

INSPECTION REPORT

ABBEYFIELDS FIRST SCHOOL

Morpeth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122245

Head teacher: D Greenwood

Reporting inspector: K Manning
20267

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th November 2002

Inspection number: 248335

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Abbot's way Morpeth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE61 2LZ
Telephone number:	01670 513582
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	A Patterson
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What should the school do to improve further?
			Art and design	How high are standards?
			Foundation stage	How well are pupils taught?
			English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
			Educational inclusion and race equality	
12536	S Bullerwell	Lay inspector		What sort of school is it?
				Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school cares for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22881	G Halliday	Team inspector	Science	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Design and technology	
			History	
			Citizenship	
8070	J Haves	Team inspector	English	
18819	J Atkinson	Team inspector	Physical education	
18037	A Smith	Team inspector	Religious education	
21397	I Bradbury	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Geography	
			Music	
			Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves the local and wider community of Morpeth, which has changed little since the previous inspection. Although there is a wide social mix, the proportion of pupils who have free school meals is well below the national average. Few pupils start the school part way through their education. A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and all speak English at home. With 280 pupils, this is a large school. Forty-seven children attend the nursery either mornings or afternoons. When they start in the nursery, children's attainments and experiences vary considerably but are generally typical of three-year-olds. Most pupils are taught in nine classes, from reception to Year 4. One class has a mix of pupils from Year 3 and Year 4. Sixty-five pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, 43 pupils have a statement of their special needs. Thirty-three of them have severe learning and physical difficulties and because of this are taught in four special classes and a language class. These pupils are from Years 1 to 4 and come from a wide area. Many travel to school by taxi. The governors have agreed a policy whereby pupils do not sit national tests until they have completed the National Curriculum programme of work. This means that pupils in special classes are not included in the school's results in national tests.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Abbeyfields First School provides its pupils with a good education. It is led and managed well by the head teacher, governors and senior staff. Good teaching ensures that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and that pupils achieve the best that they can. Pupils who have special educational needs, make good progress. The very good relationships that exist between pupils, teachers, parents and governors have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. The school gives good value for the funding it receives.

What the school does well

- Good teaching means that, by the time they leave the school, many pupils achieve standards in English, mathematics and science that are above what is expected for their age.
- Very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs helps them make good progress.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development very well and, as a result, pupils are highly motivated to learn and behave extremely well.
- Close partnerships with parents have a very good effect on pupils' learning and the life of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough.
- The leadership and management in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are not strong enough to raise standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a good rate since it was last inspected in November 1997. The curriculum for physical education and religious education now meets requirements. In all subjects, there are

policies and high quality programmes of work to guide teaching. The deputy head teacher has a far greater role to play in the leadership and management of the school and the senior management team is effective. In general, teachers use what they learn from assessment and tests to set a starting point for work in English, mathematics and science. They do not do this so well in some topics. The school now meets all statutory requirements with regard to registration and reporting attendance. Other improvements to the school's provision include more good teaching and a stronger partnership with other local schools and the community.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	A	B	B
writing	A	A	B	B
mathematics	B	A	B	B

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

- By the end of the foundation stage, most children have achieved the early goals and skills expected for their age in creative and physical development. Their personal and social skills are good, as is their knowledge and understanding of the world. In communication, language and literacy and mathematics, children have achieved many of the early goals and skills expected for their age and are working towards the first levels of the National Curriculum.
- By the end of Year 2, the standards in reading, writing and mathematics achieved by pupils in mainstream classes reflect the results of national tests and are above average. They are lower than the previous year because, in mainstream classes, there were not so many higher attaining pupils in the year group and more pupils who have special educational needs. Standards in science are also above average. Girls do better than boys in reading and writing. Teachers are aware of this and are trying to reduce the gap by planning activities that are interesting to boys and encourage them to read and write. Standards are below what is expected in information and communication technology. In all other subjects they match those expected by the end of Year 2.
- By the end of Year 4, the standards in English, mathematics and science achieved by pupils in mainstream classes are above average. It is only in information and communication technology that standards are below what is expected. In all other subjects they match those expected for pupils' age.
- Pupils in the special classes do not take national tests. However, they make good progress and achieve the targets set out for their learning. Similarly, pupils in mainstream classes who have special educational needs, also achieve their full potential, though this may not always be close to the standards expected nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes and are highly motivated to learn. They are extremely enthusiastic about lessons and other activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons and when they are out of the classroom. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils forge very good relationships with teachers and other pupils. They work co-operatively and show their independence and maturity in the way that they help around the school.
Attendance	Levels of attendance match the national average and reflect the fact that pupils enjoy their time in school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Strengths in teaching and learning: in the foundation stage, children achieve well during their first years in school because teachers have a clear understanding of how children learn and use this to plan activities that are exciting and help children find things out for themselves ~ throughout the school, good teaching of literacy and numeracy ensures that pupils achieve the best they can in English and mathematics ~ good teaching of science ensures that, by the time they leave the school, many pupils achieve standards that are above average ~ teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities have equal access to the curriculum and progress at the same good rate ~ there is some very good teaching of pupils in special classes and the language class ~ pupils with special educational needs, in mainstream and special classes, make good progress with work that meets their needs and very effective guidance from teachers and support staff.

What could be improved: the teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory and prevents pupils from learning at a fast enough rate ~ although satisfactory, the use of topics to teach means that pupils do not always learn about each subject in the depth needed to ensure that standards are as high as they are in English, mathematics and science.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enriched by a wide range of after-school activities, educational visits and visitors and strong links with the community. Children in the foundation stage have a curriculum that is appropriate for their age. Those in special classes have a curriculum that meets their needs and all pupils have equal access to what the school offers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The work, guidance and resources provided for pupils who have special educational needs help them to make good progress towards their personal targets. Pupils' learning also benefits from the well-managed teaching they receive in small groups from skilled classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Teachers place a lot of emphasis on developing pupils' personal growth and individuality. This makes the provision for social development very good. There is good provision for promoting pupils' moral development and satisfactory provision for promoting pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils and take good care of them when they are in school. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress in the foundation stage and special classes and in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects they are satisfactory but not used as well to set a starting point for work.

Very close partnerships with parents provide an effective basis for pupils' learning and personal development. Parents are pleased with what it provides for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good. Senior managers know what needs to be done to raise standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The only weakness is that, not all subjects benefit from the same strong leadership and management. Staff work together well as a team and are committed to the continued success of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors do a good job on behalf of the school. They fulfil most of their statutory requirements and are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good systems to check on its performance. The head teacher and governors set realistic targets for improvement.
The strategic use of	The school makes sound use of staff and money with the prime aim of

resources	raising standards. In too many lessons, computers are left standing idle.
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In general, support staff and classroom assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those in special classes. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and the high quality of displays makes it an attractive place for pupils to learn. The quality of learning resources is satisfactory. Governors have begun to consider the pros and cons of spending decisions in terms of the effect on standards and pupils' learning, but are not yet doing this in a systematic way.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased that their children like school. • They believe that their children are making good progress in school. Parents think that most of the teaching is good. • Most parents feel that staff are approachable. • Parents think that the leadership and management of the school are good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no areas of the school's work that parents wish to see improved.

The school is held in high regard by parents and these views are confirmed by inspection findings. Pupils say that they enjoy school and are eager to join in with what it has to offer. The teaching is good and helps pupils achieve well. Staff are always ready to talk with parents, at the start and end of each day and in more formal situations such as parents' evenings. Parents are right about the good leadership and management of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Standards in the foundation stage

1 When children start in the nursery, their achievements vary widely but are generally typical for their age. Most children know about books and numbers and have a wide experience outside their own homes and families. During their time in the nursery and reception classes children are taught well and so, whatever their starting points, make good progress. In communication, language and literacy and in mathematics children achieve most of the early goals and some are already working towards the first level of the National Curriculum by the time they leave the reception classes. Children also achieve beyond what is expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn new skills in creative and physical development and achieve the skills and knowledge that are typical for their age.

Standards in Years 1 to 4

2 Standards in English have risen since the time of the previous inspection and are now above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Last year, the proportion of pupils who reached the level expected in national tests at the end of Year 2 was above average and more than a third of pupils achieved a higher level. These results were lower than in previous years because there were fewer higher attaining pupils and more pupils who had special educational needs in the year group. Standards in English have risen because teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to teach reading and writing. Teachers also provide many opportunities for pupils to join in discussions, in English and other lessons. As a result, most pupils listen attentively to what adults and classmates have to say and talk confidently about themselves and their work. Girls do better than boys in reading and writing. Teachers are aware of this and are trying to reduce the gap by planning activities that are interesting to boys and encourage them to read and write.

