132 The co-ordinator has a good grasp of where development is needed but has few opportunities to observe teaching and learning in other parts of the school in order to identify specific areas for improvement. For example, although the co-ordinator has agreed with staff a need for a

brisker pace in lessons, there are no opportunities to observe lessons and see what needs to be done in particular classes or areas of the subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

133 The attainment of pupils by the end of both key stages is below what is expected for pupils of their age. This means that attainment has not improved since the last inspection. Although teaching is sound, there are flaws in the curriculum guidance and planning that make it hard for all pupils to achieve well at present.

134 Pupils do not have a secure basic knowledge of religion by the age of seven. Pupils appreciate the concept of God and how Jesus was God's present to mankind. They know that prayers are directed to God but are confused by the story of the Creation. One group of pupils puzzled over which came first, God or dinosaurs, which resulted in a healthy debate. Pupils understand the notion of family and the sense of belonging, and refer to families and karate groups as examples. Only higher attaining pupils refer to the Christian family. Pupils are beginning to appreciate other religions, like Judaism, and that they too have rules, as in the Torah. Pupils can suggest their own rules for behaviour, like 'no fighting' and 'no swearing'. Pupils have weak writing skills, which prevent them from showing fully what they know.

135 By the age of 11 pupils have a reasonable, if patchy, knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. They consider that there are many different gods to cater for different religions but struggle to explain the differences. Pupils have some knowledge of Bible stories like The Good Samaritan, although only higher attaining pupils recalled The Prodigal Son efficiently. Few pupils, though, can suggest the message that the parables are trying to convey, even though they are used to considering personal issues and dilemmas. They are good at offering a range of wise advice about what to do, for example, if they found a £10 note in the street. Pupils show a positive regard and empathy for other people in their deliberations. For example, pupils put themselves in the shoes of the person who had lost the £10 note. Visits to places of worship, such as churches and Hindu temples have helped the pupils to have a tolerant view of all faiths. However, pupils do not write about their knowledge effectively. Pupils produce very similar work to each other because teachers provide far too much for the pupils and do not let them find and present information for themselves.

136 The school has done little to improve the subject since the last inspection. There is an acceptance that the subject suffers from the understandable focus of time on English and mathematics but little awareness that the subject can be important in the promotion of literacy and art, in particular. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership and management within the constraints that have been placed on developing the subject. Although the school has modified its curriculum to include new national ideas, it is obliged to rely on the agreed syllabus taught in the local authority's schools; this syllabus is out of date. As a result, teachers cannot check to see how well pupils learn, compared to the expected levels. There are too few good resources to help bring the subject alive, although the school has already recognised need to buy more artefacts.