

INSPECTION REPORT

BEDE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108327

Headteacher: Mr R Foster

Lead inspector: Mrs M Fitzpatrick

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th January 2004

Inspection number: 255464

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	123
School address:	Old Fold Road Gateshead Tyne and Wear
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Childs
Date of previous inspection:	July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bede Community School is situated in a regeneration area in the east of Gateshead. The school roll of 123 pupils has fallen since the last inspection because of house clearance and re-housing programmes. Children join the school in the nursery with very low levels of attainment. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average and the school is set in an area of high economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils who are on the school's special educational needs list is well above the national average. There were no pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need on the roll at the time of the inspection. The school community is predominantly white European, with less than ten per cent from Asian-Indian or Chinese heritages. At the time of inspection there were three refugee children in the school. The percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language fluctuates and is sometimes above the national average. At the time of the inspection there were no children in the school who were at an early stage of fluency in English. Pupil mobility is sometimes high and in the last year 37 pupils joined the school and 31 left at times other than the start of the school year. The school benefits from a stable and dedicated staff. The school is involved in many local and national initiatives to support its work. These include; Education Action Zone, single Regeneration Budget, Small schools Fund, Sure Start and The Children's Fund. In 2002 the school received the Investors in People Award and in 2003 it received the Healthy School Award and the Schools Achievement Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
24326	Mrs M Fitzpatrick	Lead inspector	English
			History
			English as an additional language
9572	Mrs K Anderson	Lay inspector	
23375	Mr J Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Information and communication technology
			Geography
			Religious education
			Design and technology
			Physical education
			Special educational needs
25344	Mr J Peacock	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Science
			Art and design
			Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bede Community is a very effective school. Pupils are very well taught so that they consistently achieve very well. While standards are below the national average overall, this reflects the very low level of attainment of pupils when they start school and the very high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, ensuring a clear direction for the work of the school and all who are associated with it. Teamwork is very good and relationships are excellent. The school's commitment to inclusion produces an ethos in which tolerance, respect and care are very highly valued. Pupils respond well, showing a keenness to learn and be involved in the life of the school. The school has considerable strengths and has clear strategies for tackling its weaknesses. It serves its pupils and the community very well and provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The high quality of leadership and management in the school, especially that of the headteacher.
- Low standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The very good teaching and very good support from learning support assistants.
- The very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
- The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those in the nurture group.
- The outstanding links with parents and the community.
- Boys' standards are lower than girls'.
- The attendance of a few pupils is too low.
- The school provides very good care and guidance for pupils.

The school is more effective than at the time of the last inspection. Standards have improved faster than they have nationally for pupils in Year 6. The quality of teaching has improved and very good assessment procedures have been introduced. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and is now good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E*	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	D	E	E	C

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those with a similar percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.*

Pupils' achievement is very good. Results in the national test have shown better than average improvement in the last three years and the school's performance now matches that of similar schools by the time pupils are at the end of Year 6. The school's performance in the tests in 2003 was lowered by the high proportion of pupils – almost 20 per cent – who joined the school during Year 6, the majority with very low attainment. Pupils now in Year 6 reach standards below the national average in English and science and ICT, and well below the national average in mathematics. In other subjects inspected, including religious education, they reach the expected standard for their age. Pupils in Year 2 achieve standards well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects inspected, including ICT and religious education they reach the expected standard for their age, except in history where weak literacy skills hamper their recording and recall of learning. The main obstacle to pupils achieving higher standards is their very low level of literacy when they join the school, which hampers their learning in all subjects. Children

in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning, but most will not reach the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class, because of their very low levels of attainment when they join the school.

Pupils behave well in and around the school and they have good attitudes to learning. **Their personal development is very good because of the school's very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good overall, with some excellent teaching seen in Year 2. The high quality teaching leads to very good learning by pupils who make good progress and enjoy their lessons. While for most pupils, learning in lessons is very good, their progress over time is only good because many have poor retention of what they learn. Sometimes teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to talk and explain their ideas as a way of improving their learning. Teachers make very good assessments of pupils' learning and this is a strength of the teaching.

The curriculum is very good in Years 1 to 6 and it is very good in the Foundation Stage. It is very well enriched with a good range of visits and visitors. The provision for clubs and activities outside school is very good. The school provides very good care and guidance for its pupils, based on the very good knowledge that the headteacher and staff have of their needs. Pupils have very good opportunities to comment on their school through the *School Council* and in *Circle Time*, when they are able to make suggestions for improvements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the development of the school. The deputy headteacher sets a very good example in the quality of teaching, in the leadership of the English curriculum and in managing assessment procedures. The leadership and management of special educational needs and the Foundation Stage are very good. The governing body has good involvement in the development of the school, is very supportive of its aims and ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in very high esteem and feel that they have a genuine partnership in their children's education. At the parents' meeting, parents showed their high opinion of the school in expressions such as, *It's a Belter* and, *Smashing- couldn't be better*.

Pupils express very high levels of satisfaction with the school. They feel secure and trusted, enjoy lessons and all the other activities that the school provides. Older pupils feel they have good opportunities to help improve the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6 and in ICT by the end of Year 6.
- Raise standards for boys so that they more closely match those of girls.
- Improve attendance for the minority of pupils whose attendance is poor.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children join the school with very low attainment overall; there are very few higher attaining pupils. The majority do not reach the early learning goals by the end of reception. Standards in Year 2 are well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 6 standards are below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. Despite these low standards pupils have made good progress over time and their achievement in lessons is good. For some boys, achievement is satisfactory instead of good, because they rely on adult support and when it is not available their learning slows.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are low at the end of Year 2 and Year 6; standards are low in reading and writing in Year 2.
- Pupils in Year 2 reach the expected standard in ICT and their achievement is good.
- Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach the expected standard in religious education.
- By Year 6 pupils reach the expected standard in history and achieve very well in the subject.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well overall. In their personal, social and emotional and their physical development they achieve very well.

Commentary

1 The attainment of most children when they join the school is very low. They make good progress in all areas of learning because of the very good introduction they have to school through the highly skilled support they have from teachers and nursery nurses. They achieve well in their learning, especially in their personal and social skills because of the skilful interventions and guidance given by adults which enables them to develop confidence and independence. They also make rapid progress in their physical development because of the very good teaching they receive. However, because of their very low attainment when they join the school, there is a significant minority, about one third, who will not reach the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. When they join Year 1, a significant number of pupils need the additional support of the school's nurture group provision to help them prepare for learning the National Curriculum.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.0 (11.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	10.2 (11.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	13.0 (13.3)	16.3 (16.5)

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

2 Results in the national tests for the last three years for pupils in Year 2, in reading, writing and mathematics, are well below the national average and the average of similar schools. In science in 2003, results were well below the national average. This low performance reflects the very low attainment pupils have when they join the school, the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs as well as the impact of pupils who have English as an additional language. Despite their low performance in National Curriculum tests pupils make good progress from when they join the school and their achievement is good. Girls' performance in the tests is

better than boys in all subjects. Since the last inspection the attainment of pupils joining the school has fallen significantly.