3 In mathematics, standards have also risen since the previous inspection. They are now above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. In last year's national tests more pupils than in most other schools reached the level expected for their age and more than a third of pupils achieved a higher level. Throughout the school, standards have risen as a result of improved teaching of mental arithmetic and solving problems. Teachers have also used the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to plan work that has helped to raise standards. There are no trends to the attainment of boys and girls. In some years girls perform better than boys and in others boys outperform girls.

4 Standards in science have also risen since the previous inspection and are now above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. In last year's national tests most pupils reached the level expected for their age. A third did well and achieved a higher level. The main reason for good standards, throughout the school, is the emphasis given to scientific investigation. Pupils enjoy this type of work tremendously and learn at a good rate.

5 Standards have fallen in information and communication technology and are now below what is expected by the end of Years 2 and 4. They are lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection because pupils do not get enough opportunities to use computers.

6 In physical education, standards match those expected by the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils have sound skills in games, gymnastics and dance and those who attend after-school sports clubs benefit from the extra time they have to practice their skills. In all other subjects, standards match those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. However, while pupils have reasonable skills, they lack depth to their knowledge of art and design, geography, history, design and technology, music and religious education. This is largely because these subjects are taught as part of topics and there are no co-ordinators to monitor the curriculum or the quality of teaching and learning.

7 Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress from a lower than average starting point. In general, these pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable, though these are often below what is expected for their age.

Standards in special classes and the language class

8 In this school, pupils who have not completed the work set out in the National Curriculum programmes of study are not entered for national tests at the end of Year 2. However, a considerable amount of good teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities, in special classes and the language class, achieve well.

9 Pupils who have severe, or specific, learning difficulties rarely reach the levels expected for their age. However, they make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual programmes of learning. Pupils in the language class benefit from good teaching and the help from visiting specialists, such as the speech and language therapist who works with individuals or small groups of pupils for a day and a half each week. Pupils who have difficulty speaking are helped to make good progress by the consistent use of signing and begin to say simple words when prompted by an object or toy, such as 'cat'. Other pupils learn to identify simple words by the first and last sound and go on to read and write words of three letters or more. Those pupils who have special educational needs related to autism make good progress in the length of time they concentrate on their work. With gentle and sensitive help from staff they come to learn the routine for working through their tasks and as they get older use their 'personal schedules' to organise themselves for lessons or activities.

10 The well-structured programme during lunch times and well-organised use of staff helps pupils with physical problems gain the independence and pleasure that comes from feeding themselves and making choices about their food. The very good liaison between the teachers, classroom support staff and the physiotherapist helps pupils with severe learning difficulties to develop their physical skills. For example, exercises to help pupils increase their movement take place regularly throughout the week.

11 Pupils in special classes have the confidence to talk to adults they know and those who are in the language class make good progress as a result of the help they are given by staff and specialists who visit the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 The picture remains similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils respond very well to what the school provides. The attitudes they have towards learning and to one another and the way they behave are strengths of the school.

13 Pupils' positive attitudes to learning help them to do well. From the time they join the nursery children enjoy their time in school. The youngest children are happy to wave goodbye to parents and get on with the activities of the day. Their natural inquisitiveness was obvious as they peeped around

doors and through windows in their eagerness to see what activities were on offer. In Years 1 to 4, pupils are equally keen to get on and settle quickly to their work. In lessons, they are eager to take part and work hard because they like and want to please their teachers. This is equally true of pupils in special classes. They enjoy the activities that staff provide and, because the relationships they have with adults are based on trust and mutual friendship, they make good progress.

14 The school has been successful in maintaining the same very good standards of behaviour that it had at the time of the last inspection and has had only one occasion to exclude a pupil, for a short period, for poor behaviour. When pupils from special classes join in with lessons pupils in mainstream classes behave sensibly and the two groups of pupils mix and get on very well. Right from the reception class, pupils are responsible enough to get on quietly by themselves, which means that teachers can either work with a small group or give help to those who need it. Lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions with happy chatter between pupils and the ladies who supervise them. During breaks, pupils of all ages mix and play in a friendly way and playground ‘buddies’ look after pupils who are alone or without a friend.

15 Pupils’ personal development remains very good. The maturity of pupils is apparent from a first visit to the school. They are helpful to visitors and willing to take on responsibility for some of the day-to-day running of the school. Pupils in Year 1, gained the applause they deserved after preparing and presenting an assembly about ‘the people who help us’ for parents and other pupils. In lessons, pupils organise themselves sensibly, getting the equipment they need to finish a task and tidying away when their work is complete. Throughout the school, pupils take responsibility for setting their personal and class targets and know what they need to do to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils in special classes are helped to be independent by staff and although some find it hard to communicate verbally, they show their enjoyment in the activities through laughter and their physical responses. At lunchtime and at playtimes pupils are mindful that there are now different zones in the yard and follow the rules thoughtfully.

16 Attendance is in line with the national average, which is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection. Authorised absence is mainly due to medical reasons and parents taking their children on holiday during term time. There is no recorded unauthorised absence. Registration is quick and efficient and the majority of pupils arrive at school on time. The school now meets statutory requirements on the reporting of attendance to parents.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection and most of it is now good. There is good teaching in every year group and in the special classes. The weaknesses in planning, identified in the previous report, have been remedied and the strengths have been maintained. However, there still remain some weaknesses in the teaching of information and communication technology that prevent it from being satisfactory overall.

18 Teaching in the foundation stage is generally good. Teachers have a clear understanding of how children learn and use this to plan activities that are exciting and help children find things out for themselves. A strength of the teaching lies in the strong, caring relationships that staff in the nursery and reception classes form with children. This enables children to feel secure, settle quickly into school and develop enthusiastic attitudes to learning. Teachers make good use of assessment and their understanding of the development of young children to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and personal growth. They use this information to good effect on children’s progress by planning interesting and challenging activities. Staff are good at teaching language, literacy and mathematical development. Children are given daily opportunities for reading, writing and using numbers. This is

one of the reasons why most children are working towards the first levels of the National Curriculum by the end of the reception year.

19 Throughout the school, teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In Years 1 to 4, teachers use the National Literacy Strategy to ensure that spelling, punctuation and handwriting are given due attention and that pupils are taught the sounds of letters and use this knowledge to read and write. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 3, the way that the teacher used questions to make pupils aware of when to use speech marks helped them grasp the idea quickly and by the end of the lesson, most punctuate their sentences correctly. Similarly, in another very good lesson, pupils in a special class learned to identify the sounds of letters because the teacher used a good range of resources to help them see and say the letters.

20 Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy to equally good effect to teach mathematics. In numeracy lessons, pupils are taught the basic skills of number during mental mathematics sessions. For example, in a good lesson, pupils in Year 1 practised counting to 100 and counting on and back from a given number up to 20. Following a review of the methods they were using to teach mathematics, teachers now set aside some time each day for pupils to practise their skills and use them to solve problems. This is paying dividends and is one of the reasons why standards are rising.

21 Teachers use topics to teach most subjects and, over several years, have built up a bank of topics and activities that are interesting to pupils. Although the system works satisfactorily it has some flaws. It is unclear how teachers adapt topics in order to ensure that the starting point for work builds on what pupils already know. The second problem is that, without co-ordinators to monitor subjects other than English, mathematics and information and communication technology no one can be certain that the skills, knowledge and understanding associated with each subject are being taught in sufficient depth. Teachers are aware of these issues and have begun to revise their planning. However, these flaws are reflected in the slight lack of depth to the knowledge of many pupils. For example, although pupils have studied a range of localities they were unable to talk about how these places have changed and evolved or express anything but limited views on their physical and human features.

22 There are some gaps in the teaching of information and communication technology that prevent it from being satisfactory. This is not because teachers lack the skills or confidence to use computers; some use them very successfully as a teaching resource. However, they do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to use computers and are not yet teaching all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth. For example, there is not enough work on control technology or using databases. Pupils in Year 3 could remember very little about using a floor robot and those in Year 4 could not describe using a computerised database to store or interpret information. Similarly, computers are often left idle for large parts of the day and are rarely used in literacy or numeracy lessons. Without regular practise pupils do not acquire basic computer skills and by the end of Year 4, some still type with one finger and are unfamiliar with the keyboard. In addition, teachers do not always pitch pupils' work at the right level. Pupils in Year 1 have not developed the skills that they mastered in the foundation stage. They are familiar with a wider range of software but do not know how to save or print work or how to turn on the computer and access the programs they want to use.

