

INSPECTION REPORT

BESSACARR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Doncaster

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106739

Headteacher: Mrs J W Darby

Reporting inspector: Mr Keith Bardon
11807

Dates of inspection: 31 January 2000 – 4 February 2000

Inspection number: 182084

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ellers Avenue
Bessacarr
Doncaster
South Yorkshire

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A V Chapman

Date of previous inspection: 19 June 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Keith Bardon	Registered inspector	Information technology Design & technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Kath Berry	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Graham Rhodes	Team inspector	Geography Physical education	Pupils attitudes, values and personal development
Ralph Walker	Team inspector	English Religious education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Bruce Potter	Team inspector	Mathematics History Art Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
Sheridan Earnshaw	Team inspector	Under fives Science Music Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7-11
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12-15
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15-17
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17-19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19-20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21-23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25-30
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31-46

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bessacarr Primary is situated in a residential area of mainly owner occupied properties to the south of Doncaster. There are 254 full time pupils on roll in the main school and another 60 attend the attached nursery on a part time basis, making the school a little larger than average. Twenty-six pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, predominantly Asian and Chinese, and 21 speak English as an additional language. There are 48 pupils with special educational needs and 2 of these pupils have a statement. Both these figures are below average for a school of this size. Only a small number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. When they first enter the school most children show good basic skills and their early attainment is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bessacarr Primary is an orderly school, which provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils attain appropriate standards that are generally above average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but more consistent in the younger classes than the older ones. The school is effectively led and managed and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides children with a good quality of nursery education.
- It promotes very good attitudes to learning helping to ensure that when pupils leave the school at the age of eleven standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average.
- Literacy is generally taught well and good use is made of the opportunities different subjects provide to extend pupils' reading and writing skills.
- Pupils who enter the school speaking very little English receive effective support and make good progress in acquiring basic language skills.
- It encourages high standards of behaviour in its pupils.
- It sets appropriate targets for the raising of standards based on carefully collected data.
- The school and the Governing Body work effectively as a team ensuring that the priorities for development reflect the needs of the pupils.

What could be improved

- There are weaknesses in the teaching in some classes in Key Stage 2.
- Standards in information technology by the age of 11 are too low.
- Some members of the school's management team do not contribute enough to decision making.
- A number of curriculum leaders are unclear about how to develop their subjects.
- The structure of the timetable for some lessons does not make the best use of the time available.
- Some of the information gained from monitoring the work of the school is not used as effectively as it could be.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected the school has been reorganised from a first school into a primary school. This has been achieved with very little apparent disruption to pupils' education. Although standards have fluctuated throughout the period they have been generally satisfactory and in English, teaching and learning have been strengthened with the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Improvement is now also apparent in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage. The nursery continues to be a strength of the school

and pupils' attainment by the age of five, which was mainly satisfactory and sometimes good, is now consistently good.

The school has addressed all of the issues from the last inspection, but some more successfully than others. Improvements to teaching have been made, although there are still weaknesses in Key Stage 2 that need to be addressed. The curriculum has been improved but subject leadership is not as good as it should be. Effective assessment procedures are in place although more needs to be done on day to day assessment. Considerable improvements have been made to the provision of books. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	N/A	A*	B	D
Mathematics	N/A	A	B	D
Science	N/A	A*	C	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In 1999 pupils' attainments in English and mathematics were above the national average and a good proportion of pupils attained the higher than average level 5 in the national tests. Although these results were lower than those achieved by pupils in 1998, due consideration should be given to the difference in characteristics of the year groups. The 1999 cohort had a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who spoke English as an additional language, or had joined the cohort late in their primary education. Twenty-six per cent of the pupils required special arrangements to help them to sit the tests. Despite this cohort variation the school's performance targets were met in mathematics and exceeded in English.

The achievement of seven and 11 year olds in English and mathematics is satisfactory and the standards are above the national average. There is some under-achievement in science in Key Stage 1 but by the age of 11 pupils' attainment is above average in this subject also. Standards in information technology are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but much too low in Key Stage 2. In both key stages standards are good in art and history and satisfactory in most other subjects. However, they are generally too low in physical education and in some aspects of music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very good attitudes to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour during lessons and at all other times is very good. Pupils are polite to adults and to each other
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Pupils readily take on responsibilities both within class and around school..
Attendance	Slightly above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

In 92 per cent of lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory or better and in 18 per cent the teaching was very good or excellent. The eight per cent of unsatisfactory or poor teaching occurred in lessons in Year 3 and in one Year 5 class. Only some excellent teaching in Year 6 and effective teaching elsewhere in the key stage allows a judgement of satisfactory teaching overall to be made for Key Stage 2.

The teaching of English and mathematics is consistently good in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching in these two key subjects is more variable, but sound overall and often good in English. Across the curriculum as a whole, the teaching of literacy is good and the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory.

In the better lessons teachers involve pupils well and challenge them to think and to make decisions. The work is well matched to what the pupils need to learn next and teachers interact with the pupils in a lively manner. Unsatisfactory and poor lessons are characterised by a lack of pace, an over emphasis on instruction and a low level of active participation by pupils.

Pupils show good levels of interest and concentrate for long periods. They generally apply themselves well to the tasks set although their level of independence is at times too low.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	In most subjects the curriculum is satisfactory. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are firmly established and in many subjects the national schemes of work are used effectively. However, the curriculum for information technology in Key Stage 2 does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the timetable for lessons in physical education and music is badly organised.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs which enables them to maintain a sound rate of progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Currently satisfactory overall and under further development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall for spiritual, moral and social development. Unsatisfactory for cultural development, particularly in respect of multi-cultural provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers and other staff give pupils their full support and take their safety and wellbeing as a priority. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainments are satisfactory overall and effective monitoring of test results is enabling appropriate targets for pupils' attainments to be set.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parental involvement in children's learning is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides effective leadership but does not delegate sufficiently. Some members of the senior management team function effectively but others are not sufficiently involved in decision making. Although there are exceptions, for example in English, curriculum managers are not clear enough about how well their subjects are being taught.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors play an active role in the life of the school and meet their statutory obligations well. They have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what it needs to be do to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has effective monitoring procedures in place and makes sound evaluations of the information obtained. Its use of the outcomes of evaluation is less effective.
The strategic use of	Satisfactory use is made of financial resources to support pupils' learning and to fund developments. The school makes very good

resources	use of voluntary helpers to maximise pupil's progress.
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The school has an adequate number of teachers and support staff in most areas, although there is little extra classroom assistance for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Accommodation is adequate although with the increase in pupil numbers some classrooms are becoming rather cramped.

Learning resources for all subjects are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children enjoy coming to school and they are encouraged to work hard • Most parents who filled in the questionnaire indicated that they were satisfied with the progress their children were making but a minority of others had reservations and thought that children could achieve more. • The children are well behaved and polite • They find the school easy to approach if they have a problem or a question concerning their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant proportion feel that the school does not work closely enough with parents. • They would like to know more about what is being taught and to be kept better informed of the progress they are making. • Although some parents felt that children received the appropriate level and quality of homework others see the need for improvement. • A large proportion of parents are dissatisfied with the range of extra curricular activities the school provides

The school's working partnership with parents is under development and improving. Inspectors feel that this development is satisfactory.

Inspectors agree with parents that the school provides insufficient information about what is taught. The written reports could be more informative but with this exception the amount of information parents receive about children's progress is appropriate.

Inspectors feel that the level of homework provided in the different years is appropriate and that it is effectively extending pupils' learning.

Inspectors agree with those parents who feel that the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is too narrow.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When pupils leave Bessacarr Primary at the age of 11 their standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are above the national average.
2. Children's attainment on entry to the school is generally above average and most have good basic skills. They are articulate and communicate well, both with adults and with other children. While children's knowledge of numbers is not quite at the same level as their early literacy, it is still a little above average.
3. By the age of five almost all children have progressed to the point where they are ready to start the National Curriculum and a good proportion have already moved on to it. Their attainment meets and often exceeds the national targets set for the age group and as 'under-fives' they achieve well in all aspects of learning. They quickly adapt to classroom routines and get on well with each other. By the age of five many can write short sentences, recognise simple words in print and can follow a story. They recognise numbers to ten and often beyond, and can do simple addition and subtraction sums. They gain a good understanding of materials and are able to mix their own colours when painting. Children's control over their own actions develops well enabling them to participate effectively in a range of physical activities.
4. In the 1999 National Curriculum reading tests the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 2 was well above the national average. However the proportion attaining a 'strong' level 2 or a higher level 3 was only average. Overall pupils' performance in the reading test was above the national average but a little below that of similar schools. In the writing test pupils' attainment was much more uniform and at all levels results were above the national average and much the same as similar schools. Results in mathematics were weaker. Pupils' attainment was below the national average at all levels and well below that of pupils in similar schools.
5. Standards are being maintained in English and the attainment of the current Year 2 pupils is above the national average in both reading and writing. Pupils' ability to speak and listen effectively is well above average. They are able to follow a discussion and express their ideas confidently. In reading the distribution of attainment is now much more even and similar to that found in writing. This is one result of the school's effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Most pupils read confidently and accurately and higher attaining pupils can recall in detail previously read stories. The majority of pupils write clearly and express themselves well. In mathematics standards have improved and the attainment of Year 2 pupils is now above the national average. They know a good range of number facts, can solve simple problems and have a firm grasp of addition and subtraction. This is the result of improvements to the curriculum, better teaching and constructive use of the National Numeracy Strategy. These standards are to be expected of pupils who have good basic skills when they enter the school and represent satisfactory achievement. Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, are becoming both literate and numerate and make sound progress in Key Stage 1 in these two important areas.
6. There are no science tests for seven year olds but teachers' own assessments in 1999 indicated that while an average proportion of pupils reached the standard expected in this subject, very few pupils attained the higher level. Overall the performance of seven-year-olds in science was well below that of pupils in similar schools. This is reflected in the standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2. Most are attaining the level

expected but few of the higher attaining pupils are achieving the upper level. This under-achievement is the result of work given to pupils that is not always as well matched to the age group as it is in English and mathematics, and less effective teaching. For example, lessons on the eye involve a level of detail more normally associated with secondary school biology lessons and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to grasp the principles of investigation, such as fair testing.