3 Pupils who are now in Year 2 are still well below the level expected for their age in reading and writing. They have made good gains in speaking and listening and in learning a number of strategies for reading. However, their very limited vocabulary prevents many pupils from writing independently, while poor motor skills hamper their ability to write neatly at this stage. In mathematics, pupils' standards are well below what is expected, mainly as a result of their poor literacy skills which hamper their retention and recall of facts and impair their understanding of questions. In science, while pupils learn well through practical activities their overall standard is well below average because they have poor recall of information. Despite these standards pupils' achievement is good, because they are very well taught and have developed good attitudes to their learning since joining the school.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.0 (22.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.9 (23.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.6 (26.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4 Pupils who are now in Year 6 have made very good progress in their English and reach standards that are only just below the average. They have good strategies for reading and develop sound writing skills because of the good opportunities they have to write in other subjects. Despite having good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects and making good progress while they are in Years 3 to 6 pupils' standards in mathematics are still well below average. This is because of the low base they start from when they join Year 3 and the difficulties they have in understanding written questions. In science, standards are below average for Year 6 pupils, who have made good gains in knowledge and understanding as a result of well planned practical lessons and very good teaching in the subject. Pupils' achievement in these core subjects is very good because they are well motivated by the high quality teaching and they benefit from the school's generous staffing, which allows them to be taught in smaller than usual groups.

5 Pupils in Year 2 reach the expected standard in information and communication technology (ICT) because they are well taught and have been given good opportunities to apply the skills they have learned in other subjects. The same applies to pupils in Year 6, who, because they have only had regular access to computers in the last two years, only reach standards that are below average. Nevertheless, they have made the same good progress in their learning as the younger pupils and are well on the way to reaching the expected standards. In religious education, pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6, reach the standards expected for their age, because the syllabus is well planned and they have good opportunities to learn about world faiths from visits and visitors. Likewise in history, pupils in Year 6 reach the expected standard because they are very well taught and benefit from well planned visits and visitors as well as learning first hand from examining artefacts from the past. Pupils in Year 2 show a good understanding of what they learn in history, because they have opportunities to talk and think about the past. However, they do not have good recall of their learning and overall, their standards are below what is usually seen.

6 Pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans because these are well written and based on very good assessment of their needs. They are very well taught and benefit from high quality support both in and out of the classroom, from both support assistants and the part-time special needs teacher. Over time, these pupils make the same progress as their peers, though they do not achieve the expected level in the core subjects by the time they leave the school.

7 Pupils whose mother tongue is not English, including those pupils who are refugees, make good progress in their learning because they are well supported by teachers' planning and the in-class support they receive from learning support assistants, and also by being paired with pupils of similar ability to work collaboratively during lessons. Test results show that pupils whose mother tongue is not English and who remain in the school from Year 2 to Year 6 make good progress in the core subjects in that time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities are developed very well. Pupils have a good attitude to school and their behaviour is also good. Bullying is not a problem at this school. Pupils' attendance rate is well below the national average. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although attendance has improved recently, it is still a significant weakness and hinders the rate of progress of pupils who do not attend regularly.
- In spite of the weak attendance, pupils enjoy coming to school and are usually punctual.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for their work.

Commentary

8 All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and act as good role models for them. The excellent relationships they have with pupils actively promote the ethos of a caring school and encourage pupils to want to come and to learn.

9 Most pupils concentrate well in lessons and try hard to improve their work. They have very good relationships with each other and with all adults. Pupils listen well to each other in class and work happily together. They are enthusiastic about the interesting things they do in lessons and for the many after school clubs. Pupils behave well throughout the day and no incidents of bullying or harassment were seen or reported. Parents at their meeting were adamant that bullying is not a problem here. There has been only one exclusion in the last school year which in itself is an achievement, considering the above average proportion of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems.

10 The school makes very good provision for the promotion of pupils' personal development. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when it was good. In the nursery and reception class, the calm atmosphere created by experienced class teachers, ably supported by dedicated and hard working nursery nurses, results in children making very good progress towards the targets set for them in their personal, social and emotional development. They can work and play very well together, especially listening to each other and following the rules of speaking in turn.

11 The school is only closed for two weeks each year. Being a community school at the heart of the local community, pupils benefit from holiday care sessions, a breakfast club and a wide range of community based activities in which they can take part. This ensures that they have many and varied opportunities to socialise with one another and with adults. The community lunch club each Wednesday, for example, brings many visitors into contact with pupils. During the inspection, three local policemen came to lunch and joined parents and pensioners.

12 Older pupils are confident that their views are important to the school. They have a good range of responsibilities in school, for example, Year 6 act as prefects and sign a contract with school, which clearly sets out their responsibilities. The *School Council* is a very effective forum for pupils to share their views on a range of school related issues. Pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong. All pupils have the opportunity to discuss topics such as sharing, respect for others and racism. Most fully understand the importance of these aspects of citizenship.

13 The school is preparing pupils very well for life in a multi-cultural society. Not only do they have a very good knowledge of different religions, but they have also learnt about their own and different cultures. The 'Extending Horizons Initiative' enables parents and pupils to travel to places of interest beyond their own area. Recent visits have included York, the Lakes and Scotland. Children as young as three in the nursery learn about the customs associated with Hindu weddings and the school grasps any opportunity to promote an awareness of religious and cultural diversity. Leaders from a mosque have visited school, for example, and the admission of two pupils from Venezuela added to pupils learning about that country and an understanding of the plight of refugees.

Attendance

Attendance has improved by over two percentage points since the previous inspection as a result of the support for the school from parents and carers. However, it has not kept pace with the improving trend nationally and is well below average. An analysis of attendance registers shows that the main cause is linked directly to the high mobility of pupils. Absences are still being recorded, often when pupils have left the school without notification. Absence from school has a significant effect on pupils' learning and their progress. The school has an effective range of measures to promote good attendance and these are having a positive impact. Pupils talked about school being "a place to look forward to every day".

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.4%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Any other ethnic group

No of pupils on roll
121
1
1
4
2

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education for its pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is very good, learning is very good. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teachers' planning is very good.
- There are very good assessment procedures and use of assessment.

- Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour and their development of positive attitudes to learning are very good.
- The use of learning support staff is very effective.
- The receptiveness of staff to new methods of teaching and learning enables them to respond quickly to change.
- The setting of targets for individuals in mathematics is not as sharp as it is in English.
- The curtailing of opportunities for pupils to develop speaking skills reduces their confidence to speak in formal situations.

Commentary

14 The quality of teaching is very good overall. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall in the rest of the school. Improvements in teaching are an increase in the numbers of support staff and the high level of professional development that teachers and learning support assistants undertake. The school's excellent links with higher and further education institutions has led to teachers adopting new methods and technologies to improve the range of teaching styles they use which has had a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. The quality of teachers' planning and their assessment of pupils' learning are key areas of improvement, which have quickened pupils' learning.

15 In the Foundation Stage, the very good use of assessment enables teachers and nursery nurses to target learning for individual pupils, ensuring that they are provided with a good level of challenge and success in their learning. Because of this, children who join the school with low levels of confidence and poor communication skills achieve well, gain confidence and develop their independence as learners.