23 A particular strength of the teaching, throughout the school, is the way that teachers ensure that pupils of different abilities and backgrounds have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress. Pupils in special classes join in regularly with physical education lessons in other classes. This has a tremendous impact on pupils' personal development and is a significant factor in the high levels of tolerance and understanding that pupils display. The small number of pupils who start the school part-way through their education are given the help they need to

settle quickly and make good progress. Teachers assess their knowledge and skills informally and take pains to ensure that the work they are given matches their ability.

24 Teachers ensure that pupils who have special educational needs get a good deal from the school. Their work is planned meticulously so that what they are doing matches the targets in their individual education plans. Programmes, such as those designed to promote literacy and mathematics skills are taught well and ensure that pupils make good progress with reading and writing.

25 The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in the special classes is often very good. It has been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. The strength of the teaching lies in the many varied approaches that are used to such good effect by all staff. For example, the very good use of shadow puppets by the pupils to 'act out' a story read by the teacher reinforced pupils' understanding of the book. Well ordered routines, especially for pupils' with autism, helps them understand what they have to do and lengthens the time they can concentrate. In the language class, the teacher's thorough knowledge of how pupils learn and the effective use of resources ensures that pupils meet the targets in their individual education plans. In classes for pupils with severe learning difficulties, teachers and classroom assistants are very good at talking to the pupils and making sure they are engaged in the activities. One of the strategies they use very effectively is to sing to pupils at the end of a session. Pupils enjoy this and respond by looking and listening. Another strategy that staff use very effectively is 'signing'. They use this to hold pupils' attention and to say their names. This feature of the teaching extends throughout the school and many pupils in mainstream classes sign to those from special classes when they are working together.

26 Teachers set homework that is relevant to what pupils are learning in school, although some do this more regularly than others. From reception class onwards, pupils are encouraged to take books home to read with parents or carers.

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

Learning opportunities

27 The school meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers now ensure that all elements of physical education are taught in sufficient depth and that religious education meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum for the foundation stage is suitable and meets the recommended guidelines. However, while the curriculum is suitably broad it sometimes lacks balance because of the way that teachers plan work around topics.

28 The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they have full access to the National Curriculum as well as the wider curriculum. The 'essential curriculum' devised by the staff in the special classes, is successful in ensuring that pupils have full access to all subjects. In the language class, pupils' work is planned to match the work of each pupil's home class. For example, if the whole class is working on measurement in mathematics, then pupils in the language class will do the same. Arrangements for pupils from the special classes are organised within the school to make certain that all the pupils have equality of access and pupils, for example, in physical education lessons.

29 Teachers provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Activities include sports, music and computer clubs and are open to infant pupils where suitable. The clubs are popular with pupils and well attended.

30 The school's links with the community have improved and are now good. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. For example, links with the local newspapers help pupils understand how news is presented. Pupils in classes in Year 4 learn about the processes of job application and interview when they apply to be a school 'buddy'. The school's links with partner institutions have also improved and are now good. They serve to smooth the way for transition to middle school and pupils say that they are confident about making the move.

Personal development

31 A strength of the school is its curriculum for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, which is very good. This pervades the ethos of the school and teachers regard it as the 'bread and butter' of their teaching. Teachers set aside time in the week for pupils to discuss issues of life that are relevant to their age and maturity. For example, when pupils in classes in Year 1 discussed 'our rules for bonfire night,' they made sensible suggestions to keep themselves, others and animals safe. Pupils are taught about growing up, the misuse of drugs and how to have a healthy lifestyle as part of a planned programme of work. The whole package has been very carefully thought out and helps to prepare pupils to play an active role as citizens. Teachers are rightly proud of how the programme contributes to pupils' very good behaviour, relationships and attitudes throughout the school.

32 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It has improved since the last inspection mainly as a result of the effective opportunities for reflection in assemblies and in lessons. For example, an assembly presented by pupils in Year 1, concluded with prayers and a period of reflection about 'people who help us'. Teachers provide effective opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development, particularly in lessons in religious education, when they allow pupils to express their personal feelings and to respect the feelings of others. For example, pupils in Year 1 explored the emotions and feelings associated with the theme of 'being special'.

33 The school's provision for pupils' moral development is good. In lessons and assemblies, teachers emphasise the difference between right and wrong and the need to consider others. The way they treat one another and pupils makes them good role models. The same is true in the playground, where supervisors deal quickly and fairly with silly behaviour or squabbles and help pupils settle their differences to the satisfaction of all parties. The school is a caring community, in which pupils are taught self-respect and respect for others.

34 The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The teachers work very hard to establish very good relationships in classrooms. This makes pupils well aware of the need to be considerate of others and respect other peoples' views and beliefs. The school encourages pupils to work well together and it is very successful in the way in which it includes pupils from the special classes into all aspects of the life of the school. It enables older pupils to take on extra responsibility through the 'Big Friends' scheme whereby pupils from Year 4 take responsibility for looking after and working with children in the reception classes. Pupils warm to this, appreciate their role and do a very good job which is most appreciated by younger pupils. All pupils play their part in raising money for charities such as the Shoebox Appeal.

35 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development has been maintained since the previous inspection and remains satisfactory. Teachers plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to encounter and understand the traditions and values from different cultural backgrounds in the topics that make up the curriculum. For example, studies of past societies in Greece and Egypt and of contemporary ones in India and the West Indies help pupils to broaden their knowledge and to

compare other cultures with their own. Pupils learn something of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society when they study Hinduism. The school promotes interest in good quality literature written for children and invites authors to visit and talk to pupils about their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 The quality of care and support pupils receive in school has been maintained since the previous inspection and continues to be good. The way that staff expect and encourage pupils to behave well is extremely effective.

37 Health and safety procedures, including risk assessments, are well established and form the basis of setting priorities for the repairs and maintenance of the school building and grounds. Procedures for child protection are in place. The new deputy head teacher has recently been designated responsibility for child protection matters and, although she has not had training she is aware of procedures to be followed and all staff have been updated on their responsibilities. Arrangements for first-aid and dealing with sick children are good and twelve members of staff are trained in first aid.

38 Provision for the welfare of pupils with special education needs is very good. Teachers and classroom assistants provide help and support in lessons. Specialists, such as speech therapists and educational psychologists give further help when this is necessary. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly to check progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The school's arrangements for helping and caring for pupils in special classes are very good and they are looked after extremely well. All of the staff in special classes have had training to help them lift and move pupils who have physical disabilities.

39 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance have improved since the last inspection highlighted some defects in the system of registration and reporting attendance. They are now satisfactory and the school meets all statutory requirements. Parents are reminded of the need for their children to attend school regularly and staff follow up any unexplained absences.

40 Teachers and other staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. They have a positive approach, and set good examples to pupils through their own behaviour and relationships. Their standards are clear and consistent, so that pupils know what to expect. Rewards and sanctions are sometimes used to help pupils who have special educational needs in mainstream and special classes understand and gain control of their behaviour. Pupils understand the system and it is often successful. Teachers keep a close eye on pupils who have special educational needs linked to emotional or behavioural problems and their behaviour is tracked and recorded. The parents of these pupils are given advice about how to play their part at home and in this way are involved in their children's learning.

41 The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. In the foundation stage, teachers keep detailed records of children's gains in personal, social and emotional development. In special classes, staff also keep detailed records, in order to ensure that each pupil gets the help they need to gain independence. In the rest of the school, support is based on teachers' knowledge of pupils. It is a mix of informal observations and more detailed records of pupils who are experiencing difficulties or problems.

42 The school has improved its procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. They are now good. Senior teachers make a thorough analysis of the national results and in this way identify trends in attainment

and highlight gaps in teaching and learning. They also use the results of assessments and tests to set targets for classes, groups and individuals. Procedures in other subjects remain satisfactory but are not as thorough. In addition, teachers do not always make such good use of what they know about pupils' prior attainment to set a starting point for work in topics. One of the good features of the school's procedures is the records of achievement, which include examples of pupils' work and show teachers and parents how well pupils are doing. Procedures for assessing and recording the attainment and progress of children in the foundation stage are particularly good. They are extremely thorough and are one of the prime reasons why children in these classes make good progress. Similarly, teachers in the special classes keep very good records of the pupils' progress, including colourful and personal records of achievement showing the range of activities in which the pupils take part and the things they have learned to do. There are detailed records throughout the school of how well the pupils who have special educational needs progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and this ensures that the process of reviewing and then setting targets works well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43 A strength of the school is the partnership that it has with its parents. This continues to be an important factor in pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Parents hold the school in high esteem and believe that children make good progress, academically and in their personal development because of the good teaching. As a result of the openness of the school they feel comfortable in approaching staff with questions or problems and judge the leadership and management to be good. Inspection findings support the very positive views held by parents.