7. Since it was last inspected in 1996 the attainment of seven-year-olds in the reading tests has fluctuated considerably. It has on occasions been very high and throughout the period at least above the national average. Results in writing have been more consistent and generally well above average. In both these subjects results fell in 1999 but a significant number of pupils in the cohort had some difficulties with learning and 50 per cent of them are now registered as having special educational needs. Following good results in mathematics in 1996 standards fell and results in the national tests have been below the national average for the past three years. The school has carefully analysed the difficulties pupils were having and identified the reasons. As a result it has changed its approach to the teaching of mathematics and standards are improving significantly. Throughout the period since 1996 girls have consistently performed better in the national reading, writing and mathematics tests than boys and to a greater extent than is normally found. However, there is no evidence of such a strong bias in the work of the current Year 2 pupils and changes, such as the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have narrowed the gender gap in attainment.
8. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science, an average proportion of eleven-year-olds attained the expected level 4 in all three subjects. In English and mathematics an above average proportion of pupils went on to attain the higher level 5 and overall the school's performance was above the national average but below that of similar schools. An average proportion of pupils attained the higher level in science and the school's performance was close to the national average for the subject but again below that of similar schools. The similar schools comparison is made on the basis of the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Other factors also affect the performance of a particular cohort of pupils and these are discussed in the next paragraph.
9. Since it reorganised as a primary school only two groups of eleven-year-olds have taken the national tests and there have been marked contrasts in performance. In 1998 the results achieved were very high in English and science and put the school in the top five per cent nationally. Results in 1999 were much lower but the cohort of pupils was very different. Far more pupils had special educational needs and almost a quarter of the pupils who took the test had started at the school part way through their primary education, many of them not long before they sat the tests. Nine of the 35 pupils who sat the tests in 1999 had to have special arrangements to ensure that they could do themselves justice. These factors can have a significant effect on pupils' performance. There was also a higher proportion of pupils who spoke English as an additional language. These pupils did not perform well in 1999, in contrast to the previous year when they had obtained good results. The school was aware of these factors and set its targets for pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests accordingly. These targets were met in mathematics and exceeded slightly in English, which represented a satisfactory performance. Next year's targets have been set at an appropriately challenging level. Although comparisons between the two sets of results can be reasonably made it is not possible to draw reliable conclusions about overall trends in performance from such limited data.
10. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is above the national average in both English and mathematics. Standards are a little better than those attained by eleven-year-olds in last year's national tests in that the proportion of pupils both attaining and exceeding the expected level is now above average. Pupils' achievement is as expected and

satisfactory overall and equates with sound progress across Key Stage 2 as a whole. Most pupils listen with concentration, can follow complex ideas and give good explanations of their own. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. The majority read both fiction and non-fiction with a good level of understanding and have developed preferences for particular styles of writing and authors. Pupils' handwriting and spelling are generally good and they write effectively in continuous prose. Standards in both reading and writing are above average. Most pupils are able to use a range of strategies when solving mathematical problems and have a good understanding of number relationships. They measure accurately and handle data competently. Standards are above average in all aspects of mathematics and pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Overall the attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language mirrors that of other pupils, although some have problems with aspects of grammar.

11. Pupils' satisfactory level of achievement in literacy and numeracy is also apparent in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, pupils use their literacy skills well when researching information in history or writing evaluative reports in design and technology. Sound standards of numeracy are apparent in pupils' use of graphs and tables in science and symmetry and pattern in art.
12. Pupils currently in Year 6 have better scientific knowledge and skills than the 1999 test results would suggest. Overall standards are above the national average and achievement is satisfactory. Their knowledge of living things is satisfactory but not as well developed as their understanding of materials and physical processes, which is above average. Pupils' ability to carry out investigations is also above average and across Key Stage 2 as a whole, pupils make satisfactory progress in science.
13. Standards in Information technology by the age of seven are above average for the age group and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Key Stage 1 pupils acquire a good level of knowledge of the computer and other forms of information technology and develop effective skills in their use. Many pupils have access to computers at home. This is used to good advantage by Key Stage 1 enabling pupils to make sound progress. Unfortunately this is not the case in Key Stage 2. Pupils are provided with insufficient opportunities to learn how to use the computer and other forms of information technology. By the age of eleven pupils' attainment is below average and standards are too low. Pupils' achievements are below their capabilities and their progress in Key Stage 2 is poor.
14. Pupils' attainment in religious education meets the levels expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus in Key Stage 2 and is a little above the standards expected in Key Stage 1. Pupils' knowledge of Bible stories and of different religions develops well and they become increasingly able to express their feelings and beliefs. In both key stages standards are good in history and art and satisfactory in design and technology and geography. Standards are broadly those expected in physical education and music but the lessons in these subjects are often very short and as a consequence pupils do not achieve as well as they could, considering the range of experiences that many have outside of school.
15. The provision for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stages 1 and 2 is effective and allows these pupils to participate fully in lessons and receive individual help where this is appropriate. As a consequence pupils with special educational needs maintain the same satisfactory rate of progress as other pupils. The good start provided for the under-fives benefits pupils with special educational needs well and in this stage of their education they make good progress. For similar reasons, pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall and where specialist support is provided for pupils at an early stage of English acquisition these pupils make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. From when they first enter the school the under-fives show an enthusiasm for learning and a pride in their own achievements. They readily share their toys and equipment with others, play happily together and behave well.
17. Pupils in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have very good attitudes to school. They are keen to learn and involve themselves readily in the activities and opportunities presented to them. Pupils make good use of their experiences and interests outside the school to support their learning. For example, from his knowledge of his father's work as a surveyor a Year 2 pupil was able to explain to others during a geography lesson what a tripod was used for. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and try hard to overcome any difficulties they may encounter.
18. Behaviour is generally very good and pupils respond well to the expectations set by teachers. Pupils are polite and courteous, adhere to the rules of behaviour for break and lunchtime and to the school code of conduct. As a result pupils' movement around school is orderly and efficient. In all year groups pupils enjoy talking to adults, and their behaviour at lunchtime, particularly in the dining room, is of a high standard. Pupils have good table manners, and when given responsibility for serving other pupils with lunch, do so sensibly and fairly, making lunchtime a pleasant social occasion.
19. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are good. Pupils work sensibly and well together in groups, although the opportunities and encouragement to do so are greater in Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. Relationships between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds are good and pupils of different abilities work and play well together. Most pupils are keen to take responsibilities both within and outside the classroom. They apply themselves well to the tasks set in lessons, and readily help the smooth running of the school: for example, by acting as library helpers or register monitors.
20. Throughout the school pupils are generally helpful, kind and courteous towards each other. Through the school's involvement with a range of charities, pupils develop a strong sense of awareness of the needs of others and how they can help those who are less fortunate than themselves. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 have used their own initiative to raise funds for a charity to help new born babies, whilst pupils in years 5 and 6 organised stalls and games to help support animal welfare and conservation organisations.
21. Attendance is satisfactory and slightly above the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Across the school as a whole the teaching and learning is satisfactory. In over 90 per cent of the lessons the teaching was satisfactory or better. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the percentage of satisfactory or better teaching was less than 80 per cent. However some weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2 remain and the issue from the previous report relating to the development of teaching has only been partially addressed. The quality of teaching for pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory and equates with that provided for all pupils.
23. The quality of teaching of children under five in the nursery and reception class is good overall. In over 60 per cent of lessons the teaching was at least good and in 45 per cent the teaching was very good. The remaining lessons were satisfactory.

24. Children make a good start to learning in the nursery where teaching was very good in 80 per cent of lessons. Teachers use good strategies to establish classroom routines, such as children putting on aprons for painting, and washing their hands correctly. Activities are interesting and challenging and teachers place appropriate emphasis on developing children's reading, writing and number through well organised play activities. For example, pupils are taught to sort multi-coloured plastic bears into colour sets and match them to number cards. They learn to tell the difference between large, medium and small when playing with containers in the sand. Teachers promote children's early writing well through the provision of activities that have a clear focus and an achievable goal, such as children writing their names or copy writing something that the teacher has written. Other areas of learning are equally skilfully taught through the use of stimulating resources and interesting activities. Teachers monitor the children closely and direct them carefully towards the full range of activities to ensure that they get a breadth of experiences and make good all round progress. The nursery nurse provides excellent support and she has a good understanding of how to develop pupils' knowledge and skills.
25. Teaching of pupils who are under five in the reception class is sound overall and occasionally very good. Children continue to develop their literacy and numeracy skills well through a range of practical and written activities. Through sound teaching they learn how to write sentences and add and subtract numbers to 10. Children in the reception class are provided with a good mixture of activities directed by the teacher, where they are expected to produce work of a good quality, and other activities from which they can choose. The latter, which include role play in the home corner and sand and water activities, provide good opportunities for the development of social skills and aspects of language. Observations of individual pupils are carried out regularly in both the nursery and reception class. Teachers use this information well when deciding what activities they need to provide next.
26. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 was good or better in around 70 per cent of the lessons observed, and pupils' learning was good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1. The teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 was satisfactory overall, but much more variable than in Key Stage 1 or in the under fives. In Key Stage 2 the teaching ranged from excellent to poor. It was good or better in 36 per cent of lessons. However there were unsatisfactory lessons in Year 3 and unsatisfactory and poor lessons in one year 5 class, constituting 13 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 2 as a whole. Only some excellent teaching in Year 6 and effective teaching elsewhere in the key stage allows a judgement of satisfactory teaching to be made for Key Stage 2 as a whole.
27. Where teaching is good or better, teachers provide interesting and stimulating lessons and interact constructively with pupils through discussion and questioning. The outcome of this is enthusiasm from the pupils and willingness to be involved and to learn. In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to express opinions, ask questions or put forward their ideas. The pace of learning is too slow and there is often a lack of challenge in the tasks set, particularly for the higher attainers.
28. Teaching is consistently good in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 but more variable in Key Stage 2. The teaching of English in Key Stage 2 is sound overall and often good, but varies between very good and unsatisfactory. In mathematics the teaching in Key Stage 2 is broadly satisfactory with some very effective teaching, particularly in Year 6 counter-balancing unsatisfactory and occasionally poor teaching in some lessons in Years 3 and 5. Most teachers have worked hard to establish the National Literacy Strategy and make every effort to ensure that it is well taught. Literacy lessons are well planned and delivered with an enthusiasm that transmits to the pupils. The majority of teachers have also made a positive start with the National Numeracy

Strategy, and are including challenging mental activities in lessons. In the unsatisfactory and poor English and mathematics lessons in Key Stage 2 teachers fail to make effective use of the literacy or numeracy strategies and pupils' interest and concentration suffers as a consequence.