16 In all other classes, teachers' knowledge of pupils' learning needs is detailed and used to good effect in planning the next stage of learning. This is particularly the case in English lessons, where teachers make very good use of writing assessments to set individual targets for pupils to help them improve. This sharp focus on providing pupils with tasks that bring success in their learning led to good learning and good achievement for a class of predominantly boys. The teacher made good use of the individual targets throughout the lesson to remind pupils what it was they needed to concentrate on in their work. While assessment in mathematics is rigorous and used well to plan the next stage of learning, it is not used as well as in English lessons to set individual targets for pupils. This is a weakness which has led to less consistently good learning in mathematics than in English. The method of recording individual assessment of the English curriculum is very successful in setting appropriate targets for pupils' learning and helps them make at least good progress. The school has not yet adopted this system when setting targets for the mathematics curriculum.

17 All teachers have very high expectations of good behaviour from pupils. They make clear what these expectations are by discussing and agreeing classroom rules with pupils. They support pupils to follow these rules by the frequent use of praise and awarding of merits for thoughtful behaviour and hard work. The result is that, in all classes, pupils understand the need for a calm atmosphere for learning and all try their best to achieve this. Pupils develop good attitudes to learning from the earliest age because of the emphasis that teachers place on listening, sharing and taking turns. Children in the nursery showed great enthusiasm for counting with teddy bears and were able to give way to each other because of the teacher's firm and clear insistence on taking turns and behaving well. The impact of teachers' skilful management of behaviour is clear in the calm atmosphere that pervades lessons and in the enthusiasm that pupils develop for learning as they move through the school.

18 Teachers plan comprehensively and in detail for pupils' learning. They make very good use of their knowledge of pupils' needs by recording teaching and learning evaluations routinely on their planning. This is then put to good use in providing further explanations or examples to help those pupils who need more consolidation of their learning, as well as providing greater challenge for pupils who need it. They plan for pupils with special educational needs by making good use of their well

written individual education plans to guide the work that they set and the level of support these pupils receive. Likewise with pupils who have English as an additional language, teachers ensure that they have opportunities to work alongside pupils of similar ability who can support them in their understanding of English so that they can complete tasks and learn at the same rate as others in the class.

19 Teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants work together very well to promote good learning for pupils. All are well aware of their role and the high expectations that are made of them. Teachers make very good use of the expertise of nursery nurses and learning support assistants in both planning learning and in teaching groups of children and pupils in all classes. Nursery nurse and learning support assistants form very good relationships with pupils and give high quality support to their learning. Because the quality of teamwork is so high, pupils recognise that all adults have the same high expectations of them and respond positively to all. The impact of the work of nursery nurses and learning support assistants is significant in raising the achievement of pupils because they are well briefed and skilful in what they do. They are particularly effective in supporting boys' achievement so that when their support is not available, boys achievement sometimes dips from good to satisfactory.

20 While teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking through talk, especially in English, mathematics and science lessons, they sometimes dominate discussion leaving little room for pupils to make contributions. There is also a tendency among some teachers to speak for pupils in order to reduce their embarrassment at not being able to formulate sentences quickly. These well intentioned strategies reduce the vital opportunities that pupils need to practise speaking in the calm classroom environment that teachers are providing. Where teachers exploit opportunities for talking, as in a lively and exciting history lesson in Year 6, then pupils learning and their achievement improve significantly as they explore explanations of the past by talking about artefacts.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	12 (39%)	14 (45%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities for pupils. The provision for the enrichment of the curriculum is very good. The school's accommodation is very good, resources for learning are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in the Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teachers' planning is very good.
- There is a very good range of activities, visits and visitors.
- There are very good links with the community for learning.
- The quality of display in the school is very high.
- There is a shortage of some resources in ICT.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

21 The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. There are stimulating activities from which children can learn through play and practical activities supported by well-trained, expert adults. The planning for learning takes full account of the early learning goals in each area and is based on very thorough assessment of what children need to learn next.

22 The school's curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and there is an appropriate priority given to improving standards in English and mathematics. The school has successfully implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Teachers' planning for these and other subjects is thorough and takes good account of different ages and stages of learning for pupils in each class.

23 Teachers take care to plan for the use of basic skills in other subjects and these are used well for learning in all classes. Displays around the school show how pupils use writing, measuring and estimating and a range of ICT skills such as recording information, data collection and desktop publishing to support their learning in other subjects.

24 The school's very strong commitment to equal opportunities ensures that the curriculum is fully inclusive and that pupils benefit from all activities regardless of background or ability. The curriculum for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. Teachers adapt what is taught to meet the needs of the pupils' individual education plans and learning support assistants are very effective in implementing the teachers' plans, so that pupils learn well and make the same progress as others in the class. At the time of inspection there were no pupils who were at an early stage of learning English and no specialist support is currently used in the school. However, the needs of pupils whose mother tongue is not English are well met by teachers' planning which ensures they are supported in their understanding of the context and any new vocabulary of learning. Refugee children who have recently joined the school are well supported by being paired with pupils of similar ability who are happy to explain tasks and any unfamiliar words. Pupils all have the same access to the curriculum which, because of the adaptations described, meets their needs well. The use of a specialist teacher for pupils with the most severe literacy problems is very effective in preparing them for reading readiness in a small group.

25 Provision for pupils who have not reached the early learning goals by Year 1 is made each afternoon in the nurture group. This is managed by the co-ordinator for special educational needs, who is also the nursery teacher. Currently there are ten pupils in the group, two from Year 2 with particularly weak learning skills. The focus in this small group teaching is the development of communication and learning through play. Pupils make very good progress because of the carefully adapted curriculum, which follows what their classmates are doing but at a much simplified level. They also benefit well from the high adult to pupil ratio, which means they have the individual attention they need to make small steps in their learning. This excellent provision has assisted two Year 3 boys to successfully re-integrate with their class this term and learn effectively alongside their peers.

26 Teachers take every opportunity to promote pupils' personal and social skills through the curriculum. They are skilled at developing pupils' personal qualities not only through their teaching and other school activities but also in personal, health and citizenship lessons and in the sessions of philosophy they hold regularly. In these sessions, pupils are encouraged to think about issues and to raise questions and concerns. For example, pupils in Year 2 asked what would happen to the people who didn't go on Noah's Ark during the Flood. In *Circle Time*, pupils have the chance to discuss their feelings and beliefs and make suggestions for improving the school, which are then taken up by the *School Council*. The *School Council* provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop citizenship skills and an awareness of democracy.

27 The school, in partnership with the community, makes very good provision for care and learning outside the classroom. There are drama and music workshops, sports provision and gymnastics. The community runs a breakfast club and after school club and there is holiday care

available in all holidays except those at Christmas. The school enriches the curriculum with visits and visitors, such as the curator of a local museum or artists in residence and there are regular visits to the local swimming pool. Younger children benefit from the school's close contacts with local business and enjoy visits to shops and restaurants as part of their extended curriculum.