44 The positive views of the school that parents hold have grown stronger since the last inspection. There are several reasons for this. Parents appreciate the use of the school hall to run two 'toddler' sessions each week. This has the positive effect of ensuring that children are familiar with the school when they start in the nursery. The after-school club is also popular and working parents say that they value it highly. Last year, teachers initiated a project aimed at involving parents in their children's learning of skills in literacy and numeracy. It was extremely successful and so popular with parents that the school is planning to repeat it this year. The effects went beyond what it did for parents and actually helped to raise standards measurably. For example, children in the reception class grasped the use of prepositions, such as next to, underneath and beside within a week, when in the past it took up to half a term.

45 The school's very good links with parents start in the foundation stage. Children and parents are invited to visit the nursery and reception classes and sometimes staff visit children in their homes. Parents are welcome to spend time helping their children settle into school more confidently. In Years 1 and 2, the accessibility of staff is a strong feature of the partnership. Parents of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream and special classes are kept well informed of their children's progress and are invited to attend regular discussions about their individual learning programmes. The partnership between parents and staff in special classes is particularly strong. Parents trust teachers to do a good job and are rewarded by the very close bonds that exist between their children and school staff. Throughout the school, parents are able to see their children's teachers before and after school and make appointments to talk to them for longer if necessary. Parents are encouraged to come into school to help in the classrooms and a number support their children by attending school concerts and productions and by helping to run some of the school's fund-raising activities. They are very effective in this and money raised is spent wisely on resources, such as the sensory garden, which in turn raises standards.

46 The quality of information provided for parents by the school is very good. A useful range of booklets tell parents how best they can help their children at home. Regular newsletters keep parents

up-to-date about school events. The school also provides lots of opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum. Workshops have been held on literacy, numeracy, design and technology and working with computers and these have been well attended. Each term, parents have the opportunity to speak to teachers about their children's progress and at the end of the year parents are given a written report, which outlines how their children have done. These are of good quality and include statements about pupils' strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics. Although pupils have individual targets for improving their performance, these are not included in the reports. The teachers of pupils in Years 3 and 4 share these with parents early in the autumn term.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47 The leadership and management of the school are stronger than they were at the time of the previous inspection and are now good. The head teacher has very definite ideas of how the school needs to develop and has ensured that the key issues raised in the previous inspection have all been tackled successfully. With good support from the newly appointed deputy head teacher the school has moved forward at a good rate and has the capacity to maintain high standards in English, mathematics and science. The shared vision of the head teacher, staff, governors and parents ensures that the warmth and compassion of the school is apparent in everything it does. The way that teachers manage the personal and social development of pupils is one of the strengths of the school and it ensures that all pupils have an equal chance to gain the best from their school days.

48 Staff with leadership and managerial roles have a good understanding of their responsibilities and contribute to the effective management of the school. A clear indication of good leadership is that the school's provision for English and mathematics have improved since the time of the previous inspection and, as a result, standards in both subjects have risen. In addition, the special classes function very effectively as a result of clear direction from basic skills managers who monitor standards in the essential curriculum. Throughout the school, basic skills managers and senior teachers provide informal advice for colleagues and more formal training in their subjects. They analyse the results of National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics and are involved in consultations about setting targets and identifying gaps in teaching or learning.

49 A weakness of the leadership and management of the school is that there are no co-ordinators to lead and manage some subjects, particularly those that are taught within the topics. Although teaching and the curriculum in these subjects are satisfactory and standards match those expected nationally it is unlikely that they will improve without clear direction and leadership. For example, although the curriculum covers all of the elements of the National Curriculum programmes of work, it lacks the depth that would enable pupils to gain a greater knowledge and understanding in subjects, such as geography and design and technology.

50 Governors do a good job for the school. They fulfil most statutory requirements and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Several governors take an active part in the life of the school. They work or observe in classrooms and contribute significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. Governors' understanding about the impact of teaching on learning has increased through their involvement in managing teachers' performance. In general, they make the best possible use of limited funds but have not considered whether the school is using the computers it has efficiently.

51 Financial planning and control continue to be good. The school receives several grants as a result of bids. They are spent wisely and put to good use to raise standards and ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds get a fair deal from the school. Governors and the head teacher have worked hard to bring spending into line and throughout the year, make regular checks on spending. At

the same time, the school administrative staff exercise good control of day-to-day spending within the limits agreed by governors. Through the conscientious work of the school's secretarial staff, financial administration is efficient and unobtrusive. Action has been taken on all points raised for improvement at the last audit. The school provides good value for money.

52 There are sufficient resources to teach the curriculum and teachers use them effectively to improve pupils' learning. Computers are kept in classrooms and the number of computers available to pupils is lower than in most schools. However, in some classes, they stand idle for a good part of the day and in this respect are not an efficient use of resources. Improvements have been made in resources for history, geography and religious education, since the previous inspection; these are now adequate.

53 Teachers make good use of visits and visitors to extend the curriculum. This is particularly noticeable in the special classes where, for example, pupils go horse riding regularly. In special classes, classroom assistants and support staff are used extremely well and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. In mainstream classes, the time and talents of classroom assistants are not always used efficiently during times when teachers are talking to the whole class. Teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology as a teaching resource; they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use them to learn.

54 The school has adequate accommodation. Pupils benefit from having two halls, where they have assemblies, lunch and lessons in physical education. Outside, there is a good-sized playground with zones for different types of activities. There is space and a reasonable number of wheeled toys that are popular with the youngest pupils and help promote their physical development. The building is maintained to high standards of cleanliness and repair and contains displays that capture pupils' imaginations and reinforce their learning. The building is also adapted for access by pupils who have physical disabilities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55 Governors, the head teacher and staff should:

(1) Raise standards in information and communication technology by:

- a. providing more opportunities for pupils to use computers,
- b. making greater use of computers to teach English and mathematics,
- c. allocating more time and emphasis to teaching information and communication technology skills.

(Paragraphs 22, 119 – 123)

(2) Further strengthen the leadership and management of the school by:

- a. delegating responsibility for the leadership and management of all subjects,
- b. ensuring that someone is responsible for monitoring the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning in foundation subjects.

(Paragraphs 49, 98, 108, 113, 118, 126, 130)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	36	24	0	0	0
Percentage	0	15	50	33	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	256
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	43
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	65

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	21	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	17
	Girls	20	21	20
	Total	38	39	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95% (93%)	98% (100%)	93% (100%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	21	20	20
	Total	39	38	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98% (93%)	95% (100%)	95% (95%)
	National	85% (85%)	89% (89%)	89% (89%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	204	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.4
Average class size	18.2

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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£

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	636

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Total income	1,103,358
Total expenditure	1,061,645
Expenditure per pupil	3,725
Balance brought forward from previous year	-14,493
Balance carried forward to next year	27,220

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	282
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	17	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	23	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	30	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	27	3	2	12
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	34	5	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	21	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	66	30	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	27	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	36	4	0	18

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56 Children start in the nursery at the age of three and transfer to one of the reception classes in the autumn of the year in which they are four. Some children stay in the nursery for three terms, while others are there for longer, depending on the month of their birthday.

Personal, social and emotional development

57 When children start in the nursery their personal and social skills are generally typical for their age, though some are more outgoing and confident than others. Teachers are good at promoting this area of learning and, as a result, most children achieve beyond what is expected by the time they leave the reception year.

58 A good feature of the teaching is that children are encouraged to do things for themselves and be independent. In the nursery children are expected to carry out simple duties, such as tidying away after activities. In reception classes, teachers give children more responsibilities and they learn to look after themselves and respect the needs of others. For example, when told that the other class was joining them for a music activity, children very sensibly made space for them on the carpet.

59 Staff work hard to promote children's personal development in everything they do. Teachers help children to understand the difference between right and wrong through stories and discussions and in the example they set of always listening to what children have to say. Teachers expect children to be friendly to one another at all times and are very clear about the rules of sharing equipment. In general, children respond by being well-mannered and patient. For example, children in the nursery waited quite patiently for their turn to hold the flag and say how they felt that day.

Communication, language and literacy

60 Children's experiences of books and writing are typical for their age, when they first start in nursery. Good teaching ensures that by the end of the reception year, most children have achieved the early skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing and are working towards the first levels of the National Curriculum.