29. Literacy is generally taught well through other subjects. For example, in art, pupils write about the clay pots they have made and in history they research information from books before composing clear accounts of what they have found out. Numeracy is not as well taught in other subjects and while it is satisfactory overall some opportunities to extend pupils' skills are missed. For example, in some classes teachers encourage pupils to make use of data handling when investigating in science, but in other classes this is under developed
30. Teachers generally have secure knowledge and understanding of the different subjects, although this is not always the case in information technology. Across Key Stage 2 as a whole the teaching of information technology is poor and pupils do not make the gains in knowledge and skills that they should. The teaching of physical education and to some extent music is adversely affected by the time allocated for lessons, which is far too short to sufficiently develop pupils' skills.
31. Planning of lessons is sound overall and the majority of teachers carefully identify what they expect pupils to learn. Teachers make effective assessments of pupils' periodic development by providing tests at the end of units of work and they keep accurate records of pupils' progress in most subjects. Reviewing assessment procedures was a key issue in the previous inspection report and the school has progressed a long way in addressing it. However, ongoing daily assessment, which informs teachers' future lesson planning is not as well established, but developing satisfactorily alongside the introduction of the national schemes of work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always indicate to pupils how they could improve their work. Display around the school is minimal. Teachers do not display pupils' work effectively to celebrate achievements or to stimulate thinking.
32. The teaching methods in use are generally appropriate to the ages of the pupils and effective. Most teachers use an efficient three-part structure of introduction, activity, and concluding discussion. In the under five classes and in Key Stage 1, pupils are given opportunities to work independently. For example, they are allowed out of the classroom in pairs to use the computers in the 'shared area'. In Key Stage 2 pupils are well managed but are not given the same opportunities to work on their own initiative and do not show the same level of independence of many of the younger pupils.
33. Teachers generally give due consideration to the needs of pupils with learning or language difficulties and plan appropriate work for them. They pay due attention to the targets in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs when structuring their lessons. Support staff work closely with both teachers and pupils and make an effective contribution to teaching and learning.
34. Homework is provided regularly for all pupils and increases appropriately as pupils grow older. All homework is regularly marked and it provides a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Some parents felt that the level and quality of homework needed to be improved but inspectors found that the homework for individual classes is satisfactory.

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

35. The school provides a broad range of appropriate educational opportunities for all its pupils. The statutory requirement to teach the National Curriculum and religious education is met in all subjects with the exception of information technology. In this

subject the curriculum provided in Key Stage 2 does not meet requirements and pupils are not given the range of experiences to which they are entitled.

36. Mainly through the adoption of the national schemes of work in subjects such as science, history and geography and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies the school has effectively improved its curriculum planning since the last inspection. There are still some areas of weakness, primarily in information technology, but overall the issue concerning the planning of work has been satisfactorily addressed.
37. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been well managed and it is operating effectively. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced this year and is developing satisfactorily. Both strategies are improving the teaching of basic skills and the development of pupils' competence in reading, writing, and number.
38. Current organisational and timetabling arrangements for music and physical education are unsatisfactory. The lessons provided in these subjects are too short and fragment the timetable. In addition the withdrawal of groups for music causes disruption to lessons in other subjects.
39. Although there is currently some satisfactory teaching of personal and social skills, the school has recognised the need for a more systematic approach. The development of a policy and scheme of work for personal, social and health education is a priority this year. This development is progressing satisfactorily and the provision should be fully operational from next September. The number and range of after school opportunities for pupils are too low and, apart from the annual theatre visit, the proportion of pupils involved is relatively small. All children have equal access to the curriculum and they work happily with one another.
40. The school has no policy for the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, and this adversely affects the quality and consistency of provision.
41. The provision made for pupils' spiritual development, in assemblies and religious education in particular, is satisfactory overall. However, the opportunities provided for the development of pupils' spiritual awareness and self-knowledge vary from unsatisfactory to good and this is reflected in pupils' learning. Pupils are given opportunities for silent reflection, although on occasions these are badly focused or unnecessarily brief. The quality of singing in assemblies is generally poor, and recorded music is not always used to best effect to enhance a spiritual response. There is some evidence of spiritual content in the curriculum. Year 1 pupils, for example, respond with enthusiasm to the growth of their bean plants.
42. Pupils' understanding of right and wrong is promoted satisfactorily. Through the consistent operation of the code of conduct, classroom discussion of every day incidents and meaningful stories, pupils develop an informed appreciation of moral principles. Careful consideration of rules, commandments and commitment in religious education enables pupils to appreciate the role these principles play in our lives. Assemblies often present moral issues for consideration, and, through involving the children in raising money for charities, the school develops pupils' sense of responsibility for less fortunate people in this world.
43. Teachers effectively encourage pupils to relate well to others, and to show care, courtesy and consideration. Pupils are helped to work sensibly with others in group activities and to take responsibility for their own actions. Both in class and in assemblies teachers seek to develop pupils' self-esteem and give public acknowledgement to achievements of all kinds. However, sometimes in "achievement assemblies" the opportunities to display pupils' work and to exemplify good standards

are missed, and the manner of presentation of awards is pedestrian and uninspiring. Displays of pupils' work are not well used either for celebrating pupils' achievement or stimulating their interest. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and to show initiative. All classes have monitors with a range of responsibilities and older pupils help in the library, supervise younger pupils and serve at lunch tables. Older pupils too organise fund-raising for charities they think worthy of supporting. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory.

44. Pupils benefit from visitors to the school, such as the police for road safety, and the local vicar for assemblies. A theatre group visits each year performing plays linked to science. Pupils make use of the local community to enhance work in history and geography. All pupils, from Year 2 onwards, learn to play the recorder. From Year 4 pupils also have the chance to learn to play the violin, or guitar. Thus the development of pupils' understanding of their own culture is satisfactory. However, there is very limited development of pupils' appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures. Although pupils learn about other faiths in religious education and about their festivals in assemblies, the school's promotion of pupils' appreciation of the multi-cultural and multi-linguistic nature of modern society is unsatisfactory. Multi-cultural aspects of art and music are not explored. There is little in terms of display or resources, and the culture and experience of the ethnic minority children in the school is under-used. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection that has not been effectively addressed. The school has recognised the need to raise staff awareness of the culture and language of ethnic minority pupils, and has organised a series of workshops with the local education authority multi-cultural centre.
45. Effective links with the community and support agencies have been maintained since the last inspection. Relationships with other schools within the pyramid are good and continuing to develop. Church leaders have a significant input throughout the school enriching the curriculum and providing pupils with a deeper understanding of their role in the community. With the exception of the multi-cultural dimension, the school uses the community well as a resource and representatives from it share their lifestyle and skills with the pupils. Year 6 pupils enjoyed a drug awareness session presented by a local police officer during the week of inspection. Links with the wider community particularly through the Internet have yet to be fully utilised.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The procedures used in the nursery and reception to introduce pupils to school work well. They enable children to settle quickly into the routines of school life and to feel comfortable in their new surroundings. The school maintains good links with its local high school so that at the end of their time at Bessacarr pupils transfer smoothly to the next phase of their education.
47. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, enjoy the full support and respect of all adults working in the school. Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that their safety and wellbeing are priorities. Pupils feel able to approach members of staff if they have a question or a problem in the knowledge that they will be listened to carefully and sympathetically. The school takes care to ensure that the small number of pupils who do not speak English well are fully supported and given full access to the curriculum.
48. The school has secure and well established procedures for child protection and designated staff have a good understanding of the issues that relate to this important area. All aspects of security, health and safety are monitored regularly and effectively and the school maintains a clean, tidy and safe learning environment.

49. The school monitors pupils' behaviour effectively and promotes their attendance well. Teachers maintain their registers with care and are alert to any irregularities. Issues surrounding pupils' attendance are dealt with sensitively but firmly. The recently developed policy for personal, social and health education is bringing together these aspects of pupils' personal development and helping to ensure equality across all age ranges and abilities. This has been and is continuing to be an area for development throughout the school and there are early indications that sound progress has been made.
50. The school nurse visits periodically and a local police officer helps raise pupils' awareness of the problems associated with the misuse of drugs. Lunchtimes are well organised and provide pupils with a good opportunities to socialise with others from different classes. This contributes effectively to the harmonious atmosphere which prevails at all times. Older pupils are invited to serve the food, and they do this in a mature manner. This is very effective in promoting pupils' self esteem and their sense of responsibility.
51. Teachers in the nursery have introduced a system of assessment developed by a northern university. This provides a good quality of information about individual children's attainment on entry to the school, including their literacy and mathematical skills, and enables children's early progress to be successfully monitored. Frequent observations are made of children, and teachers use this information well to plan suitable and well focused activities. Baseline assessment is carried out thoroughly in the reception class enabling useful information to be built up about each child.
52. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 teachers make regular assessments of pupils' mathematical and literacy achievements and use standard tests at appropriate intervals. Detailed records are kept in these subjects and modern technology is used to collate the data. This information is used effectively by the school to monitor pupils' progress and determine how resources should be used in support of pupils' learning. The monitoring of the progress of specific groups of pupils by these methods, such as those who speak English as an additional language, is less effective. However, a visiting teacher who provides well structured support for the small group of pupils who arrived at the school with little or no English keeps detailed and informative records of the progress these pupils make. This enables realistic targets to be set for their development. Procedures for day-to-day assessment are being extended satisfactorily in conjunction with the national schemes of work the school has adopted.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The majority of parents are very supportive of the work of the school and the care it provides. They take a keen interest in their children's progress and readily inform the school of any concerns. The school 's relationship with parents is developing well and improving over time.
54. General information is communicated effectively and on a regular basis. However the school provides too little information about what is taught and this adversely affects parents' ability to support their children's work from home. Nursery and reception teachers provide a useful booklet welcoming new parents and children. This is open and friendly and easy to read. Some communications with parents are too direct and do not promote the partnership with parents as well as they could.
55. Arrangements for parents to discuss their children's progress are satisfactory. However, annual reports provide insufficient opportunity for the school and parents to agree targets for pupils' learning. Parents have accepted the Home/School Agreement and fully support the work their children do at home. They readily involve themselves in fund raising and support other activities, assemblies and trips.
56. A number of parents have been trained to take part in the Better Reading Partnership which supports the reading of selected groups of pupils over a ten week period. This has been beneficial to both the parents and pupils involved. Parents also help around the school and in classrooms where they can. This help has a positive effect on pupils' learning and is much appreciated by the school. The contribution parents make to pupils' learning at school and at home is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher has led the school through a major reorganisation with a minimum of disruption to pupils' education. The satisfactory quality of her leadership is enabling the school to continue to move forwards. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a sense of purpose based on the raising of standards.
58. Although the management of the school by the headteacher and senior members of staff is satisfactory overall, there are weaknesses. The criteria for membership of the senior team are inadequately allied to individual teachers' management skills. Some members of the senior management team have the required expertise and contribute effectively to strategic planning. However other members of the team have insufficient management skills and do not contribute enough to the decision making process. This has led to reluctance on the part of headteacher to delegate responsibilities. While this ensures that the headteacher is in full control of the decisions that are made and that the school is developing satisfactorily, it reduces the effectiveness of the senior management team as a whole and places more work on the shoulders of those members of the team who are functioning well
59. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and makes an effective contribution to the management of the school. Governors are well aware of the direction in which the school needs to move and keep themselves up to date through the headteacher's reports and in some instances regular visits to the school. They shared a training day with teachers last year and have plans for another in the near future. Governors' direct involvement in the monitoring of educational provision is increasing satisfactorily and they play a constructive role in the setting of the school's targets.