28 The school's accommodation is very good. Classrooms are spacious and teachers make very good use of the extra space created by falling rolls. Each classroom has computers for pupils to use during lessons; there are quiet areas for group and individual work, which are well used by teachers, learning support assistants and pupils. The quality of display in all classrooms is high and, in the Year 6 classroom, it is outstanding. Teachers devote a lot of time and thought to displaying pupils' work to the best advantage; the displays contain much from which pupils can learn or consolidate their understanding. Challenging questions are posed on displays to encourage pupils to reflect on what they see. Resources are very good overall, with very good provision in English, the Foundation Stage and in the number of computers available. Some software shortages for ICT are overcome by the very good links the school has through its Education Action Zone (EAZ) partnership with a neighbouring school, which provides access for pupils on a regular basis.

Care, guidance and support

The school's care, welfare and health and safety of pupils are very good. There is very good provision for the support, advice and guidance of pupils. The school ensures good involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good arrangements for supporting and guiding pupils' personal and academic development.
- There are very good arrangements for risk assessment and health and safety procedures.
- Arrangements for following up pupil absence are very good.
- Arrangements for the medical care of pupils are very good.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to comment on and make suggestions for school improvement.

Commentary

29 The school provides a very safe environment and pupils are well supervised at all times. The school places a high level of importance on pupils' health and safety and pupils are taught about their own health and safety through the science and personal and social education curriculum, while older pupils receive appropriate advice about sex education and drugs misuse. The school has recently gained the Healthy School award for its work on the importance of healthy eating. Pupils learn about handling risks to their personal safety through the community project 'Whoops'. There are regular and thorough risk assessments, the school is kept in very good order, with cleaning and caretaking carried out to a high standard.

30 Arrangements for Child Protection are very good. All staff have been trained and are up-to-date with procedures. All staff are trained in First Aid and procedures for dealing with, recording and reporting accidents are very good. Links between school and home are very good, as are induction procedures for children when they start the nursery. The home-school liaison teacher goes to considerable lengths to support parents to ensure their children are healthy and safe and well prepared for the demands of school.

31 The school's very good assessment and monitoring procedures ensure that the headteacher, teachers and learning support staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils' learning, social and emotional needs. They plan lessons and activities very well taking these needs into account, so that pupils feel secure and valued. The successes in learning that teachers constantly provide for pupils, helps to promote the excellent relationships that exist in the school. The strength of these

relationships is fundamental to development of confidence and self-esteem that is evident among the pupils as they move through the school.

32 The school takes a rigorous approach to following up pupil absence. There are first day call arrangements for those pupils who are known poor attenders and the school works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer to convince parents of the need for regular attendance.

33 The *School Council*, *Circle Time* and personal and social education lessons all give pupils very good opportunities to express ideas and make suggestions about how the school should improve. Recently, the *School Council* suggested to the local Metro Authority the need for a safe fence along the train track near the school. Pupils were delighted when their suggestion was acted upon. Pupils value these opportunities highly and feel they make a good contribution to developing the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established excellent links with parents. Links with the community and other learning organisations to support pupils' learning are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school actively encourages parents to become learners in order to support their children's learning.
- The school has established open and trusting relationships with parents who feel valued partners in their children's learning.
- The school has very productive links with schools and colleges of further and higher education.
- The school has highly effective links with local business for the benefit of pupils' learning.

Commentary

34 The school works very closely with parents to help them support their children's learning. It provides very effective guidance to parents through its Share programme. This programme is taught by an experienced nursery nurse and learning support assistant and is very successful in helping parents understand the methods and resources they can use to help their children learn at home. Parents interviewed spoke very highly of the pleasure and confidence the course was giving them. Besides this, the school also runs classes in literacy, numeracy and ICT for parents during the year, which give guidance on new methods in mathematics and how to listen to children read. The headteacher is dedicated to involving parents in their children's learning and has been highly effective in attracting funding for out of school activities to extend the horizons of both parents and children. These have included visits to the Lake District, Edinburgh Zoo and local areas of interest. During these visits parents have been involved fully in all activities such as climbing, raft building and walking. Through this programme, the headteacher has succeeded in demonstrating to parents the need for shared experiences with children as well as providing the facilities for trips they might otherwise not be able to make.

35 Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Annual reports are detailed and give a clear picture of progress as well as future targets. However, the school realises that regular verbal reports about their children are more valued by parents and staff go to great lengths to keep parents well informed through formal and informal meetings and telephone calls. Some parents support their children's learning at home by helping with homework tasks such as reading or tables. However, the school does have difficulty keeping track of reading books, which often go missing, and the lack of regular support given to reading is a factor in the pupils' poor development of literacy skills. Despite some low levels of support, parents spoke warmly of the school's partnership with them and how the staff valued their support.

36 The school has increased its involvement with other local schools and colleges significantly since the last inspection. This is because of the headteacher's determination to seize upon any

initiative, which will improve provision for the pupils. The school's involvement with students from a local university is geared to raising pupils' awareness of their own potential to go on to higher education. Students who have worked in the school are encouraged to discuss their experience and ambitions as a way of extending the horizons of pupils in the school. The school also has many productive links with local teacher and nursery nurse institutions, which regularly place students in the school to train in the classroom. These arrangements provide very good professional development for teachers who act as mentors and are made aware of new methods and practices through working with students. All the institutions associated with the school speak very highly of the quality of provision for trainee professionals. The inspection confirmed that teaching in the school is very good and the school provides an excellent base for teachers and nursery nurses to learn their craft.

37 The school's partnership with other schools is equally productive. As well as having very close links with the local secondary school, for additional ICT teaching and transfer arrangements, the school works closely with neighbouring primary schools to share resources and good practice. It also has links with a Beacon School some distance away to take advantage of training opportunities and areas of recognised good practice. Teachers make use of the community for support for the curriculum, by planning regular visits from the community police, fire brigade and community nurse. During the inspection a local social services team was in school leading the Whoops! project, explaining to pupils the hazards they have around them and giving advice on how to stay safe. Very good links established with local business also bring opportunities for pupils to learn about the area around them, bringing for many pupils experiences they have not had. For example, a visit to a local department store in the city centre, just three miles from the school, was the first time that some children in the nurture group had ever visited the city or travelled on a Metro train. The school's determination to raise pupils' awareness of their world and the opportunities it offers is well served by the many excellent links it makes with all areas of the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent; the leadership and management of key staff are very good. Governance of the school is good. There are significant barriers to pupils' learning; the school has been successful in enlisting aids to help overcome these barriers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Inspirational leadership of the headteacher.
- Very good management of school monitoring procedures, including assessment.
- Very good leadership and management of the curriculum.
- Very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage.
- Very good leadership and management of provision for special educational needs.
- The governors' knowledge of the school and the support and challenge they offer to improve it.

Commentary

38 The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the development of the school. He is ambitious for the children and has a sharp focus on raising their attainment so that they are well prepared for life beyond the school. He is very well aware of the barriers to their learning and his determination to overcome these through working in close and very effective partnership with parents, teachers and the wider community is exemplary. Since taking up post four years ago, the headteacher has transformed relationships with parents and the wider community. These now offer very good support for the work of the school and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The headteacher has been highly effective in sharing his vision for the school with all partners. Teachers and learning support assistants are clear about the headteacher's high expectations and how they can meet them. The very strong teamwork, which pervades the school, is the result of the headteacher's very good interpersonal skills and the shared understanding of the schools' goals.