61 One of the main reasons for this is that staff constantly talk with children. Every activity involves asking questions and emphasising words and names. For example, in the nursery questions such as 'which part of the teddy do you need now?' helped children learn and use the names of parts of the body. Staff also provide many opportunities for children to listen to stories, songs and instructions. In the nursery, children's enthusiasm to speak occasionally over-rides their ability to listen but by reception classes they generally listen attentively.

62 A good feature of the teaching is that staff pay particular attention to reading and writing. Children in nursery learn to enjoy books and to handle them with care. They know that the words tell the story and smile and join in with the parts they know. By the end of the reception year, the brightest children read simple stories and talk about their favourite characters. They use their knowledge of the sounds of letters to help them read unfamiliar words. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to write. Writing skills are taught carefully and systematically so that children learn to form letters correctly and make a smooth transition from copying what the teacher

has written to having a go at writing for themselves. By the end of the reception year, many children write simple sentences and stories.

Mathematical development

63 At the start of the nursery year, most children have a knowledge of number and mathematical language that is typical for their age. Good teaching ensures that they achieve well during their time in the foundation stage and that, by the end of the reception year, standards are beyond what is expected, with many children working towards the first level of the National Curriculum.

64 One of the strengths of teaching is that mathematics is part of everyday life in the foundation stage. This means that children practise their counting, adding and taking away many times each day. Consequently, they have no difficulty in working out how many drinks are needed or how many more pieces of jigsaw they have to find. By the end of the reception year they add and subtract within 20 and easily work out one or two more than a given number. The most able children use much bigger numbers and can easily work things out in their head.

65 Teachers place strong emphasis on practical activities to help children understand the relationships between numbers and learn about shape and measurement. For example, children in the nursery quickly learn to add and take away as they sing songs and rhymes. In nursery and reception classes, children learn about measurement through exploration and comparing the size of different objects. They learn about shape in the same way and by the end of the reception class, most identify common two and three-dimensional shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66 When children start in the nursery their knowledge and experience of the world is typical for their age. However, good teaching ensures that children learn quickly and by the end of the reception year most know about the area they live in and how the lives of parents and grandparents differ from the present. They are keen to find out things for themselves and know how to use modern technology such as computers.

67 A strength of the teaching lies in the interesting, first-hand experiences that staff plan for children. For example, children in the reception classes learn about the past by looking at the toys that their parents and grandparents may have played with. In one class, children were enthralled at the sight and history of the class teacher's teddy bear. Teachers also ensure that children learn about their school and its locality through looking at pictures and going out and about on walks to nearby shops. In this way children see that there are different types of houses and buildings in the area and draw and paint maps that include features such as roads and shops. Teachers make good use of visitors such as the local fire brigade to promote children's learning.

68 Throughout the foundation stage, teachers ensure that children use computers regularly and that they know how to use tape machines when they want to listen to a story. Consequently, children are adept at using a mouse or keys to move things on screen and are familiar with a number of games and programs.

Physical development

69 A mix of good and satisfactory teaching helps children make steady progress during their time in the foundation stage. They gain a sense of co-ordination and balance in their play and movement and master the skills of handling small tools such as paintbrushes, pencils and scissors in their work. By the end of the reception year children have achieved many of the early learning goals.

70 Teachers ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to engage in physical activities, both indoors and when playing outside. As a result, children are robust and lively. Children in the nursery enjoy climbing, jumping and playing on wheeled toys as they let off steam at playtime. In the reception year, teachers expect children to move around the hall without bumping into one another and to make good use of space in dance and games lessons. A good feature of the teaching in the reception classes is that teachers show children how to perform actions, such as bowling quoits. In a games lesson, children benefited from this direct tuition and, with practice, swiftly became more accurate in passing to a partner.

71 Children are given good opportunities to practise skills such as cutting, gluing and holding paintbrushes, pens and pencils. Consequently, by the time they leave the reception year, most use scissors confidently and cut around difficult shapes. Because staff in the nursery show children how to hold a pencil and paintbrush and spend time finding out which hand each child prefers to use, children are generally confident with writing tools when they start in the reception classes. They continue to make good progress in reception classes so that by the end of the reception year, their handwriting is of good quality.

Creative development

72 When they start in the nursery, children's creative talents are typical for their age. A mix of good and satisfactory teaching ensures that they achieve at a steady rate and, by the end of the reception year, achieve many of the skills expected for their age.

73 Teachers provide many activities where children can explore colour, shape and texture. For example, in the nursery, children learn to mix paints. By the end of the reception class children use their knowledge of mixing to create the colours they need to paint accurate portraits of themselves and their family. A strength of the teaching is the way that staff encourage children to look closely at what they are drawing or painting. In the nursery this resulted in children choosing the right colours to pictures of teddy bears and in a reception class children included fine details into their paintings of people who help them in school.

74 Throughout the foundation stage, children learn to sing and join in the actions to rhymes and songs. Most children are keen to join in by wiggling fingers and clapping and they quickly pick up the words to their favourite songs. By the time they leave reception class, children recognise high and low notes and can name and play a range of percussion instruments.

ENGLISH

75 Standards have risen since the previous inspection and are now above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. This means that pupils are achieving well, because assessments indicate that their skills in communication, language and literacy are typical for their age when they start in the nursery.

76 Teachers use a wide and successful range of methods to promote language and extend pupils' vocabulary. They have high expectations that pupils will understand and use technical vocabulary in all subjects. In literacy lessons, pupils in Years 1 and 2 use terms such as 'author' while older pupils talk about choosing a book after reading the blurb. Throughout the school, pupils are fairly confident when it comes to joining in discussions and giving their opinions about the books they have read. Another method that is working well, though it is limited in its use throughout the school, is drama. Through performing in assemblies and school events pupils learn to speak to a wider audience and gain self-esteem and confidence.

77 Throughout the school, teachers put a lot of effort into ensuring that pupils learn to listen carefully. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are encouraged to listen to what teachers and other pupils have to say without interrupting. Teachers ensure that the small number of pupils who have special educational needs linked to difficulties with paying attention are given all the help they need to play a full part in lessons. Very often, classroom assistants sit close by these pupils and remind them gently about not calling out and help them answer when it is their turn. In this way all pupils get an equal chance to have their say in class discussions. By the time they are in Years 3 and 4, pupils listen attentively and show that they have grasped the main points of discussions by their thoughtful answers. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 pupils were accurate in their predictions of newspaper stories from the evidence of headlines.

78 Throughout the school, teachers are good at teaching reading. They ensure that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have the basic skills and strategies that help them read unfamiliar words. For example, average attaining pupils in Year 2 used their knowledge of the sounds of letters to read difficult words such as 'outline' correctly. The many opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to read, in English and other lessons, ensures that by the end of Year 4, average and higher attaining pupils read fluently and expressively. Lower attaining pupils are slower readers, who often recognise when they have misread a word and go back to put it right. Pupils of all abilities say that they enjoy reading and are keen to talk about books, poetry and favourite authors. In all classes, teachers expect pupils to read every day, at home and at school; this has a good effect on pupils' interest and achievements in reading. Teachers make good use of reading diaries to keep a check on pupils' reading and as a means of communicating with parents. These work very well because pupils, parents and teachers are all involved in completing entries and there is a feel that everyone is working as a team. For example, after reading to a visitor one girl in Year 4 immediately set about writing up her reading diary because she wanted to write about the characters in the book.

79 Teachers are also good at teaching the basic skills of writing and use the National Literacy Strategy effectively to do this. A good feature of the teaching of writing is that teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to write in English lessons and other subjects. As a result, average attaining pupils in Year 2 write short accounts and stories that are interesting and where most simple words are spelled correctly. By the end of Year 4, average attaining pupils write longer stories with complicated plots and the most able pupils write in greater detail and use more adventurous adjectives and descriptions. The letters that pupils wrote to pen pals were lively and imaginative.

80 Thorough teaching of spelling and grammar is evident in pupils' work. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use full stops and capital letters in their writing and a number are beginning to join their letters. As pupils get older, teachers introduce more complex grammar and by the end of Year 4 pupils punctuate their work with commas, apostrophes and paragraphs. The extra attention given to handwriting has led to improvements in the presentation of work in all subjects.

81 In special classes, staff work constantly to promote pupils' skills in speaking and listening. They use signing to communicate with pupils and tremendous effort goes into teaching literacy skills. In the language class, good teaching ensures that pupils get all the help and support they need to achieve well. For example, the teacher used pictures, bubbles and balls to help pupils say and read sounds and phrases such as car, saw and moo. This worked well because the intriguing use of resources captured pupils' imagination and motivated them to try again and again. Pupils in mainstream classes who have special educational needs benefit from additional literacy support and working in small groups helps them concentrate and do well. Though many of these pupils are working at levels that are well below what is expected of their age they nonetheless, make good progress towards their individual literacy targets and achieve well.