60. Most subject managers do not have enough knowledge of how well their subjects are being taught across the school. The most notable exception to this is in English, but in most subjects, managers are insufficiently clear about the improvements that need to be made in order to raise standards. The issue from the last inspection relating to the monitoring of the curriculum has not been adequately addressed.
61. The special educational needs coordinator manages the provision for pupils with special educational needs well and ensures that the support available is appropriately utilised. The teacher with responsibility for coordinating provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language has recognised the need to raise teachers' awareness of the specific requirements of these pupils and is managing developments in this area effectively. The provision for the under-fives is managed very well and this has a significant impact on the good start children make.
62. Secure procedures are in place for monitoring academic performance. Good evaluation is made of the standards pupils attain, both in the national tests and the school's own assessments and the school makes constructive use of modern technology to aid its data analysis. Systematic checks are carried out to ensure that pupils are making the expected gains in attainment and to target individuals pupils for specific support. The headteacher and governors make effective use of the information these evaluations provide to set appropriately challenging targets for pupils' attainments and determine priorities for resource allocation and spending. The school makes less effective use of the information to monitor the progress of specific groups and individuals, such as pupils who speak English as an additional language. Other monitoring procedures, such as the regular observation of lessons by the headteacher, are well established and provide a good basis for professional dialogue. Some of the information gained is used well, such as the pairing of teachers so that the good practice of one can influence the teaching of the other, but in general the outcomes of this monitoring are not yet used sufficiently to influence the quality of the teaching.
63. Plans for future developments accurately reflect the direction in which the school needs to progress. Generally, each priority within the school development plan has a clear structure and appropriately allocated responsibilities. However the targets against which improvements are to be measured are generally too broad and do not have the sharp edge needed to make detailed evaluations. Overall, although the monitoring itself is effective in providing good quality information too little use is made of the outcomes to increase the effectiveness of the school development plan and to sharpen the targets against which success can be judged.
64. Financial planning is satisfactory and closely allied to the school's priorities for development. All specific grants to the school have been efficiently and correctly used. For example the standards fund has been allocated to the buying of advice and in service training and providing time for teachers to visit other schools to observe good practice. It has also supported a joint governor and staff training day to develop personal, social and health education, which is a current priority of the school.
65. The management and monitoring of the school finances are good. Financial administration is efficient and helps bring about the smooth running of the school. Effective use is made of information technology to control finances and monitor pupils' progress. Information is readily available and procedures are secure. A recent audit identified a number of areas for improvement but found no areas of serious weakness. The issues raised are being adequately addressed but it is recognised that some changes will take time to fully implement.
66. Governors have correctly allocated money to special educational needs to allow the coordinator time to manage this important area effectively. This represents an efficient use of funds, which is having a positive effect on the provision for these pupils. The

employment of the music specialist has been less successful in ensuring high standards in music, principally due to the inefficient way in which the timetable for teaching the subject is arranged. The governing body gives careful consideration to obtaining best value from its spending and has made the decision to remain with the local authority provision. Overall, the strategic use of resources and grants and other funding is satisfactory. It enables standards to be maintained at an above average level and for pupils to achieve appropriately. The cost of educating pupils at Bessacarr Primary is similar to the national average and represents satisfactory value for money.

67. The school is sufficiently staffed by fully qualified teachers but a comparatively recent influx of pupils as a result of housing development has resulted in some large classes in Years 3 and 4. The number of support staff is generally appropriate, although there is little extra classroom assistance for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Governors have plans to use part of the existing budget surplus to create an additional class in the next academic year to reduce this problem. The school has clear plans for the induction of new staff. Appropriate procedures for appraisal are in place and ,overall, the information is used effectively to guide staff development.
68. Accommodation is adequate and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively, although with the increasing numbers of pupils some classrooms are becoming a little cramped. Pupils enjoy a safe, clean and relaxed environment although this would benefit from a more considered approach to display to include examples of pupils' work which are more colourful and interactive.
69. The school has resourced the literacy and numeracy lessons well and other subjects are satisfactorily resourced. The one exception to this is the resources for the teaching of English as an additional language, which are inadequate. The funds raised by parents for new computers have been supplemented well by the governors and provide sufficient equipment to enable the curriculum to be taught. The key issues from the last inspection concerning the range and use of fiction and non-fiction books and the reading scheme have been satisfactorily addressed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. The headteacher, staff and governors should now address the following key issues:

Improve the quality of teaching by:

- providing professional development for those teachers whose classroom practice is unsatisfactory or poor; (paras.90,91,100,102,111,112,116,129,133,135,142)
- setting clear targets for improvement and reviewing them regularly; (paras 59,62,63)
- allowing time for those who have good teaching techniques to exemplify them for those who have weaknesses. (paras. 101,104,110,111,124)

Raise standards in information technology in Key Stage 2 by:

- implementing the national scheme of work and providing pupils with regular well planned lessons; (paras. 130,135,137)
- providing support and training for staff in the use of the school's new resources; (para 134)
- constructing a clear action plan for the subject's development and rigorously; monitor its implementation. (para 134)

Increase the effectiveness of the senior management team by:

- ensuring that the team is made up of members of staff with the most relevant expertise; (para 58)
- providing each member of the team with clear and specific roles and agreeing the targets that are to be met within them. (para 58)

Improve the management of the curriculum by:

- ensuring that all subject managers are clear about their roles, have the required subject knowledge and the time needed to fulfil their responsibilities; (para 60)
- providing training for staff in monitoring, evaluating and action planning. (paras 52, 112, 125, 146)

Raise achievement, particularly in physical education, by revising the curriculum timetable to make better use of the time available and eliminate the very short and inefficient lessons. (paras 144, 145)

Make more effective use of the information gained from monitoring to add detail to the school development plan and to sharpen the criteria against which success can be judged. (para 63)

In addition to the key issues above the governors should consider the following less significant weaknesses for inclusion in their action plan and:

- improve the achievements of higher attaining Key Stage 1 pupils in science by providing a curriculum more suited to their needs, (para 107)
- strengthen links with parents by improving the quality of written reports and increasing the information they receive about what is taught, (para 55)
- examine ways in which the extra-curricular provision made for pupils can be improved, particularly in sport, (para 145)
- make better use of the multi-cultural heritage of the school to develop pupils' appreciation of other cultures, (para 44)
- write and implement a policy for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. (para 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	71

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	17	29	44	7	1	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	254
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	48

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	17	19	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	14
	Girls	18	17	17
	Total	34	33	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	92 (89)	86 (92)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	13	14
	Girls	16	15	18
	Total	32	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (94)	78 (89)	89 (97)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	14	11	12
	Total	27	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (97)	71 (94)	83 (97)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	14	13
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	20	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (85)	69 (88)	69 (91)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	11
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	9
White	187
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.85
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	80

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
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	£
Total income	466535
Total expenditure	464086
Expenditure per pupil	1542
Balance brought forward from previous year	26966
Balance carried forward to next year	29415

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	284
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	30	10	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	35	8	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	4	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	41	18	6	13
The teaching is good.	45	37	8	4	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	45	25	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	39	7	8	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	46	8	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	25	32	28	14	0
The school is well led and managed.	25	45	14	6	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	46	8	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	20	30	32	13

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. The under-fives attain standards that are good for their age. By the age of five the attainment of the majority meets or exceeds the targets set for children about to start the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the standards of the under-fives were judged 'mainly satisfactory'.
72. In the nursery and reception class children are given good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and great emphasis is placed on developing their reading, writing and number skills. Children have positive attitudes to their learning and are eager to take part in the activities provided. They show high levels of independence and they cooperate well together. As under-fives, children make good progress in all the different areas of learning.
73. Children's personal and social development is good. They soon understand classroom routines and show confidence when working. They care for each other well and know what is required of their behaviour. All children enjoy taking part in activities and are keen to show each other their work and what they have achieved. Nursery children quickly learn the established procedures and are able to make decisions about the activities they want to be involved in. They are happy to share toys and books and they follow instructions well. Teachers ensure that pupils learn to work together and use a variety of successful strategies to develop their personal and social skills.
74. By the time they are five many children are attaining standards in language and literacy that are above those expected of their age. They have a wide vocabulary and can explain clearly what they are doing. Higher attaining children are able to write sentences using capital letters and full stops and their letters are well formed. They listen to stories attentively and enjoy reading books. Children can talk about the stories they have read and explain what they liked about them. The majority of children can use pictures to identify words they do not know. Some children choose non-fiction books to read and some higher attaining children know where to find the contents page. The activities provided in both nursery and reception enhance children's language and literacy skills well. For example, children in the nursery take on the roles of Goldilocks and the three bears in the home corner and effectively play act the story. In both the nursery and reception children are given a good range of writing activities from which to choose. However, in both classes, although language is displayed clearly, it is not extensively used around walls or at the children's own eye level.
75. Children have good knowledge of number and in mathematics they attain standards above those expected for their age. Most know the numbers to ten and can match number words and pictures as well as adding to and subtracting from sets of objects. Most can use one penny coins to count up to ten pence. Children have a good mathematical vocabulary. For example, they know that 'nothing' is the same as 'zero' and 'makes' equates with 'equals'. They are able to contribute to the making a class graph of hair colour and the majority know the names of simple geometric shapes. The range of mathematical activities in the nursery and reception class is good. Children are provided with a variety of toys in nursery to sort and match and mathematical language is developed well in sand and water play.
76. Children develop good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They can talk about and describe the properties of sand, water and other common materials they encounter regularly. Children know how they have changed since they were babies and that they will eventually grow into adults. They know that they need to care for their

teeth and can identify some healthy foods. Their computer skills are good and they use a mouse well to move the cursor around the screen to draw pictures. Children respond to screen prompts well and are able to operate programs effectively. Their use of small world toys such as the farm and roadway provides a good introduction to the world around them. Children enjoy making models but they are restricted in the reception class by the limited choice of materials provided which does not develop their learning to its fullest extent. Teachers plan activities well and give children good opportunities to widen their knowledge.