The headteacher's aims of raising both standards and self-esteem for pupils are met in an ethos that is driven by care, dedication and high professional standards.

39 The headteacher, deputy headteacher and management team have established very good systems for monitoring the work of the school. Subject leaders, many of whom have taken on further responsibilities as the school roll has fallen, effectively monitor the curriculum and standards in their subjects. They show good knowledge of the impact of improvements that have been made and a thorough understanding of what remains to be done. Leadership and management of English and science are very good, and in other subjects good, with expertise developing well for those who have recently taken on responsibilities, because of the good role models that already exist. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. Very good links are made with parents for the benefit of children's learning. The curriculum is well planned and very good teamwork exists ensuring a good sharing of ideas and information. The school has formed very productive links with other learning institutions which provide very good opportunities for staff to lead and mentor trainee teachers and nursery nurses. This encourages staff to reflect on their own practice as well as giving them insight into new methods and initiatives. This approach is very much in keeping with the headteacher's philosophy of reaching out to the wider community for support to extend opportunities for staff and pupils.

40 The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that individual education plans are well written, well matched to pupils' needs and appropriately used by teachers and learning support staff. She ensures that there are very good links with parents and goes to considerable lengths to support them with their children's needs. The school uses funding for special educational needs provision very well and the use of a specialist teacher to work with pupils who have severe literacy problems is very effective in helping them progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed a specific programme of high quality support for pupils who are Years 1 and 2 and who have not yet reached all of the early learning goals. The success of this nurture group is evident in the number of pupils who are able to return to learn with their peers having successfully overcome significant barriers to their learning.

41 The governors have a good knowledge of the school through their visits, the reports they receive and their involvement in committees where they monitor developments and question standards. They have had to make hard decisions relating to staffing in recent years and have managed this well, retaining a good range of expertise and experience to meet the needs of the school. Governors are well aware of how the school has improved in recent years and show good understanding of why standards are as they are, particularly among younger pupils. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met, that the school's race equality policy is well implemented and that the school is an inclusive organisation. Governors give very good additional support to the school by supporting in class or, as in the case of the vicar, in leading religious education lessons. Parent governors showed very great determination, in the last school year, in raising funds to ensure that all Year 6 pupils were able to attend the residential course. The school's finances are very well managed and funds appropriately allocated to help the school meet the targets in the well written development plan. Governors have earmarked funding to protect current staffing levels until the predicted rise in pupil numbers increases the school's roll. Governors and the headteacher make good use of best value principles in purchasing and in their use of resources. Given the very good achievement of pupils, the very good quality educational provision and the average spending, the school gives very good value for money.

42 The school is successfully overcoming a number of barriers to raising pupils' achievement. The headteacher's strong focus on involving parents in the life and work of the school is succeeding in building very good partnerships with them, which support their children's learning. His initiatives through The Children Fund to raise money for holiday trips and visits has won the school high acclaim in the community, which in turn makes pupils proud to be part of the school and happy to attend. The excellent relationships, which exist in the school, are another means of overcoming pupils' reluctance to learn, as they feel secure and valued by all the adults who work with them.

Further initiatives this year are aimed at improving boys' attainment by overcoming their disaffected attitudes and using teaching and learning styles that are better matched to their needs.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	411,527
Total expenditure	377,221
Expenditure per pupil	2465

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	55,895
Balance carried forward to the next	34,306

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**

43 The Foundation Stage covers the period when children are in the part-time nursery class each morning, and the reception class. At the time of the inspection, there were only 13 pupils in the nursery and 18 in their reception year. When they start school, the attainment of most children is very low and many find communication particularly difficult. The teacher, nursery nurses, parent volunteers and students from local colleges work very effectively as a team, ensuring consistent, high quality provision. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection from good to very good overall. Assessment procedures are very good. Visits to meet children and their parents at home are arranged prior to admission ensuring a good exchange of information about individual pupils. The teachers closely monitor the children's achievements and the wealth of information gathered is used very well to set the next targets for learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and nursery nurses have a very good understanding of the needs and interests of young children and ensure that they feel important and valued.
- Staff are very good role models for the children.
- Routines are well established so that the children know exactly what is expected of them. This results in very good relationships and behaviour.
- Raising self-esteem has a high profile, helping to build children's confidence.

Commentary

44 Children's personal development is very effectively provided for through very good teaching. The children are eager to learn because of the exciting and interesting learning experiences, close support of an adult and the good quality of resources they use. However, the concentration span for many is short and the staff are skilled at capturing and holding children's interest for extended periods. Children settle quickly and happily to the wide range of activities provided. They are extremely well behaved and enjoy a very special relationship with each member of staff. Praise is used well to help raise self-esteem. Most children are willing to take on responsibilities and have the confidence to try and talk about what they are doing and to answer questions. Independence skills are promoted well, for example, through being given the freedom to choose activities. Children have no difficulty in sharing resources or in taking their turn. Most children will reach the expected level by the time they are in Year 1, though a significant group will not.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many interesting activities are planned and provided for the children to speak, listen, read and write. However, opportunities are missed to encourage children to talk.

Commentary

45 Children develop the confidence to speak due to the caring and supportive atmosphere created by the teachers and staff in both classes. Most have enough confidence to share their news with the rest of the class each morning. However, they usually need adult support to express their ideas. Exciting role play activities such as the wedding conducted by a local vicar in the nursery provide very good opportunities for the children to answer questions and relate their own experiences of family weddings. A particular strength lies in the nursery teacher's skills in engaging individual children in sometimes prolonged conversations. Plenty of time is given and each child is made to feel that he or she is special and has something important to say. However, one word answers to questions are often accepted and most of the talking is done by adults, particularly in group situations when children are working. The opportunity is often missed for children to explain in detail what they are doing and why.

46 Reading skills are promoted well through many opportunities to respond to stories and other written text. When the reception teacher and nursery nurse jointly presented the story of 'The Three Pigs', it grasped the full attention of everyone. All children enjoy using and listening to the good range of story tapes. Few are able to give the phonic sound for most of the letters of the alphabet.

47 Only a few of the higher attaining children in the nursery and reception class are able to write their letters. A significant number still have difficulty in holding a pencil properly. Evidence from work completed so far confirms the good progress some children are making in reception. All writing activities are under the close supervision of the teachers, nursery nurses and, on occasions, parent helpers. All adults encourage the use of the sound of the letters as children write wedding invitations or practise their letters. Teaching in this aspect is good and most children will attain the targets expected of them by the end of their reception year. However, a significant group will not.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematics is made purposeful through a wide range of enjoyable story and play activities.
- Mathematical skills and language are systematically taught.

Commentary

48 A significant group of lower attaining children will not achieve the targets expected of them by the end of the reception year. In reception, some children know numbers to 20 and are beginning to develop an understanding of mathematical terms such as more, less, longer and shorter. In one very good session seen in the nursery, counting songs and the words needed for comparing numbers to six were effectively taught. In activity sessions, children play dice games, use number ladders or buy fruit from the shop in reception. Computers are frequently used to consolidate children's knowledge of numbers and vocabulary such as more or less. Teaching in this area is good.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a wide range of stimulating activities. This gives them plenty to talk about.