82 In some classes, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use computers in literacy lessons. Consequently, pupils are not familiar with drafting and editing text using word processors. The exception to this is in the special classes, where staff use computers regularly and very effectively to help pupils read and write.

83 The co-ordinator provides a strong lead for the subject. By monitoring teachers' planning and analysing the results of tests, the co-ordinator identifies gaps in teaching. This has led teachers to use a different range of books and activities in order to interest boys in reading and writing. Consequently, although girls still perform better than boys, the gap is narrowing.. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly and this has helped to raise the quality of teaching and has allowed teachers to share the methods that work and are most effective.

MATHEMATICS

84 Standards have risen since the previous inspection and are now above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. This means that pupils are achieving well. The main reasons for this are good teaching and the effective use of the National Numeracy strategy.

85 Throughout the school, teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of mathematics. Teachers use their knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan lessons. Teachers are clear what they want pupils to learn and this is shared with pupils at the start of each lesson. There is a good balance of mental mathematics and time for pupils to practice what they have learned. For example, in a Year 4 class, a discussion about the six-times table had a brisk start, which captured pupils' attention quickly and meant that they were enthusiastic in answering about different ways of finding the answers. As a result, pupils grasped the idea of using mathematical methods such as doubling, to work out answers quickly and accurately. At the end of lessons teachers go over what has been taught and ask questions to determine what pupils have learned. Teachers rightly use this part of the lesson to determine whether they have achieved what they set out to do or whether pupils need more practice.

86 Teachers encourage pupils to explain their working out and develop their own ways of solving problems. This helps pupils to be more confident with numbers. In Years 1 and 2 and in special classes, pupils learn a range of methods for adding and taking away. By the end of Year 2, most pupils in mainstream classes use number lines or count forwards and backwards when solving money and number problems and higher attaining pupils are confident in addition and subtraction, ordering numbers up to 100. In Years 3 and 4, teachers continue to teach a range of different strategies for using multiplication and division and ensure that pupils understand the relationships between numbers. As a result, by the end of Year 4, pupils use decimals up to two places, multiply by numbers up to 10, such as 6×17 , estimate and measure with confidence and find missing numbers in sequences of numbers with 4 digits.

87 Another good feature of the teaching is the way that teachers use concise mathematical vocabulary and expect pupils to do the same. For example, in the language class, the teacher prompted pupils to use the word 'centimetre' when estimating the length of an object. After several reminders pupils began to use the word in their predictions. Teachers' careful and accurate use of mathematical language also ensures that pupils grasp ideas quickly. For example, in a good lesson pupils in Year 2 were reminded of the angles they had found around the school and began to see the relationship between model houses that they had made and the need for straight lines and accurate measurement of angles.

88 In all classes, teachers pitch work at the right level for pupils of different ability. Higher attaining pupils are set appropriate work to extend their knowledge and understanding and the lower attaining pupils get additional help to develop their accuracy. In a good lesson, pupils in a Year 1 class were given visual clues, for example in the addition of money they use stamped shapes to name the coins. When the teaching is good, the classroom support assistants work with small groups of pupils to help them work at a suitable pace and succeed in their tasks. However, during the mental warm-up session, the classroom support assistants are not used as effectively as they could be in helping individual or small groups of pupils or recording what the pupils are doing, and this is not a good use of a valuable classroom resource.

89 Some very good teaching ensures that pupils with special educational needs and those in the special classes make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. As a result, pupils begin to learn to match one-to-one by number songs, such as 'There were three in a bed and the

little one said'. In these classes, pupils benefit from the well-planned use of the classroom assistants. They work with individual pupils to help them complete a task, for example, in one good lesson pupils were helped to take objects out of a box and associate them with the terms one, two and three. Teachers provide activities that are practical. For example, pupils with severe learning difficulties began to sort different shaped blocks and passed them one at a time. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are more able to match one-to-one and make progress in matching numbers to pictures, such as three circles and the number three. In the language class, the teaching and learning are good particularly when the teacher reinforces mathematical language, such as, more and less, consistently helping the pupils to learn to use the words correctly.

90 There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to reinforce pupils' learning of mathematics. In special classes, teachers use computers to work with individual pupils. This is not the case in Years 1 to 4 where they are often unused during mathematics lessons.

91 The leadership and management of the subject have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The basic skills teacher monitors the quality of teaching and keeps a close eye on standards and the curriculum. This is one of the main reasons why standards have risen in the last few years. The subject manager analyses the results of national tests and the school keeps records of pupils' achievement from one year to the next. All of this puts the school in a good position to be able to maintain standards.

SCIENCE

92 Standards have risen since the previous inspection and are now above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. It is good and thorough teaching that ensures pupils achieve well.

93 Teachers have improved the way they plan lessons by taking more account of information gained from assessments of pupils' work. This gives them a better starting point for lessons and work is generally pitched at the right level for pupils of different ability. In particular, higher attaining pupils achieve well because they are set more challenging work and lower attaining pupils also do better because they are given additional help from teachers and classroom assistants. For example, in a class in Year 2, lower attaining pupils used vocabulary such as 'heavy' and 'smooth' to describe the properties of building materials. At the same time, some pointed questioning from the class teacher helped higher attaining pupils consider how the properties might be put to use in building houses.

94 A strength of teaching is its firmly rooted experimental and investigative approach to science. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and learn quickly because they are very highly motivated and very well behaved. Teachers' good grasp of the subject enables them to raise pupils' enthusiasm and interest with lively and informative introductions to lessons. For instance, in Year 1 the teacher set the scene for a good lesson on light and dark by darkening the classroom. This gave a good atmosphere for discussing the interesting array of sources of light on display. One lower attaining pupil was so engaged in the lesson he thought hard about choosing an object for a 'dark box' investigation, deciding on a 'dark thing so nobody can see it.' This showed that pupils were moving towards an understanding that darkness is the absence of light. Teachers emphasise a scientific approach to investigations. For instance, before pupils in Year 3 set about investigating magnetism the teacher reminded pupils to take into account 'what you find out may not be what you expect'. This helped pupils to investigate carefully and to keep an open mind.

95 Teachers make good use of time and resources. In lessons, teachers make clear to pupils what they expect them to learn and do. Consequently, pupils know exactly what to do when they set about their tasks and no time is wasted. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace so that, by the

end of the session, pupils usually learn all the teacher set out to teach them. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and this leads to good productivity. Teachers make good use of classroom assistants to provide help for groups of pupils. Staff in special classes make particularly good use of the sensory garden as a resource for the teaching of science. Pupils in these classes use all of their senses to learn about life processes and living things. Teachers have also made good use of the community to provide first-hand experiences for pupils. For example, pupils in classes in Year 2 learned about bricklaying, joinery and plumbing when they visited a local technical college.

96 Throughout the school, teachers use the appropriate scientific terms and vocabulary in their explanations and discussions. In response to this, pupils try to use the same terms when describing their work. As a result, pupils in Year 2 use terms, such as 'properties' to describe materials and those in Year 4 use a technical vocabulary, such as 'fair test' when writing up accounts of their experiments. Teachers ensure that pupils understand these technical words and terms and often use the time at the end of the lesson to question pupils in order to check that they understand their meaning.

97 There are some weaknesses in the teaching that prevent it from being very good. Teachers do not make enough use of computers to teach science. For example, pupils rarely use computers to record their findings as graphs and charts or use databases to store information. The exception to this is in special classes where staff used computers successfully as part of their work on switches and to demonstrate the concept of cause and effect. Teachers discuss with pupils how well they do and mark their work regularly. However, they do not write comments or suggestions to help pupils move forward more quickly. This is an issue from the previous inspection that remains unresolved.

98 Although there is no direct leadership and management of the subject, teachers work effectively as a team and this has ensured that standards have risen. They have agreed procedures for recording pupils' attainment and assess their progress regularly. The head teacher takes responsibility for analysing the results of National Curriculum tests and in this way has a clear idea about the gaps in teaching and learning. All of this means, that this subject is monitored and managed more thoroughly than others without delegated leadership.

ART AND DESIGN

99 Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and match those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 4. The teaching is satisfactory but pupils' knowledge lacks depth. For example, though there are many examples of work in the style of famous artists in corridors and classrooms, pupils in Year 4 could not remember the name of any artist or talk about similarities and differences in the work of others.