77. The standards that children attain in creative development are above those expected for their age. They can mix their own colours and can paint and draw carefully. Attractive drawings of tigers displayed in the reception classroom show pupils' capabilities clearly. They know a good number of simple songs and enjoy using instruments to compose their own tunes. Good resources are provided and techniques are taught well in the nursery, such as wiping the paintbrush before painting. However, art techniques are not always taught as effectively in the reception class.
78. Children's physical development is good and they attain standards above those expected for their age. Reception children regularly use the hall for dance and other physical activities. They show good control and use the space around them well. The majority show good awareness of their own physical capabilities and are able to stretch, bend and run effectively. When they are provided with hoops they throw, catch and roll them with control. They handle pencils, paint brushes and scissors carefully. Children develop good physical skills in the nursery where they use a range of small-wheeled trucks, which they ride with increasing competence. Teachers provide a good mixture of opportunities for physical development so that children acquire a good range of physical skills.
79. The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery and sound overall with the occasional very good lesson in the reception class. Teachers' knowledge of the needs of the age group is good, which enables them to select a range of appropriate activities which children find both enjoyable and challenging. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. Teachers are well supported by the nursery nurse and classroom assistant who make a very positive contribution to children's learning. Detailed, regular assessments are made of each child and frequent observations to monitor children's progress are made in both classes. The information gained is used well to plan further appropriate activities, which build effectively on what has gone before.

ENGLISH

80. The standards attained by both seven and eleven-year-olds are appropriately above the national average. Pupils enter and leave the school with above average skills in reading and writing, which represents a sound rate of progress.
81. In the 1999 National Curriculum reading tests for seven-year-olds the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 2 was well above the national average, although the proportion attaining a "strong" level 2 or the higher level 3 was only average. Overall pupils' performance in the reading test was above the national average. In the writing test pupils' attainment was much more uniform, and at all levels results were above the national average. Comparing the results with similar schools attainment is average. Throughout the period since 1996 girls have consistently performed better in the national reading and writing tests than boys, and to a greater extent than is

normally found. However, no evidence was found during the inspection that this is still the case and boys and girls are now achieving similar standards.

82. The attainment of seven-year-olds in speaking and listening is well above average. Pupils talk confidently, expressing themselves clearly when voicing their ideas or communicating what they have learnt. They listen carefully to explanations, discussion and stories, and demonstrate good levels of understanding in the answers they give to questions. A group of Year 1 pupils eagerly talked about their clay work. "We put a pattern on it when it was soft and wet. We left it a few weeks, and then we painted it. We are varnishing it today to make it shiny. We enjoyed it." Pupils in Year 2 recalled the details of the Bible story of Joseph well, and enjoyed discussing his good qualities and what Christians are like.
83. By the age of seven pupils' reading is above average, and most pupils are beginning to read with confidence. They have a good knowledge of words and can use several different strategies to decipher those that are unfamiliar. The reading of most pupils is accurate and fluent. Pupils often have favourite stories and can name popular authors. They can explain what is happening in a story clearly. Most pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and how to use the contents page and index to locate information in a non-fiction text. High attainers read challenging books for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language read simpler texts with some assurance, and can attempt new words by sounding them out.
84. Seven year olds achieve standards in writing that are above average for their age. High and average attainers write well-structured accounts, stories and descriptions, that contain varied vocabulary, interesting detail and good sentence structure. Handwriting is clear and confident, and levels of spelling and punctuation are good. Lower attainers communicate satisfactorily in writing but in simpler and shorter texts. Punctuation of sentences is inconsistent and accuracy of spelling is variable. Year 2 pupils know how to write instructions and with their teacher's guidance are able to create a class set of instructions for planting a sunflower seed. They write their own versions of fairy stories independently, using ideas and language with imagination.
85. In the 1999 National Curriculum English tests for Key Stage 2 an average proportion of eleven-year-olds attained the expected level 4 in English. An above average proportion of pupils went on to attain the higher level 5. Overall, the school's performance was above the national average but below that of similar schools. The results in 1999 were much lower than those of 1998. However, the 1998 results reflected a higher achieving cohort of pupils and put the school in the top five per cent nationally. In the 1999 cohort far more pupils had special educational needs or spoke English as an additional language. Furthermore, almost a quarter of these pupils had transferred to the school part way through their primary education. The school took due account of these factors when setting its performance targets. The target for English proved accurate and was exceeded by a small margin.
86. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well above average. Pupils talk confidently and listen carefully and with understanding in a range of situations. They can explain at length in formal language and engage in lively discussion. Pupils generally listen with concentration and are able to follow complicated ideas and explanations. Year 5 pupils, for example, follow a discussion and interpretation of a poem very well, and are able to make detailed references to use of language. Later they develop their response to the poem in imaginative pieces of writing. Year 6 pupils effectively discuss positive and negative feelings they experience in different types of situation, considering, for instance, their expectations and apprehensions about transferring to secondary school.
87. Eleven years olds attain standards in reading that are above average. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils are fluent, competent and independent readers. They read aloud with good expression so as to communicate the meaning well. Most pupils

have well developed research skills, being able to use the contents page and index confidently, and select key ideas and information readily from what they read. These research skills are particularly well deployed in history and geography. Pupils talk readily about their reading preferences and the authors they like to choose. Special educational needs pupils and those who speak English as a second language make sound progress in their reading.

88. Pupils' attainment in writing is above average. By Year 6 pupils are writing imaginatively and at length. They have a good understanding of stylistic features in different kinds of writing and can write appropriately for a range of purposes. The majority of pupils recognise the need to choose language appropriate to their reader, and can use a range of formal and informal styles. They structure their writing well and increase the interest of the reader by using varied vocabulary and sentence structure. Most of their stories and poems are imaginative and detailed. Year 6 pupils write effective arguments trying to persuade their parents to let them have a pet, using the conditional voice, which the teacher had explained to them. Some pupils who speak English as an additional language communicate their ideas clearly in writing, but have difficulties with some aspects of grammar.
89. There have been satisfactory changes since the last inspection. Resources have been significantly enhanced, and a clear and up-to-date policy and scheme of work has been developed. Assessment and recording systems have been improved to monitor and track pupils' progress. A portfolio of samples of pupils' work has been developed to allow for the evaluation and moderation of pupils' written work. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented in the school, and now in its second year is operating successfully in both key stages. All these developments have raised teacher and pupil expectations and enhanced the quality of the English curriculum.
90. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. In Key Stage 2, teaching is sound overall, and often good but there is considerable variation from very good to unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1 the good teaching is characterised by focused planning matched well to the levels of attainment of the pupils, stimulating questioning and tasks, and good use of praise and encouragement. Pupils learn well and make good progress because they are interested and understand clearly what they have to do. They concentrate well both in class discussion and in carrying out individual tasks. In a Year 2 lesson the pupils were particularly helped to understand how to write instructions through the teacher's good use of resources including a large print book that they could read as a class. The pupils were fully involved in the reading, discussion and writing.
91. In the most effective lessons in Key Stage 2 the teacher explains the purpose of the lesson to the pupils, leads a stimulating and probing discussion and sets individual tasks which stimulate pupils' intellectual abilities and creativity. In these lessons the quality of learning is good and sometimes very good. Pupils learn, for instance, how to analyse the language of persuasive texts and how to use key markers, such as "in addition", "furthermore", "if..." and "on the other hand". Others select words and phrases from a poem they are studying to support their ideas about interpreting the meaning, and write in imaginative ways to express their response to the thoughts, ideas and language of the poem. The unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by the teacher reading to the class for too long with insufficient involvement of pupils, poor organisation of group and individual activities, and inappropriate match of content to the pupils' levels of attainment. The teaching in these lessons lacks pace and rigour. This leads to unsatisfactory learning by the pupils and poor progress. Pupils lose interest, fail to follow or understand what is expected of them and simply carry out the tasks mechanically.
92. Teachers generally make effective use of the opportunities that arise in other subjects to extend pupils' skills in reading and writing. In history, for example, they provide pupils

with good opportunities to write accounts, play scripts and imaginative stories and to research information from books. In religious education pupils re-tell stories from the Bible and write evaluations in design and technology. These opportunities provide pupils with experience of using this specific language. Information technology is used effectively in conjunction with literacy in Key Stage 1 but it is a significantly under used resource in Key Stage 2. Teachers place due emphasis on pupils using the correct technical language in all subjects, which does much to extend pupils' vocabulary.

93. The leadership and management of the subject are good with a strong commitment to high standards. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been well managed and its implementation satisfactorily monitored and evaluated. The school is beginning to monitor pupils' progress effectively and to make more informed judgements of how to move them forward. This is evident in the constructive use of the Additional Literacy Support scheme and the Better Reading partnership with parents which are providing effective additional help for those who do not find English an easy subject.