- Good use is made of the local area and visitors to enhance the quality of children's learning experiences.
- Computers are often used. Children use the mouse confidently to work through a range of programs.

Commentary

49 By the end of their reception year, most children will attain the targets expected in this area of learning. However, the same group of lower attaining children will not achieve the early learning goals. Photographic evidence shows that a wide range of interesting activities are carefully planned. In the nursery, children were totally engrossed when taking part in a wedding ceremony conducted by a local church minister. She very effectively encouraged children to listen to stories about Jesus attending a wedding and performing his first miracle. Reception children were excited about their walk around the local streets. All had a good knowledge about building materials for houses and road safety.

50 Children learn to take turns examining different toys and language skills are promoted well as they record weather conditions or talk about the seasons or their efforts to grow daffodil bulbs. Computers are always available and programs are well prepared to help the children develop ICT skills or to reinforce learning. Good mouse skills were evident, for example, as children selected clothes to dress teddy. Teaching is very good.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are enthusiastic and agile and almost all are on course to attain the learning goals before the end of their reception year.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good. The support from the nursery nurses is outstanding.
- The classroom environment is very good and it is very well resourced.
- The outdoor area is spacious and extremely well equipped.

Commentary

51 Most children quickly develop skills in using scissors, pencils and paint brushes. However, a few in the nursery and reception class still find holding and controlling a pencil difficult. Skills, such as cutting out shapes and using crayons and glue brushes are well developed. Children in reception were able to use a paint roller well to paint their card houses without getting paint on themselves or the table. In one physical education lesson seen in the school hall, nursery children concentrated exceptionally well when responding to music. All showed confidence when performing hops, skips, turns and jumps. Reception children were able to steer a ball around cones showing a good level of control and coordination. In all the lessons seen, nursery nurses joined in enthusiastically with the children and ensured that all were fully included and teaching was very good.

52 The quality of the provision outdoors is very good. There is a large purpose-built store with enough space for the very good range of large toys, bikes and equipment. As a result, children's physical development is very effectively promoted and children make very good progress in this area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

53 Insufficient evidence was available to make a firm judgement about the overall quality of provision in this area of learning or the standards being attained. However, activities such as exploring the sound made by different percussion instruments, using computers to create pictures, painting, printing and making models are carefully planned to give children a wide variety of opportunities to be creative. For example, children use a variety of materials such as card boxes, dough or wooden blocks to make houses for the Three Little Pigs. Children in both classes enjoy singing and joining in with the actions for songs. Resources for drawing and painting are good and attractive displays of children's work brighten up both class areas.

54 Role-play opportunities are carefully planned to provide opportunities for the children to develop their imagination and to relate to the wider world. In the Bede Bridal Hire area in the nursery, children enjoy dressing up in wedding clothes and a good selection of hats.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good.
- Assessment procedures and then use of assessment are very good.
- Standards are below average in all aspects of English.
- Very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

55 Standards are well below the national expectations in Year 2 despite pupils making good progress in their learning in Year 1 and very good progress in Year 2. The main reason for these low standards is that pupils start school with very poor literacy skills and many need considerable support to achieve the early learning goals even by the end of Year 1. By Year 6, pupils reach standards that are below average, reflecting the continued good progress from when they were in Year 2.

56 By Year 2, pupils have a good range of reading strategies, which they apply best when sharing reading in class or with a group. In a lesson where teaching was excellent, pupils showed they could predict missing words and offer suitable alternatives when they read *The Billy Goats Gruff* with the teacher. However, while many have good strategies for sounding out letters to help them say words, they do not have a secure understanding yet of what they read. A lack of regular adult support for reading at home undoubtedly holds back progress for many pupils. Pupils' handwriting and spelling are also well behind the expected levels, because of poor pencil skills and an inability to retain knowledge about letter sounds. Nevertheless, pupils achieve very well in lessons, and by the start of Year 3 they reach a point where their learning accelerates because they have reached a critical level of understanding about connections between speaking, reading and writing.

57 By Year 6 pupils have improved their standards to below the average. Overall, all pupils achieve well, with girls achieving very well in Year 6, because of their own high levels of motivation, and the teaching and learning styles that match their needs. Boys achieve well and show growing confidence, but there are still a number who find reading for understanding difficult and this in turn holds back the development of their writing, and their confidence. The school is aware of this and continues to develop strategies to improve boys' motivation and success. Some of these strategies are working very well in a Year 4 and 5 class, which is made up almost entirely of boys. Very well adapted teaching methods, including intense discussion, high quality, interesting resources and an emphasis on teamwork, are leading to very good achievement for boys who hitherto have been

disaffected with school and have created significant problems through disruption to lessons in the past.

58 Teaching and learning are successful because of the care with which teachers and learning support assistants prepare lessons. Because assessment is so thorough and frequent, teachers have a sharp knowledge of pupils' needs. They use this very effectively to plan the next stage of learning and recognise that for many pupils, learning must progress in small steps if it is to be successful. The impact of this for pupils is that they are presented with tasks that are accessible and bring success and this adds noticeably to their motivation in lessons. They are always eager to begin work and sustain concentration well. These positive attitudes add to the rate at which they learn in all classes.

59 The support given to pupils with special educational needs is of a high quality and helps pupils meet the targets set in their very good individual education plans. Learning support assistants use their very good knowledge of the pupils to balance the support they give, with steady encouragement for pupils to work independently. This develops pupils' confidence as well as building their self-esteem. For a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 with acute needs, additional intensive support is given to their language development during afternoon sessions in the nurture group. Here, pupils who have not yet reached the early learning goals in language and communication, benefit from low pupil - adult ratios and very good teaching to develop their pre-reading skills. The success of this additional support is seen in the numbers of pupils who return to class when they begin to recognise words independently.

60 The careful adaptation of the curriculum to meet the needs of all groups of pupils extends to those who have English as an additional language (EAL) and refugee children who join the school from time to time. Currently, there are no EAL pupils who are at an early stage of fluency in English, so no specialist support is offered. However, teachers are careful to plan for those pupils who are fluent by ensuring they are supported during whole class teaching by the learning support assistants, who give explanations, and by the peers of similar ability during independent work.