100 An improvement to the teaching since the previous inspection is that teachers now make good use of visiting artists and volunteers to work with pupils. On these occasions the work that pupils produce is of very high quality and much of this is displayed to good effect around the school. For example, the Millennium carpet, made by pupils from all classes and inspired by the main abbey complex, is a stunning piece of work that shows how pupils have been inspired by the project and adults.

101 Teachers value pupils' efforts. Throughout the school, corridors are made attractive by interesting and lively displays of pupils' work that gives them the chance to consider what other pupils in the school are doing. A good feature of displays is that they are made more effective by the range of styles used. For example, teachers in special classes displayed examples of pupils' printing as books and throughout the school teachers put photographs and pictures alongside pupils' work. In

lessons, teachers give plenty of praise for a good attempt and encourage pupils to think like artists. This happened in a lesson in the Year 3 and 4 class, when the teacher asked pupils to create a picture with a distinct foreground, middle and background. Pupils listened very carefully and, because she showed them how to achieve the effect, they quickly grasped the idea. The resulting pictures were successful in drawing the eye into the firework scene.

102 Some teachers make good use of new technology to teach art and design. In Year 4 the teacher used a digital camera to provide photographs of pupils posing with a friend. These helped pupils understand which parts of the body could be seen and how they would look. In Years 3 and 4 the teachers used the computer very effectively to stimulate pupils' imaginations. Having looked closely at photographs of fireworks that were downloaded from the Internet, pupils reproduced the colours and effects in their own pastel pictures. Teachers also provide some opportunities for pupils to use computers in their artwork. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to use computer programs to draw pictures that are bright and lively. However, pupils do not get regular opportunities to practise or extend their skills. Neither do pupils use digital cameras or the Internet to research their own ideas or seek out inspiration.

103 There are a couple of reasons why standards are not higher. There have been few changes to the curriculum since the previous inspection and teachers continue to plan work as part of topics. They are presently reviewing their planning in order to ensure that it is based on the current National Curriculum programme of study because, in some topics, the teaching and learning objectives are based on an earlier version. Of greater relevance is the fact that the subject is not led or managed effectively. Without someone to keep a close check on the curriculum and monitor the quality of teaching and learning it is unlikely that standards will get any higher.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104 By the end of Year 2 and Year 4 pupils' attainment is typical for their age. Satisfactory standards have been maintained since the previous inspection because teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils in Year 2 design and make products from a suitable range of resources and techniques and make sensible judgements about the outcomes of their work. They make satisfactory progress in both designing and making, so that by the time they are in Year 4 they use simple finishing techniques effectively to improve their products.

105 Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop designing and making skills, including how to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of products. The strength of a good lesson in Year 2 was the way the teacher emphasised the purpose and need to evaluate products. This led pupils to suggest how they could improve work they had finished in the previous lesson. One pupil, for instance, recognised that the layers of her 'lollipop-stick house had gone wonky' and suggested how she could have done it better. The lesson prepared pupils well for designing their next product. In a lesson in Year 1 the introductory discussion did not provide pupils with enough opportunities to generate ideas for making a picture of bonfire night, with a slider mechanism to create movement. As a result, pupils worked haphazardly until the teacher's good help brought order into their work. Teachers show pupils how to plan designs in a methodical way. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson a pupil completed a planning sheet: 'I will make a modroc pig. I will need a balloon, modroc and water, egg carton nose, glass eyes, card ears, pipe cleaner tail'. Pupils annotated their designs and most outcomes resembled the designs closely. In classes in Year 3 and Year 4 teachers take pupils a step further and consider the intended user of products when they plan their work.

106 A good feature of teaching is the purposeful activities teachers plan and the way they link them with other subjects. For instance, in Year 2, the topic about houses and homes, links design and

technology with several subjects and is consolidated well by an annual visit to a local technical college, where pupils learn a range of skills at first-hand. Teachers in classes in Years 3 and 4 make good use of picture frames which pupils produce, when they talk about family relationships in lessons designed to improve pupils' social skills. The finished products are attractively decorated with a variety of materials and provide suitable frames for family photographs, which teachers display in shared areas.

107 Teachers make good use of classroom assistants to provide extra help for pupils, especially those who find some difficulty to follow instructions or experience problems when using tools. As a result of such help, pupils who have special educational needs learn as well as others.

108 Although teaching and pupils' attainment are satisfactory, standards are unlikely to rise until some areas of weakness are resolved. For example, while teachers' planning makes provision for the use of computers in lessons, there is no evidence to show that this happens. The way teachers use assessments of pupils' attainment is not good enough to provide accurate starting points for topics and lessons. This limits how quickly pupils develop skills. Some elements of the subject are not covered in such depth as others, as a topic, and this puts a limit on how well pupils learn. Most critically, the school's management does not provide an effective means of monitoring pupils' progress in the subject. As a result, there is no clear view of how to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY

109 Standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and remain in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Teaching is satisfactory but without a co-ordinator it is not monitored or checked regularly. This is why pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory rather than good progress.

110 Teachers have a sound knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of geography, such as reading and creating maps. This begins when younger pupils draw simple maps showing their journeys to school. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the need for maps and easily locate India and the British isles on maps and globe. As they get older, pupils are taught to read simple maps. Consequently, by the end of Year 4, most pupils know that maps need a key to help the reader and make up symbols to use on a map of the local town. Lower attaining pupils are not so accurate as others and are not secure in their knowledge about the map of the British Isles.

111 Within the topics that pupils study, teachers provide interesting activities for pupils. For example, pupils in Year 3 classes learn to read maps by plotting the places that they and their families have visited. Pupils in Year 4, make steady gains in their knowledge of places as they study life in an Indian village. However, although they list what is different about other countries their knowledge is sometimes superficial and they do not talk in depth about how the physical and human features of different locations affect the lifestyles of the people living there.

112 Throughout the school, teachers ensure that pupils use the correct geographical terminology when talking about climate. As a result, pupils in Year 4 understand and can explain the terms 'monsoon' and 'fossil'. A weakness of the teaching is that teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in their geography. For example, pupils rarely use CD-ROMs or the Internet to research information. However, teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills, for instance, to write about the weather, food and language of the places they study.

113 As things stand, the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, without a co-ordinator to keep a close check on planning and assessment and to move the subject forward they are unlikely to get better than they are at present.

HISTORY

114 Standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and match those expected by the end of Years 2 and 4. Most pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory sense of chronology. They identify differences between ways of life in Victorian times and today. They make steady progress, so that by the time they are in Year 4 they use a variety of sources of information to compare the past and present. For instance, they use information gained from their parents and grandparents to make interesting comparisons between leisure activities such as cycling, football and swimming.

115 Standards have been maintained because teaching in the subject is satisfactory and sometimes good. However, standards are unlikely to rise until arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress improve. These remain unsatisfactory and present an issue, which remains unresolved from the previous inspection. The result is that teachers do not have an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and this prevents them having a focus for improvement.

116 Teaching is firmly rooted in a practical approach. Teachers bring the subject to life for pupils and provide them with interesting lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons thoroughly and are very highly motivated. Throughout the school they learn in a variety of ways, through videos, books, pictures, photographs, stories, visits and visitors. Teachers give them lots of hands-on experiences of historical items borrowed from the local authority. The display of items in *museum corners* of classrooms is given good priority, such as of Victorian times in Year 2. When pupils in Year 1 learnt about the 'Penny Post' they were intrigued by stamps priced in old pennies and showing Queen Victoria's head. They were amazed by kings' heads on other stamps and pricing such as 6d. Teachers make good use of visits. For instance, pupils in Year 2 visited a local museum and extended their classroom learning about 'life in the kitchen' in Victorian times.

117 In good lessons seen, teachers' secure knowledge of the subject resulted in plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn well. Interesting discussions encouraged pupils in Year 2 to join in and led to them to make good progress in sequencing historical events, when they explained the beginning, middle and end of the 'Gunpowder Plot'. Teachers' very good use of resources in lessons keeps pupils thoroughly interested in lessons so they concentrate intently on tasks. For instance, in Year 1 pupils used magnifying glasses to investigate differences carefully between stamps of different ages. In Year 2 pupils use books well to find out about Guy Fawkes.

118 There are one or two weaknesses to the teaching, which prevent standards from rising. Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to match pupils' work closely to their needs when they plan topics. Some elements of the subject are not covered in such depth as others, as a topic and this puts a limit on how well pupils learn. Teachers do not pay enough attention to developing pupils' skills in using information and communication technology or for communicating their knowledge in writing. At present there are no systematic arrangements for monitoring the curriculum or keeping a close eye on pupils' progress. Without a delegated co-ordinator to lead and manage the subject it is unlikely that the quality of teaching and learning will improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119 Standards have fallen since the previous inspection and are below what is expected by the end of Years 2 and 4. The main reason for this is that teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise or extend their skills in using computers. This means that pupils do not develop their skills in information and communication technology fast enough.