MATHEMATICS

94. When pupils leave the school at the age of 11 the standard of their mathematics is above the national average.
95. In the 1999 National Curriculum mathematics tests for seven-year-olds, the proportion of pupils attaining the different levels in mathematics was below the national average and results were well below those of similar schools. Teachers' own assessments confirmed that these results gave a true picture of standards. Last year's cohort had a larger than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs but results in mathematics in recent years have consistently been lower than those in English. After a good set of results in 1996 mathematics results fell and have remained at an unsatisfactory level both against the national average and in comparison with the performance of schools similar to Bessacarr. Throughout the period since the school was last inspected the girls have performed significantly better than the boys.
96. The standards seen during the week of inspection show considerable improvement on the results attained in the national tests. Seven-year-olds are now attaining standards that are appropriately above the national average. This is due to constructive changes to the structure of the mathematics curriculum, including the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and improvements in the quality of teaching. The majority of pupils acquire a good range of skills and are able to make simple mental calculations. They use a range of effective strategies, such as doubling and halving when calculating, and it is on standards in mental mathematics that the National Numeracy Strategy is having its most positive effect. The majority of pupils count accurately both forwards and backwards in 5s and 10s. They understand the place value of digits and can choose appropriate methods when solving simple problems involving addition and subtraction. Most pupils are able to carry out simple investigations and have started to identify number patterns, such as those made by odd and even numbers. They have developed sound understanding of simple fractions such as a half and a quarter. Most pupils recognise and know the names of different two and three-dimensional shapes with the higher attaining pupils showing good awareness of their different properties. Pupils' mathematical vocabulary develops well and they confidently use comparative terms such as more than and less than or shorter and longer. Their appreciation and use of alternative mathematical terms such as "makes" in place of "total" are also good. Many pupils are able to use non-standard measures with the expected accuracy but are less confident with standard measurements. The achievements of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are appropriate in relation to their level of attainment and pupils in these two specific groups make the same sound progress as their peers. The changes and improvements the

school has made have reduced the gender gap in attainment and the difference in performance of girls and boys is no longer apparent.

97. In the 1999 National Curriculum mathematics tests for eleven-year-olds, an average proportion of pupils attained the expected level 4 and an above average proportion went on to attain the higher level 5. Although, overall, the school's performance was above the national average it was below that of similar schools. However this comparison takes little account of factors such as the proportions of pupils with special educational needs or who spoke English as an additional language, which were higher than normal in the 1999 cohort of pupils. The school was aware of these factors and set its targets for pupils' attainment accordingly. The target was met. Only two sets of results are available for analysis and therefore reliable deductions about trends in performance cannot be made. However in those two years the performance of boys and girls has been similar, and evidence indicates that it remains so.
98. The outcome of inspection shows some improvement in standards with an above average proportion of pupils now attaining both the expected level and the higher level. Mathematics lessons place appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' mental capabilities. This has led to good development in pupils' ability to use of a range of strategies, recall number facts and calculate at speed. The majority can carry out simple investigations. For example an investigation of circles led pupils to the discovery that the circumference is approximately six times the radius. Pupils' understanding of place values and the significance of the decimal point allow them to divide decimals accurately and, in the case of the higher attaining pupils, make long multiplication calculations. The principle of rounding decimals is an essential skill when using a calculator and pupils do this confidently when converting currency. The relationship between decimals, fractions and percentages is learnt in Year 5 and becomes a useful concept in future work. Most pupils measure with a good degree of accuracy and most have secure concepts of weight and length and capacity, but their understanding in this area of mathematics is less strong than in others. Most pupils know and can use formulae when finding area and volume of two and three-dimensional shapes such as triangles and cuboids. Pupils' acquisition of mathematical language is good and they use correct terms consistently when describing, for example, different geometric shapes. Pupils understand the difference between mode and median and they are able to collect, organise and record data in a variety of ways. Pupils of all abilities and groupings have good knowledge and have gained an appropriate range of mathematical concepts within which they are able to work and show appropriate and satisfactory achievement.
99. Overall, standards of attainment have improved since the last time the school was inspected. At that time it was found that standards in mathematics were "average and above" in both key stages. Standards are now above the national average at the end of both key stages. The previous report also found that "pupils are working broadly in line with their abilities". This continues to be the case with standards that pupils achieve being those expected from pupils who enter the school with above average attainment.
100. The quality of teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall but ranges from excellent to poor.
101. In classes in Key Stage 1, the teaching is consistently good. Teachers continually encourage pupils to use different strategies and to explain how they arrive at the answers they give. Lesson planning is clear and centres on the teaching of basic skills, particularly those needed to make mental calculations. Lesson objectives are well focused and show the teachers' own good subject knowledge and understanding. The enthusiasm teachers show in Key Stage 1 transmits itself to the pupils who increase in confidence, take a pride in working accurately and develop positive attitudes to the subject. Teachers are aware of the capabilities of different groups of pupils and make

sure that the work they are given is appropriate, whilst providing a sufficient level of challenge. This ensures that pupils work hard and their learning is taken forward. Pupils enjoy mathematics, especially the very well organised mental activity at the start of the lessons when the methods employed by teachers ensure that each pupil is able to participate. Throughout the key stage strong emphasis is placed upon the correct use of vocabulary. Teachers are using the structure and guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy well and this is helping them present their pupils with an appropriate and progressive curriculum through which pupils learn new skills and spend a minimum of time practising skills they have already acquired.

102. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall but much more variable than in Key Stage 1. The lessons at the end of the key stage, where one lesson seen was excellent, do much to raise standards at a crucial period of the pupils' education. They also compensate to some extent for those lessons earlier in the key stage that are unsatisfactory or poor. In lessons that fail to meet a satisfactory standard the pace of learning is too slow and content fails to engage and sustain the pupils' interest. Most teachers plan appropriately from the Numeracy Strategy and give the pupils well organised and stimulating activities. Unsatisfactory and poor lessons do not use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. Good lessons are typified by teachers giving clear explanations at the beginning of what is expected, from which pupils are able to grasp what they need to do to succeed. Good teachers set challenging tasks within the capabilities of the pupils. Lessons are less successful when the challenge for higher attainers relates to working with larger numbers rather than with harder mathematical concepts. Work is generally suitably matched to pupils' levels of attainment, including pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. This ensures that there is progress in pupils' learning and they are not struggling with work beyond their capabilities. The ability of all the teachers to manage their class is generally very good and the pupils behave well. In many lessons teachers contrast teacher-led whole class periods with individual or group tasks. This provides variety within the daily mathematics lessons, which helps pupils to sustain their interest and concentration, which in turn has a positive effect on the quality and extent of their learning.
103. The mathematics curriculum places a good emphasis on numeracy, and numeracy skills are reinforced in other subjects, such as concepts of shape and symmetry in art, measurement in design technology and time and dates in history. However this cross-subject aspect of the mathematics curriculum is not as well developed as it could be. Information technology is used in Key Stage 1 to reinforce number recognition and computation but there is insufficient use in Key Stage 2. Throughout most of the school there is a positive ethos for mathematics and a very clear commitment to improvement.
104. The results of national testing have been analysed and realistic targets set. An informative audit for mathematics has been carried out by which the school has identified the strength and weaknesses for both key stages and areas for development. The school is clear about the reasons for the unsatisfactory standards in the Key Stage 1 national tests in 1999 and has taken appropriate action. The subject manager has had insufficient opportunities to identify areas in which the teaching of mathematics can be further improved, although this will form part of the monitoring of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy in the future. The assessments that are carried out are satisfactory but the quality of marking is variable and does not always identify with sufficient clarity where pupils are achieving or what they need to do to improve. The use of homework is good and what is set is appropriately challenging.

SCIENCE

105. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. The achievement of most Key Stage 1 pupils is satisfactory but that of the

higher attainers is too low. In Key Stage 2 the achievement of all pupils, including the higher attainers is satisfactory.

106. There are no science tests for seven-year-olds but teachers' own assessments in 1999 indicated that while an average proportion of pupils reached the standard expected, few pupils attained the higher level 3.
107. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. They can identify, for example, different parts of the body. Higher attainers can locate the position of the heart correctly and know that it beats faster after exercise. The majority can explain why animals are suited to their habitat, such as woodlice living under stones because they prefer dark and damp conditions. Most can explain why metal and plastic are used to make a table and can say what happens to materials, such as bread when it is heated. They have good understanding of the effects of pushes and pulls and high attainers know that gravity is a pulling force. A good proportion of pupils are capable of attaining the higher level 3 in their knowledge and understanding if they are set challenging and suitable tasks. However, although pupils make good observations and comparisons, their skills of investigation are not well established. Most pupils cannot determine whether a test is fair or not because they have not been taught how to do this.
108. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds an average proportion of pupils attained both the expected standard and higher level 5. Overall the school's performance was close to the national average but below that of similar schools. These results were below those attained in 1998. However, the 1999 cohort contained an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs or who spoke English as an additional language and a quarter of pupils had joined the school part way through their primary education. The current Year 6 cohort is more typical of the school and standards are higher and overall above average. The standards that boys and girls attain are very similar.
109. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have good knowledge of the function of different organs of the body and although their knowledge of the reproduction of flowering plants is limited they have not covered this area yet this year, but will be doing so later in the term. Their knowledge of micro-organisms is good following recent work on this subject. They have a good understanding of how to separate different materials by filtering, sieving or evaporation and can fully explain the water cycle. Their understanding of forces is good and the higher attainers can identify the difference between forces that are balanced and those that are not. The majority know that light travels in straight lines and relate this to their understanding of the solar system. Their skills of investigation are good. They know how to plan a fair test and carry it out and they recognise the need for accuracy when measuring. Pupils can explain how tables and graphs are useful for providing information although sometimes their explanations of events are not as clear as they could be.
110. The teaching of science is sound overall in both key stages, with some very effective teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is satisfactory overall. However, on occasions, pupils' learning is not fully extended because the content of the work provided is not appropriate and there is insufficient challenge for the higher attainers. The teaching in the lower key stage class is interesting and pupils are given good opportunities to observe events, such as the growth of broad beans. Teachers make good use of the opportunities that arise to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy. Pupils are required to write good quality written accounts of observations they have made and make effective use of data handling procedures such as Venn diagrams.