61 The very good leadership and management of the subject have led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching, the range of the curriculum and in the effective use of assessment procedures since the last inspection. While standards have dropped from the levels found at the last inspection, this is the result of changes in the school's context and the attainment of pupils when they enter the school. The co-ordinator is expert in her knowledge of the subject and has a very good understanding of the challenges that teachers face in overcoming the barriers to pupils' learning. She sets a very good example in the quality of her own work and offers high quality advice and direction for the development of the subject. Standards have risen significantly at the end of Year 6 in the last three years because of the cumulative effect of very good teaching and learning in the school, under the leadership of the co-ordinator.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62 Teachers make good use of writing in other subjects. They link these opportunities with work in ICT so that pupils with weak writing or spelling skills are able to produce final drafts in which they can take pride. In Years 1 and 2 writing is often restricted to captions or brief sentences but, as pupils mature, they write at length in history and geography and Year 6 pupils make good use of their writing in science, when they describe investigations. Teachers' use of speaking to promote pupils' learning is less well developed and pupils sometimes do not have enough opportunity to discuss and plan together, which reduces their opportunity to develop their thinking through talk. Because of their lack of exposure to frequent speaking opportunities, and a tendency in some teachers to talk for the pupils, many pupils lack confidence to speak formally in class and seldom give audible responses. The school is aware of this weakness and has the teaching of speaking and listening as part of its priorities for improvement in English this year.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are well below the levels expected at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The attainment of boys is well below that of girls and this contributes significantly to the low standards of attainment overall.
- Lessons are well planned and based securely on the National Numeracy Strategy so that pupils' learning is good.
- The good ratio of adults to pupils ensures a high level of individual attention so pupils' achievement is improved.
- There is a good system for analysing pupils' test results and identifying weak areas that need to be addressed.
- Pupils do not have clear, individual targets for mathematics so their learning does not address their needs as accurately as it might.

Commentary

63 Standards of attainment in mathematics are well below average in Year 2 and in Year 6. In the 2003 national tests, the percentage of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reaching the higher levels was very small. Overall, standards have fallen considerably since the previous inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is partly because of pupils' much lower standards when they start school and partly because of the greater emphasis now placed on the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in national tests. Pupils generally achieve well as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school because of the high level of additional support they receive. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as others in their class. Boys attain significantly worse results than girls and this depresses the overall standards. The school is aware of this and is currently drawing up a policy and strategies to tackle this problem. The school has not identified any pupils as being gifted and talented.

64 Teaching is good overall and there is some very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6. Lessons are based on comprehensive plans that link closely to the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result, mathematics is taught systematically and confidently by most teachers. For example, very skilful teaching in the Year 5 and 6 class ensured that a lot of learning was packed into a well-balanced lesson on angles so that pupils achieved well. The development of pupils' mental arithmetic skills during the early part of mathematics lessons is still not emphasised consistently enough. All pupils, especially those with special educational needs, benefit from being taught in small groups and achieve better as a result.

65 The school systematically analyses the results of national and optional tests. This enables them to find which areas of mathematics are the weakest so that this can be addressed in subsequent lessons. However, pupils do not yet have individual learning targets as they do in English. This means that their specific learning needs are not as accurately met as they could be. The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher in the absence of the permanent subject leader.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66 Mathematics is used in a range of subjects although teachers do not often incorporate this in their planning. For example, pupils designing linkages in design and technology lessons measure carefully and use their knowledge of angles to make pop up shapes. Younger pupils also use their mathematical knowledge and understanding well in geography when they record the findings of their local traffic survey as computer-drawn bar charts.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very good attitude towards the subject and most achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- There is a good emphasis on practical work in science in Years 3 to 6, but not enough in Years 1 and 2.
- Writing skills are weak and this adversely affects the neatness and quality of pupils' written work, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

67 Overall standards are below average for the present Year 6. This takes account of the higher than average proportion of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils' performance in the national tests for Year 6 over the past three years was below average in 2001 and well below average compared to all schools for the last two years. When pupils' performance is compared to similar schools, standards were above average in 2001 and in line with the average for the following two years. School records show that, in 2003, most pupils did well in relation to their prior attainment as seven-year-olds. It was noticeable in the scrutiny of completed work how much work was covered and how productive pupils were in Years 5 and 6.

68 Teachers' assessments in Year 2 show that standards were very low, being in the bottom five per cent nationally in 2003. No pupils managed to reach the higher Level 3, making pupils' performance well below average. In science, there is little difference in the performance of girls and boys throughout. Standards are now well below average by Year 2. However, tracking of individual pupils' progress shows that all achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make good progress.

69 The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the one excellent lesson seen in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class studying forces, pupils enjoyed the challenge of identifying the push or pull force needed to perform simple tasks or make different toys work. The scrutiny of work showed that all aspects of the curriculum are covered in some depth in Years 1 and 2. Pupils learn facts about their bodies, grow bulbs and find out about light sources. However, not as much emphasis is given to conducting investigations or experiments as in Years 3 to 6. In Year 5 and 6 in particular, pupils have lots of opportunities to conduct experiments and gather first-hand evidence for themselves and it is obvious that they enjoy this practical approach. Pupils in a Year 5 and 6 lesson concentrated exceptionally well when classifying animals by various criteria. There were records of junior pupils' attempts to dissolve materials, for example, and make electrical circuits and measure certain bones in their bodies for comparison. Older pupils work hard and obviously take pride in their work, which was mostly neatly presented. All have a good understanding of fair testing.

70 Pupils make little use of computers in science. Graphs and databases in the scrutiny of work were mostly handwritten. Good use is made of pupils' literacy and mathematical skills in Years 5 and 6. An over-reliance on published worksheets in Years 1 and 2 gives pupils little chance to write very much. Pupils' spelling is weak and the standard of handwriting poor. During investigations into the temperature of water and insulation, mathematical skills were employed to record temperatures and produce graphs from data and detailed accounts were written about the findings.

71 The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher who has recently taken over from an experienced subject co-ordinator. Key priorities in the school improvement plan this year for science are, more emphasis on practical work and further improving teachers' level of expertise in the subject. There are very good procedures to assess the standards pupils achieve in the national tests and the quality of the work they produce each term. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is also thorough. Resources available for pupils to study science are good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in curriculum development, equipment levels and teacher expertise since the previous inspection.
- The subject manager has developed the subject systematically so that standards are now satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and much improved by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not have the necessary resources to teach all aspects of information and communication technology to the necessary depth.
- Some lessons require a clearer focus and supporting software is not always appropriate to the stated learning objectives.

Commentary

72 Standards of attainment were below expected levels at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 at the time of the previous inspection. Since then, standards have steadily improved and are now at expected levels by the end of Year 2. By Year 6, pupils also attain expected standards in most parts of the curriculum, but not in sensing, modelling or control because the school does not have the necessary equipment at this time. Older pupils receive additional tuition at the City Learning Centre in those parts of the curriculum that are not yet resourced in the school, but have not had enough teaching in these areas to reach the standards expected by Year 6. The school now has a modern and well-equipped information and communication technology room so that all pupils have good access to the essential hands-on experience. This provision is further enhanced by a range of computers and other technology, such as audio centres, in classrooms. The adoption and use of national guidance is ensuring that all pupils now have access to the full curriculum.