120 With clear direction from the subject manager, teachers have had substantial training and improved their skills in using information and communication technology. They now make good use of new technology in their teaching. For example, teachers in classes in Years 3 and 4 used a computer and projector to provide stimulating visual aids in art and design lessons. Similarly, throughout the school, teachers make good use of digital cameras to record pupils' work and in displays. However, it is only in the special classes and foundation stage, that teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers. In special classes, staff make good use of computers to motivate pupils and to teach literacy, numeracy and other subjects. For example, pupils with severe learning difficulties practised using switches in the light room and on the computer and in this way began to consider the scientific concept of cause and effect.

121 In general, teachers have a good knowledge of computers and the school's software. Their explanations of how to use technology are clear and help the pupils who have a go master new techniques and learn new skills. For example, pupils in Year 4 classes were able to explain how to use a publishing program to create posters and fliers that used text and pictures. They had some idea how to incorporate sound but were not absolutely sure because they had not been working on the project

for very long. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 were given detailed instructions for programming a floor robot. The real issue is that having listened to clear instructions pupils sometimes have to wait a long time before they get to put them into practice.

122 In Years 1 to 4, computers stand idle for a great part of each day. This is an inefficient use of expensive resources. The time that pupils have to work on computers is not long enough for them to make the gains in familiarity with programs and computer technology to be able to reach the expected standards. The situation is further exacerbated because most classes have only one or two computers. This means that several days can elapse between turns and pupils cannot make fast enough progress despite their enthusiasm to learn. As a result, some pupils in Year 4 are still unfamiliar with the keyboard and take a long time to type in text. This is exacerbated by the fact that some pupils use only one finger to type. Until teachers begin to use the computers that they have more regularly standards are unlikely to improve.

123 The co-ordinator has done a good job of planning training for teachers and has used grants available for training successfully. A high quality programme of study, linked with the school's own guidelines for teaching skills provides a solid basis for planning. However, this is not always used effectively, for example, the work set for pupils in Year 1 did not build on skills that they had already mastered in the foundation stage. This had not been picked up because, without separate lessons for information and communication technology, it is extremely difficult for the co-ordinator to observe the quality of teaching and learning.

MUSIC

124 Standards have fallen since the last inspection although they remain in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is because the subject has no co-ordinator to monitor the planning, teaching and learning of the subject and to ensure that all aspects of the subject are taught in sufficient depth. Pupils say 'there is not much time for music in the week'. All pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of musical skills, particularly singing. Pupils in the special classes make good progress in music and singing helps their work in other subjects, for example the use of counting songs in mathematics or for different ways of moving in physical education. It is very much part of the special classes routine to use songs and music to give the pupils cues about the activities and helps them to anticipate what they will be doing next. By the end of Year 2, pupils are use simple notation in the form of drawing to write down their compositions. They sing enthusiastically and tunefully, especially in assemblies, and use signing to make sure that the pupils with severe learning difficulties are included. They all know the words of the songs by heart and even the youngest pupils join in. Pupils at the end of Year 4 are able to name their favourite instruments and know about maintaining a rhythm and a musical pulse. They know about crotchets and quavers and are able to use simple formal notation. They can compose and record their compositions through shapes and pictures.

125 Teachers' lesson planning indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good as in the previous inspection. In part, this is because teachers no longer have the expertise of a visiting music teacher to guide them. In a lesson the clear indication by the teacher of the lesson objectives ensured that pupils knew what they had to do. The teacher used a good method of getting the interest of pupils and maintaining their attention by asking them to hold up colour-coded symbol cards when they heard the instrument represented on a taped extract of Indian percussion music. The use of good questioning enabled the pupils to see how the music was put together, for example, insistent drumming. A weakness in the teaching is the insufficient time in the lesson for the teacher to complete all the work planned. Pupils work hard during lessons and are interested in their work.

126 The scheme of work and policy are satisfactory and include all elements of the National Curriculum programme of study. Overall planning for the teaching of music is well detailed in the topic plans and follows the focus of the topic. For example, the use of rhythms in a piece of music about the sea when the topic is about the Vikings. However, there is no monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning or any detailed assessment about pupils' progress against key skills, or their knowledge and understanding to inform planning and this is unsatisfactory. Resources for music are satisfactory and stored for easy access and use. The lack of leadership and management has had an adverse effect on standards in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127 Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and match those expected by the end of Years 2 and 4. There have been several improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum is now broad and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers' planning is better and makes good use of a comprehensive scheme of work. As a result all classes enjoy all aspects of physical education and there are good opportunities for swimming in Year 4 where pupils spoke enthusiastically about the progress that they have made. Pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between health and fitness and this fits well with the school's concentration on pupils' personal development. This leads to pupils taking care with their diet and exercising on a regular basis.

128 Teachers have a sound knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of gymnastics and games. In Years 1 and 2, pupils travel, climb and balance well on both the floor and the apparatus. They perform simple skills with agility and have good control of their movements. They have good skills in performing the basic actions of throwing and catching over short distances and are becoming increasingly accurate. Pupils in Year 4 spoke enthusiastically about the recent work in Hindu dancing and the opportunities to represent the mood, pace and style of music; for example when they performed the 'rubbish dance'. In Year 3 pupils have secure skills in sending and receiving passes in netball. They work well in groups and are developing an awareness of the importance of teamwork and tactics. In Year 4 pupils are making good progress in their skills in basketball. They practise their shooting, passing and dribbling skills and work effectively in teams of four. A significant strength of physical education is the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs who, with good levels of support, participate in a good range of activities. As a result they achieve well and are valued by other pupils for their contributions. All pupils have regular swimming lessons and the standard is good with almost all pupils being able to swim a minimum of 25 metres. Pupils have the opportunity to play hockey, football, rounders, netball and tennis.

129 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers provide clear explanations and demonstrations to pupils. As a result pupils respond enthusiastically and are positive in the tasks that they undertake. Teachers prepare lessons well, have good relationships with pupils and make very good use of the support staff. Teachers use praise and encouragement to motivate pupils, which ensures that they persevere with tasks, and practice their skills. Overall teachers make effective use of the hall, dress appropriately for the subject and are conscious of health and safety matters. Consequently pupils show an appreciation of the importance of warming up and relaxing after exercise and set out equipment with care. The quality of pupils' relationships is very good and results in pupils co-operating well in pairs, groups or teams and are sensitive when evaluating each other's performances.

130 Physical education makes an effective contribution to the social and moral development of the pupils by promoting the importance of teamwork and fair play. The good range of extra-curricular sporting activities is appreciated by the pupils and is indicative of the school's dedication to providing an extended curriculum. Without a co-ordinator the subject lacks clear direction and management.

While this has not prevented the school from making the changes necessary to ensure that the curriculum now meets statutory requirements, it is unlikely that standards will rise until someone looks closely at the teaching and learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131 Standards in religious education have improved since the last inspection and, by the end of Years 2 and 4 are now in line with those prescribed in the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is the result of the implementation of better teaching and the increased time allocated to religious education throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs do as well as others in relation to the knowledge they gain but sometimes recall learning in less detail.

132 In mainstream and special classes, teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to listen to and discuss stories from the Christian and Hindu religions. For example, after listening to the story of Rama and Sita, pupils in Year 3 talked about the similarities in the way that Christians and Hindus use light and candles in their celebrations.

133 Teachers use a range of interesting activities to help pupils explore the main messages of Christianity and Hinduism. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make clay Diya lamps, in Year 3, pupils got to taste Diwali sweets and an Indian parent showed pupils the special clothes that are worn for the festival of Diwali.

134 Throughout the school, teachers use the teachings of religion to reinforce pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 1 pupils develop a sound understanding of the importance of belonging to a family. They learn about people who help them in school and outside. Around the school, there are attractive displays of fabrics, pictures and objects from the Christian and Hindu religions. These capture the interest of pupils who say that they enjoy looking at them.

135 A good feature of the teaching is that teachers encourage pupils to talk about their feelings and ask purposeful questions to help pupils extend their knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 1 explored the emotions and feelings associated with the theme of being special. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the lives of homeless people when they study the life of Dr Barnado. They appreciate that some people dedicate their lives to helping others and effectively discuss how they might help people that they live and work with.

136 The subject is soundly led. The head teacher has written and implemented the subject policy. She monitors teachers' planning but has had few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in religious education throughout the school.