111. In Key Stage 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make sound progress overall, although this is better in some classes than in others. Teachers provide pupils with a suitable range of activities but sometimes they talk for too long before allowing the pupils to become actively involved. This results in a lack of impetus and a low level of pupil interest. Where learning is good, teachers provide a short but sharply focused introduction to the lesson recapping on previous work and quickly move on to the activity. In these lessons pupils show high levels of interest and are eager to learn. The teaching of investigation skills is uneven. In some classes pupils are taught effective procedures and given plenty of opportunities to practice them, but in others, key aspects such as the collection and handling of scientific data are not included often enough. The subject manager ensures that the oldest pupils in the key stage cover the full range of science knowledge and skills. In this class pupils use an established format for writing investigation reports and this helps them to focus on all aspects of the procedure. Although the computers are used effectively to support science in Key Stage 1 there is too little use of information technology in Key Stage 2. The subject manager has recently introduced a nationally produced scheme of work into the school and teachers are using this well to plan their lessons. Suitable assessment procedures have been linked to the scheme so that teachers can judge pupils' attainment at the end of each unit of work. However, teachers' use of frequent assessments to inform their lesson planning is not as effective.
112. The subject manager has made a good start in introducing the scheme of work but as yet does not have a full overview of science across the school. Although some moderation of science work has been carried out with staff, monitoring procedures do not provide the quality of information needed to plan the subject's development in detail. The key issue from the previous report of developing teaching styles to encourage lively, enquiring minds has only been partially addressed and in some classrooms the involvement of pupils in investigative work is still too low.

ART

113. The previous inspection reported that "standards in relation to age are variable but mostly average or good". An improvement has been made and standards are now consistently good in both key stages.
114. By the age of seven pupils are working with confidence and care with a number of different media and materials. Key Stage 1 pupils are able to mix colours effectively and represent people and objects in paint, crayon and pastel. An understanding of primary colours enables pupils to produce work of a good quality of which they are justifiably proud. In Year 1, pupils experience working in three dimensions and produce attractive thumb pots which they carefully paint. They talk with enthusiasm and clarity about how they made these pots, referring to the changes that took place in the clay and through this extending their scientific understanding of materials. Pupils in Year 2 are able to understand the technique of an artist such as Van Gogh but find his technique difficult to reproduce in the medium in which they work.
115. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have developed an appropriate range of skills and produce work of a good standard. A good example can be found in the high quality work produced by Year 6 pupils in support of their study of Ancient Greece in history. They achieve good symmetry in their drawings of a Greek vase and produce very attractive depictions of an Athenian coin. At the lower end of the key stage, pupils are bold and adventurous in their use of paint and colour. They produce high quality observational drawings of animals in Year 4 and these show very good development of skills and techniques. The sketch books that pupils use in both Years 5 and Year 6 show that pupils experiment creatively, for example, when rehearsing the most effective way in

which to draw a mouth. The Year 5 exercise of drawing the human skeleton shows good attention to detail, particularly when pupils pick out and enlarge the ball and socket joint of the hip.

116. Teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of good and unsatisfactory teaching, the latter as a result of an art lesson taking place alongside design and technology, the latter received all the teachers' attention to the disadvantage of the art. This is not the usual practice in the school. Teachers develop pupils' skills appropriately and provide them with a wide range of experiences including painting, drawing, printing, collage and three-dimensional work. Although the range of experiences is sufficiently broad in terms of the materials and techniques they are taught to use, art from different world cultures does not figure strongly enough in the curriculum. The success of teaching is reflected in pupils' levels of interest and in the good quality of pupils' work of which most are justifiably proud. Although teachers value pupils' efforts, this is not reflected in the amount of wall displays around the school, which is generally too low. The work of famous artists is used effectively to raise pupils' awareness of different techniques. However, on occasions, pupils are not given the materials they need to practise these techniques and teachers use inappropriate resources. For example, in one lesson pupils were given felt tips to reproduce the brush stroke style of Van Gogh. Overall, a success in teaching is apparent in the sound progress pupils make, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. The standards in both key stages are satisfactory and pupils acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding expected of primary pupils. Since it was last inspected standards have been maintained and there have been satisfactory improvements to the curriculum provided for Key Stage 2 pupils. There is now a wider coverage of the different aspects of design and technology, although older pupils understanding of mechanisms is still under-developed.
118. Key Stage 1 pupils are able to draw what they want to make but are not yet sure what the function of the design is. Year 1 pupils are able to construct card puppets with moving limbs operated by paper fasteners. Pupils make good gains in Year 2 where they learn a range of techniques for joining materials and are able to use these effectively to construct finger, glove and plate-mouth puppets. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils use their knowledge of food products to design a range of different sandwiches and produce clear designs before constructing attractive pencil cases. Older Key Stage 2 pupils have sufficient knowledge to make some of their own decisions on the procedures to employ and the materials to use. They have started to solve simple problems constructively, such as how to produce an effective shelter.
119. The teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. From an early age pupils are taught to use the correct vocabulary when referring to materials and to look carefully at the structures and methods of construction in the things around. Teachers pass on their own skills well by demonstrating sound techniques and giving clear guidance. For example, pupils are taught to sew securely and use patterns correctly. These skills are being put to good effect in Key Stage 2 where, with the help of a parent, pupils are constructing a fabric mural celebrating the local heritage, which when finished will adorn the school piano. This is well constructed and very attractive. Teachers pay due attention to the teaching of safe techniques, such as the importance of hygiene when working with food and pupils pay due attention to the 'rules' that apply. Teachers build all the required elements of designing, planning, making and evaluating into their lessons, although in some designing lessons, opportunities to develop numeracy through the adding of dimensions and the use of measures are missed. Literacy skills are generally taught well through design and technology, with pupils required to write detailed reports of how they constructed and how they could make improvements.

120. The school has recently adopted the national scheme of work and is in the process of implementing it. This is a sound development but the subject manager does not have a clear action plan for the scheme's implementation and consequently is not sure of the resource or staff training implications. The procedures currently used to monitor the quality of provision in design and technology are inadequate and do not provide the subject manager with sufficient information.

GEOGRAPHY

121. Standards of attainment in geography are satisfactory and pupils have the skills and knowledge typical of the primary age group. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
122. The previous inspection report identified that pupils in Key Stage 2 were working below their capabilities in physical geography. Planning by teachers did not link clearly to the programmes of study, which led to a lack of breadth in the subject. A review by teachers of the content of the curriculum and the recent adoption by the school of the national scheme of work for geography have helped to address these issues satisfactorily.
123. Year 2 pupils make effective use of their understanding of their own local area to make well informed comparisons between their own lives and those of people who live in a distant locality. In doing so they develop a useful vocabulary of geographical terms, and become familiar with the idea of plans and symbols as represented in atlases and on maps. At Key Stage 2 pupils extend their knowledge of the local area and of other localities and begin to recognise how geographical features are formed. They appreciate that some changes to the environment are an improvement, but that others can damage the environment. Through this they develop an understanding of the need for conservation. By Year 6 pupils are competent in their use of atlases and can locate and name various mountain ranges and other physical features across the world.
124. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory overall and good at the end of each key stage. In more effective lessons teachers' clear planning identifies specific objectives for the pupils to achieve and the work is conducted at an appropriately brisk pace. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, the teacher used her own strong subject knowledge well to ask sharp questions and give clear explanations. As a consequence pupils listened intently, remained well focused and made good progress. They were able to locate mountain environments across the world and to use a range of geographical skills to represent these on a world map using accepted conventions of shading and the construction of a key. Regular and timely interventions by the teacher ensured that pupils understood what they were doing and completed the expected work in the time available.
125. Effective procedures for monitoring and assessing the work across the school are not yet in place. There is currently no planned use of information technology to support the teaching of geography, although this is a feature of the recently adopted national scheme of work. The subject is adequately resourced but there is a need for a wider range of map provision to support the planned work. Use of the school's own grounds and visits to places locally and further afield adds to the quality of experiences offered to the pupils.

HISTORY

126. The standards attained by pupils in both key stages are above those expected of the primary age group and the rate at which pupils learn is sound. This very positive picture is similar to the one the school presented during its last inspection.
127. By the age of seven the attainment of the pupils is good. Most are able to recognise primary sources of historical knowledge, as in the use of the diary of Pepys to find evidence of the Great Fire of London. They extract and record the number of people killed in the fire and their interest is stimulated by such snippets as Pepys burying his cheese and wine in the garden to save them from the fire. They begin to understand there are different ways to find out about the past and use their literacy skills effectively when using books to find out more about the event they are studying. Higher achieving pupils are able to extract detailed information from text to enable them to make such statements as "Many Londoners blamed foreigners for starting the fire". They become familiar with certain key figures in the period they are studying, for example in their focus on the Victorians, they can recall in detail the work of Florence Nightingale. Pupils are able to place the key events in her life in sequence on a time line. The work of high attaining pupils is of a very good standard as they write at length about her life.
128. By the time they reach the age of 11, pupils have studied a range of periods in history. They have gained good historical knowledge and understanding as well as effective research and deductive skills. The current focus for Year 6 pupils is Ancient Greece. The detail in pupils' writing on the origin of the Olympic games show that pupils have a clear understanding of why these games were so important to the culture of Ancient Greece and to its people. Pupils recognise the legacy of the period, such as the contribution of the Greek language words to modern day English, for example in the words theatre and atom. Pupils make good use of their developing literacy skills and produce good quality imaginative writing, such as a playscript based on the mythological story of Theseus and the Minotaur.
129. Teaching is often good and occasionally very good. Teachers show good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are clear about what they want their pupils to learn. Lessons are well designed and carefully planned to stimulate pupils' interest and provide them with engaging activities. Teachers draw successfully upon such colourful characters as Henry VIII to teach their pupils how to evaluate the positive and negative traits of famous historical characters. They encourage awareness of their own locality and compare maps from the early Victorian era with Bessacarr today. The enthusiasm that the teachers show and their skill at asking questions has a positive effect on the pupils' desire to learn and the quality of the work which they produce. Visits that are arranged for the pupils, to such places as Eden Camp, develop new knowledge and effectively advance pupils' learning. Pupils respond well to the opportunities the teachers provide and they concentrate hard during lessons. Their behaviour is consistently very good and they work with interest and enthusiasm.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

130. The standards attained by eleven-year-olds are too low and their achievement is poor. The requirements of the National Curriculum are not met in Key Stage 2 and pupils receive too few lessons in the subject. Many pupils have access to computers at home but these advantages are lost through the inadequate provision the school makes. Pupils could attain far more than they do.
131. This is not the case in Key Stage 1. The majority of pupils in this key stage have good basic skills and are achieving well. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are provided with regular, well structured opportunities to use the computer and become familiar with a range of information technology. Consequently, they make good progress and the standards exhibited by seven-year-olds are above average. Many can load programs from within the computer and from CD-ROM and close them down when they have finished. They

use the keyboard and mouse with control and understanding and can operate a range of programs effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils working with a Bible Stories program were able to select the part they wanted to use from the menu and follow the on screen prompts and icons to successfully complete the tasks the computer set them. Pupils are confident in front of the computer and have a good understanding of how to use it in conjunction with other aspects of their learning. For example many are able to word process a short piece of written work and, with a little help, print it off. The good provision made in Key Stage 1 has a positive effect on the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language and pupils in both these groups make good progress.

132. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils do not have the understanding of information technology or the skills in its use typical of the age group and standards by 11 are below average. A good number of pupils learn basic word processing and information retrieval at home. This learning excludes those pupils who do not have regular access to a computer outside of school and the standards of these lower attainers are significantly below those of other pupils. The majority of pupils are able to use the school's computers to research aspects of history, but they have a poor understanding of how to record, analyse and present data on the computer or how information technology can be used to monitor events and control mechanical and electrical devices. A good proportion of pupils have developed basic modelling skills through playing adventure games at home but do not understand how this relates to their school work and to the solving of problems on the computer. Pupils with access to scanners have begun to combine text and graphics but the majority of pupils have little understanding of the ways in which this can be achieved. The good start pupils make in Key Stage 1 is not adequately built upon and pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is poor. This applies equally to pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
133. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is good but in Key Stage 2 it is poor. Key Stage 1 teachers provide their pupils with regular information technology lessons based upon the national scheme of work. This builds pupils' skills and knowledge in a systematic and effective way and provides them with a breadth of appropriate experiences. For example, the teacher of a Year 1 class successfully built pupils' understanding of communications technology by discussing constructively the information that can be gained from signs, labels and maps. Pupils quickly recognised the many different ways in which communication links are made and set about the task of finding more about the classroom with interest and enthusiasm. Key Stage 1 teachers make effective use of the links between information technology and other subjects and pupils' learning in both literacy and numeracy is extended well. They regularly use computer programs that require pupils to read, write and use numbers. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is well organised and strikes a good balance between class activities and small groups regularly working on the computer, both inside and outside the classroom. Routines are well established and pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Pupils respond well to the trust placed in them when working under their own supervision and behave very responsibly.
134. In contrast, the national scheme of work the school has adopted is not being taught effectively in Key Stage 2, primarily because teachers are not planning or delivering regular lessons in information technology. A small amount of teaching takes place, mostly in information retrieval, but this does little to extend pupils' knowledge or skills. Insufficient use is made of information technology in other subjects, and in literacy and numeracy in particular the opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge and skills are seriously under utilised. The good level of interest Key Stage 2 pupils show and their positive attitudes to learning are wasted resources in this subject. The school has recently acquired a number of new personal computers (PCs) and some teachers feel insecure in their use, but this is only part of the problem. Insufficient attention has been

paid by teachers, the Key Stage 2 coordinator and the subject manager to the structure and organisation of the information technology curriculum in Key Stage 2. This, in conjunction with the lack of a clear plan of action for the subject's development, has brought about this very unsatisfactory situation.

135. The previous inspection report made reference to missed opportunities in information technology. These have been addressed in Key Stage 1 but not in Key Stage 2. Overall, since it was last inspected satisfactory improvements have been made in Key Stage 1 but in Key Stage 2 the subject has weakened rather than improved. Although much has been done recently to develop the facilities for information technology the school is aware that significant improvements in curricular provision are needed. The subject has been identified as a development priority in the next financial year but the subject manager does not yet have a sufficiently clear understanding of where the teaching problems lie or the order in which they need to be addressed.

MUSIC

136. Standards in both key stages are those typical of primary pupils.
137. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can play a range of untuned instruments well and compose simple tunes. They can place instruments of the orchestra into groups, including brass, woodwind and strings. The majority can play simple tunes on the recorder and follow a piece of music. High attaining pupils recognise and know the names of the notes on the staff and can pick out whether they have gone up or down the scale when listening. Although pupils enjoy singing and some sing with confidence, others do not sing with the enthusiasm normally associated with pupils of this age.
138. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils compose well. Many can read music and can identify and name notes such as crotchet and quaver. Higher attaining pupils know how many beats each note is worth. Many who play instruments can talk about their favourite pieces of music and composers but others who do not play are much less knowledgeable. When using song books most pupils sing confidently and with expression but during hymn practice when they are singing from memory many do not know the words and singing is weak. Pupils playing of descant and treble recorders make a good contribution to their learning.
139. Lessons are taken by the subject manager throughout the school and teaching overall is sound. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make sound progress. However, the timetabling of lessons restricts pupils' creative abilities. Pupils are taught music in short lessons of only twenty minutes duration. Having to collect pupils from their classes and take them to an outside classroom for their lesson further reduces the productive time the teacher has with them. As a consequence some pupils do not achieve as well as they could, particularly those who have experience of music at home. When composing, only one small group of pupils from each class is taught for approximately three weeks at a time and there is a gap before they have music lessons again. This adversely affects the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. Composition lessons are taught well. Pupils are shown how to improve and they are given opportunities to evaluate their own and others work, which they do well. In singing lessons there is less attention paid to the quality of singing and pupils do not try as hard as they could to sing to the best of their ability. During whole key stage singing lessons, pupils are not provided with words to follow and many are unsure and become restless. The subject manager takes these lessons herself with little support from other teachers and has difficulty teaching pupils the words while also playing the piano.
140. The range of resources for the subject are sound although there is a lack of compact discs and audio tapes, and instruments from other countries. Since the last inspection

average standards have been maintained and although pupils still evaluate their performance well they are not given enough opportunities to increase their confidence when singing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. Standards in physical education are broadly average but too low for these pupils. Much of the under achievement is linked to the timetabling of lessons. Although, overall, a sufficient amount of time is allocated to the teaching of the subject, the organisation of this time into predominantly twenty-minute periods is inefficient.
142. In these very short gymnastics lessons pupils' engagement with most of the activities is superficial and they have only restricted opportunities to explore, extend or refine their movement. In games, there is insufficient time for pupils to participate in the meaningful practice of skills. The teachers' role becomes one of managing activities rather than of observing and evaluating performances to help pupils make progress. As a result, both teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Lesson planning is inconsistent and learning objectives often lack the clarity to provide teachers with an effective basis for the assessment of pupils' performances.
143. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the teaching of swimming and standards are good. The majority of pupils successfully reach the expected levels of performance by the time they are 11 and many exceed them.
144. Pupils' attitudes towards physical education are good. All change into appropriate clothing in an orderly manner and their behaviour is very good. Within the limited opportunities afforded to them they co-operate well with each other and apply themselves to the work at hand. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language participate fully in the work and attain similar standards to the rest of their peers.
145. Pupils wishing to do so can participate in a weekly session of football skills development run by the local professional football club, but overall there is a very limited range of extra curricular activities. Some staff are willing to organise activities out of school, for example Year 6 pupils recently played two mini hockey matches. However, few opportunities exist for pupils to participate in regular competitive sports with other schools.
146. There is a good range of facilities. In addition to the school hall, there are two useful hard surfaced play areas and a school field incorporating a football pitch of good proportions. Overall, the accommodation and resources available provide good support for teaching and learning. There is currently no clear or effective monitoring system to help the subject manager gain a coherent view of standards across the school, or to identify areas in need of further development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. Standards of attainment are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment exceeds the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, and in Key Stage 2 attainment is in line with what is expected.
148. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are familiar with a range of stories from the Bible, and can recall and discuss stories they have recently heard. They have sound understanding of the significance of important Christian and Sikh festivals and ceremonies. Most pupils can express their own views and feelings clearly about Joseph's actions in the Bible story, particularly his forgiveness of his brothers. They

know that this story is in the Old Testament and that the New Testament is about Jesus. Pupils appreciate that Christians are people who show care and kindness, like Joseph, and that they go to church, sing hymns and say prayers. The majority communicate their ideas well in class discussion, and in writing and when illustrating their own versions of stories, like the Christmas story.

149. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have extended their understanding of Christianity, and of Sikhism and broadened their knowledge to include Judaism. They have a greater appreciation of the beliefs and symbols of all these religions. Pupils are encouraged to explore their own beliefs, views and feelings, and gain greater insight into the nature of spiritual and moral experience. Through their studies they develop a satisfactory understanding of why people wish to commit themselves to a particular religious faith. Older pupils can identify and describe personal feelings well, both of a positive and negative kind. They relate personal experience and common sayings, like "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" to the teachings of Jesus, recognising that He would not condone that action but would preach forgiveness.
150. There have been satisfactory changes since the last inspection. A well thought out new policy and scheme of work has been developed and this enables planning to maintain breadth and continuity of learning. The balance between Christianity and the other two faiths studied, Sikhism and Judaism, is now satisfactory. There are a greater variety of written responses, although opportunities to express personal views and responses in writing in Key Stage 2 are still limited.
151. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. Discussion is effectively handled so as to raise interest and allow expression of personal views. Teachers have clear objectives for pupils' learning, and ask focused and thoughtful questions. Well-chosen tasks enable these objectives to be achieved. Pupils respond well to this teaching. Their interest in the subject and topic is aroused, their knowledge and understanding is carried forward, and they make good progress.
152. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall but is more variable. There is some very good teaching, but in a third of the lessons seen the teaching was unsatisfactory and the religious content was not as prominent as it should have been. The best teaching is characterised by clearly focused activities that encourage pupils to reflect and to think carefully about the issues under discussion. In these lessons pupils make good progress because they are clear what is expected of them, they are interested and they want to participate in expressing their ideas. They respond positively to intellectual challenge. In unsatisfactory lessons teachers' subject knowledge is insecure, children are talked at instead of with, and tasks are mundane and inappropriate. Too little attention is paid to clarifying exactly what they want children to learn, and how to organise the lesson in a meaningful way so that children can understand the messages they contain. In these lessons pupils are unclear what is expected of them, they lose interest and make insufficient progress.
153. The management of the subject is sound. Satisfactory improvements have been made to resources and planning. The need to develop staff knowledge and understanding of Sikhism and Judaism is recognised and appropriate courses are being sought.