73 Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is some very good teaching when teachers are particularly knowledgeable and confident. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are pleased and proud when they master and develop a new skill. For example, pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class respond to some lively and well-organised teaching and write interesting sentences using a word-processing program. One writes, "I am so happy Jack. Where did you get that gold from?" and sends it to the printer with confidence. Lessons are not as effective when teachers or classroom assistants do not focus well enough on particular skills or use appropriate software. Newer technology is used effectively to add impact to lessons. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils learning about Venn diagrams in a mathematics lesson pay close attention when manipulating shapes on the interactive whiteboard.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74 Information and communication technology is used effectively in a number of subjects. For example, pupils use branching databases in science lessons to answer questions like, "What animal is small, has legs, but doesn't hop?" Year 5 and 6 pupils visit the local newspaper in an English lesson and use a wide range of word-processing skills to produce an interesting and well illustrated paper of their own. Pupils use the Internet, under careful supervision, to find and download additional information on a range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

75 In humanities, work was sampled in geography and there is no judgement on the quality of provision.

76 In **geography**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 do detailed work on the local environment. They develop geographical skills at first hand when they examine maps of the area and draw simple plans of their own route to school. They use information and communication technology effectively when they create graphs from their first-hand survey of local road traffic. Junior pupils study life in a village in India and plan a route. Their experience is enriched by videos and written accounts and pupils show interest in learning about other countries using a multi-media approach. Older pupils use the Internet to find up-to-date information about other countries to extend and enrich their studies.

History

Provision in history is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good.
- There is effective use of resources and visitors to make learning interesting.
- There is good use of the subject to develop thinking and writing skills.

Commentary

77 Standards are in line with the expectation for pupils in Year 2 in respect of their knowledge and understanding about the subject. Pupils' record of learning is below what is usually seen because of their weak literacy skills though, in discussion, they show good recall of recent work. By Year 6 pupils reach the expected standard in the subject and show a lively and informed interest in the Victorian era.

78 In Year 2 pupils learn about famous people and know about the life of Florence Nightingale. They understand change over time and give sensible reasons for why toys have changed when they discuss the support assistants toys with her. They know that old toys weren't made from plastic because it hadn't been developed. They ask appropriate questions to gain more information about the past, such as, *Did you have toys with batteries?* and, *Could this dolly talk once?* Most pupils can classify toys into time order by looking at the materials and functions of the toys. Higher attaining pupils can use vocabulary such as, *technology* and *materials*, correctly when explaining changes in toys over time, because they look at toys from different eras and compare them.

79 By Year 6 pupils have built up a good knowledge of the past, and of the factors that influence change. They made good use of their inquiry skills when a curator from a local museum brought artefacts connected with mining and the railways to help pupils understand the effects of industrial growth in Victorian times. Because the pupils have a very good background knowledge of the era through very good learning from high quality resources, they were able to ask and answer questions in the lesson to develop a better understanding of the impact on their local area. Their enthusiasm for local maps to locate their neighbourhood and note changes since the nineteenth century, demonstrated how the very good teaching and exciting resources have brought the subject alive for them. It is clear from lessons and from discussions with pupils that they are taught to think hard and make connections between events in the past. The very good displays of pupils' writing show a good range of styles as well as a detailed knowledge of the topics. The subject provides pupils with a very good vehicle for developing their literacy skills.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is sometimes enlivened and enriched by acting out religious ceremonies such as weddings and baptisms.
- Standards of work are at the expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils are taught in a way that encourages reflection and a better understanding of the feelings and beliefs of people in other cultures.
- In written work, pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to develop their weak literacy skills.

Commentary

80 Standards of attainment are the same as at the time of the previous inspection when standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were judged to be satisfactory. The teaching of religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Assemblies are interesting, meet the requirements for a corporate act of worship, and add to the school's provision for spiritual, cultural, social and moral education. For example, a whole school assembly celebrating individual achievement was well supported by parents who clearly valued and enjoyed the opportunity.

81 Management and teaching of religious education are satisfactory. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils are systematically taught and achieve a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of major world religions such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Younger pupils learn to reflect on what makes an individual person special. They learn about important ceremonies such as marriage and baptism in a realistic and stimulating way by acting out the different roles. In a very well taught lesson about the story of Noah and the Ark, Year 2 pupils were challenged to ask questions about the story in order to develop their thinking about religious matters. *Why did God send the Flood*, and, *What happened to the other people?*, were among the thoughtful questions they devised. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about the importance of the prophet Mohammed to Muslims and draw interesting parallels with Jesus and Christianity. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 extend this concept by comparing and contrasting a range of texts. For example, they examine the different versions of The Creation in the Bible and the Koran. Some work is less challenging than it should be because pupils are only required to respond by drawing pictures or copy passages without thought. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively when they include attractive and informative pictures of relevant school events in displays of pupils' work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82 Work was sampled and discussions with pupils were held in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.

83 There was insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on the overall provision in **art and design** as no lessons were seen. However, the quality and range of pupils' completed work on display show that they are provided with a worthwhile and varied curriculum in the subject. Standards in the previous report were in line with those expected and evidence from pupils' completed work shows that standards have at least been maintained.

84 Clear guidelines are in place and the skills and techniques to be taught are clearly identified in teachers planning, which is satisfactory. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are also satisfactory. The multi-cultural aspects of art are exploited well. Examples of art work from around the world is prominently displayed in the school entrance and visiting artists make effective use of the local culture for artwork.

85 In **design and technology** younger pupils use their mathematical skills effectively when they design and make a pop-up picture using linkages. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to work with textiles when they design and make a money container. They write clear instructions, plan their project and review their work using helpful guidance sheets. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their developing language skills to write instructions for others to follow. They sew complicated patterns using a range of stitches and develop these skills further when creating slippers using attractive appliqué work.

86 No lessons were seen in **music** so it is not possible to make a firm judgement about the quality of provision in music. The school encourages active participation and enjoyment of music by all pupils regardless of ability. Junior pupils benefit from the expertise of specialist music teachers who take each class for a four week block of lessons. Infant teachers benefit from the support of a learning support teacher who helps teach rhyme, musical patterns and rhythms. There is an extra-curricular session each week for pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 and this provides the opportunity to create their own songs and learn to play an instrument such as the recorder. A volunteer pianist teaches singing in Years 1 and 2 and the school choir every Thursday afternoon. Pupils from the school are encouraged to join in with local musical festivals, regional choirs and visiting musicians often come to perform at the school.

87 In the one **physical education** lesson seen, pupils in Year 3 and 4 enjoyed beginning work on dance. They were well taught and the teacher's clear explanations and use of pupils to demonstrate good quality movement and ideas helped others learn. In this lesson pupils showed good levels of co-operation and the majority were working at the level expected for their age. Pupils in Year 6 attend swimming lessons at a local pool and most are on course to swim the expected distance by the time they leave the school. In a very good session with the nurture group, the teacher made good links between science and physical education when pupils worked on push and pull movements. Clear explanations helped all pupils to make very good progress. The school offers a wide range of sports activities outside of school and there is good level of uptake by both boys and girls.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88 The school places strong emphasis on the personal and social development of pupils. Circle time and philosophy lessons, as well as personal and social education lessons, give pupils frequent opportunities to raise issues and discuss things that are important to them. Teachers carefully plan activities to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem in philosophy lessons. In a lesson in the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils learned to consider which object was the odd one out and give a reason for their answer. The teacher was quick to point out that there were many possible answers and that they could all be correct. Pupils gained in confidence as they explained their reasoning and saw that it was accepted by the teacher and their peers. The School Council is providing a very good opportunity for pupils to become involved in the improvement of the school. Discussions in circle time range from safety in the school grounds to what to do if someone is lonely in the playground. In these and many other ways, the school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development and understanding of their role in a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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