

INSPECTION REPORT

CEDARS INFANTS SCHOOL

BLACKBURN

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119222

Headteacher: Mrs E Beaumont

Reporting inspector: Terry Mortimer
18849

Dates of inspection: 24-01-00 to 28-01-00

Inspection number: 188695

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hawthorne Street Blackburn Lancashire
Postcode:	BB1 9TH
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Khaliq
Date of previous inspection:	10-06-96

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Terry Mortimer	Registered inspector	Science Information technology Physical education History Geography Equal opportunities	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Sue Boyle	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils attitudes, values and personal development
Tusha Chakraborti	Team inspector	Under-fives English as an additional language English Design and technology	
Keith Sanderson	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cedars Infant School serves an urban area of Blackburn which contains a range of housing from, recently built housing association or local authority housing to houses awaiting refurbishment. A small number of pupils travel in from outside the immediate area where their local schools are over-subscribed. It is about the same size as other primary schools with 250 pupils aged between three and seven years on roll, including 39 in the nursery. The main school contains 211 pupils 198 of whom are of Asian origin many are at an early stage in acquiring English as an additional language. This is an extremely high percentage when compared nationally to other schools. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 46 per cent, which is well above average. The number of pupils (64) on the school's register of special educational need is above average but the number on the higher stages (12) is below average. The number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational needs which is above the average nationally. The attainment of the children on entry to the school is well below that expected for children of the same age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Cedars Infant school is a very effective school and makes very good provision for its ethnically diverse population. The standards achieved by the pupils although still below the average nationally reflects good learning. The school provides a good quality of education that is well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. The quality of teaching is good. The school is well led by the headteacher ably supported by the deputy headteacher, all staff, governors and parents. The overall effectiveness of the school is good and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school has achieved, over time, a very good rate of improvement in attainment from a low starting point.
- The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher is a very effective manager and is well supported by governors and senior staff in guiding the school and planning for the future.
- Curriculum planning is good.
- The ethos of the school is good including very good provision for spiritual and cultural development.
- The school uses monitoring and assessment well to help pupils make good progress.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and all staff constantly strive to improve the learning for the pupils.
- Subject managers, especially in core subjects, are very effective.
- Teachers and high quality support staff provide good learning opportunities for all pupils including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language.
- Relationships with parents are very good and there is a strong community spirit that includes pupils and families of all ethnic backgrounds.

What could be improved

- Although standards have risen considerably in the last two years they are still below the national average and could be improved further.
- Attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996. Since that time the school has improved considerably. The action plan designed to implement the key issues has been followed well and the issues have all been addressed. Standards in English have risen as a result of the action taken by the school. Good quality long-term plans for the curriculum are in place and the implementation of the National Curriculum is monitored well. The school has shared and developed the good practice in planning, assessment and recording and this is now a strength of the school. Pupils have good quality feedback on lessons that contributes well to reinforcing their learning. Taking into account the many improvements made since the last inspection and the school's successful drive towards raising standards and meeting its own targets, its capacity for further improvement is judged to be good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	E	E	E	C
Writing	E	E	E	C
Mathematics	D	E	E	D

Key

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

The table above shows that although standards attained are well below average when compared to all schools and adjusted they are broadly in line with those found in schools with pupils from a similar background apart from mathematics where standards are slightly below. Over time standards have been rising in all core subjects in line with the realistic school targets. The inspection finds that standards are below average in the core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in information technology are average. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus overall but good in certain areas. In all other areas where it is possible to make a secure judgement standards were in line with those found with similar age pupils. When the very low attainment on entry is taken into account the pupils' achievements are above average. The targets set by the school to raise standards are agreed with the local education authority and governing body and are realistic. It is important to note that although the school appears to have not made improvement in some of these standards of achievement there are many other factors to consider, the very large number of pupils with special educational needs and high numbers of those with English acquisition needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school and to learning. They are eager to learn and show good concentration in lessons, answering questions well and contributing to discussions.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. The vast majority of pupils are courteous and friendly. The school is an orderly community where pupils respect people and property. A small minority of pupils presents challenging behaviour, which is handled well by the staff.
Personal development and relationships	The provision for the personal development of pupils is good. The relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupil to pupil relationships are good, they work well together and play together well on the playground.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory. Although the school makes strenuous efforts to encourage good attendance a significant number of families take extended holidays that cause the overall attendance to be well below the national average

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. It was at least satisfactory or better in all lessons, of which 42 per cent were good 13 per cent very good. This continues to be a strength of the school.

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is frequently good. The national initiatives in literacy and numeracy have been well implemented and teachers prepare well for these lessons. The use of literacy across the curriculum is extensive and is a targeted process in the school's approach to the pupils' language acquisition. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. All staff understands the targets which have been set for the literacy strategy and are addressing the targets for the numeracy strategy. These aims and values influence the work of all staff and express high expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve.

Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional Language are well supported by teaching and non-teaching staff in classrooms and the quality of teaching they receive when withdrawn by the specific teachers is of a high standard.

Significant strengths of teaching generally are teachers' subject knowledge; the good management of pupils; the relationships teachers have with their pupils and the generally good questioning skills of teachers. All teachers have very high, but appropriate, expectations of pupils, and class discussions are always lively and challenging. Questions are well focused and designed to bring all pupils into the discussions.

A good variety of teaching methods are employed to make lessons interesting. Teachers manage pupils well although there are a significant number who display challenging behaviour and could be disruptive. Lessons are consistently of a good pace and the use of support staff is very good. The good quality of day-to-day assessment enables resources and time to be used effectively. Homework is satisfactorily used to consolidate and extend what pupils have learned at school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good quality curriculum for the pupils that is broad, balanced and relevant to their needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are supported well by good quality classroom assistants who ensure that pupils are fully involved in classroom lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has many pupils who speak English as an additional language. The support provided for these pupils, by the education authority and the school is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for this area of pupils' development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their actions and consider how they affect others. Pupils are clearly taught right from wrong and good attention is given to developing pupils' awareness of their own cultures and the local culture of the area.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well.

The school works well in partnership with parents and provides a suitable and challenging amount of work for pupils to complete at home. The school has effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Parents support the view that the school cares very effectively for their children. The school offers very good pastoral care for pupils, where their views are always taken into account. The school appropriately addresses the linguistic needs of all the pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is supported by a hardworking and very effective deputy headteacher. The subject co-ordinators understand their role and fulfil it very effectively. Teaching and learning are monitored very well and the school development plan is a very good working document that is effective in leading the school forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the context in which the school works. They work closely with the senior management of the school and fulfil their responsibilities well. A good range of policies to guide the work of the school is in place although some are still in draft form and require completing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very effective systems for evaluating performance and uses this information very well to identify areas for improvement.

The strategic use of resources	The school has a good supply of staff to meet the needs of their pupils. Teaching support staff are used very effectively. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall with some significant strengths such as the way in which space is used to provide a role-play area for reception children. Governors apply principles of best value well when making spending decisions.
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The experience, dedication and expertise of teachers and support staff provide very well for all pupils regardless of ability or background. The shared vision, aims and values of the headteacher, staff and governors creates a very good partnership enabling them to manage the many recent changes very effectively. The headteacher and governors are aware of best value principles and apply them most effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Parents feel that the teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no areas that a significant number of parents feel needs to be improved.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school's result in the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments in English and mathematics were well below average. In reading and writing, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 3, the higher levels were below average but in mathematics it was average. Standards in science, which are judged through teacher assessment shows that the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are achieving well below average. However, at the higher Level, 3 pupils are achieving above average. Overall, standards are average when the school is compared with schools of a similar type. Standards in the two core subjects of English and mathematics have remained low since 1996 although they are rising in line with the targets set by the school. Evidence from the inspection confirms standards are rising but at present they are still below average. Pupils are making good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, religious education and information technology from their well below average starting point. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils now achieve standards in information technology which are in line with national expectations; this is similar to that found at the previous inspection. Standards attained in religious education are in line with the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus this is a similar picture to that found in the last inspection. Standards of work are about what is expected of pupils of this age in all of the none-core subjects, which are art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In the subjects which are dependant upon spoken and written English the attainment of the pupils who are learning English as an additional language is generally lower than that expected for similar aged pupils.
2. Reasons for the low standards can be explained, in part, by three factors: First of all by the consistently high numbers of pupils in school who are identified as having special educational needs, which was approximately 33 per cent at the time of the inspection and which is well above the national average; second, the overall very low levels of attainment when children begin school; finally the high levels of pupils who speak English as an additional language (95 per cent) and the very high levels of pupils at an early stage of English acquisition (79 per cent).
3. Children begin Cedars Infant School with a wide range of abilities, although their overall standards of attainment are well below average in all areas of learning, which are language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal and social development, physical and creative development.
4. For those pupils who are currently in Year 2, and are due to take standard assessment tasks and assessments in May 2000, their standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are generally on target to be around the expected levels. The targets set by the school are realistic given the low level of entry of the pupils.
5. Pupils under the age of five years, in the nursery and reception classes, receive a good solid start to their education. Most children make good progress throughout their early years, and by the time they begin compulsory education at the age of five years, almost all of them have made gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. However, by the age of five years, they are attaining standards well below the levels expected for their age in language and literacy, and mathematics. Standards in creative development, and personal and social development are below expectations. Pupils

attain standards in physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world which are in line with levels expected for their age.

6. At Key Stage 1 pupils build on this good start, and although progress is good in English, mathematics and science, inspection evidence indicates that the overall performance of pupils in all three core subjects is still below average by the end of the key stage.
7. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading are below average. Most pupils develop an enthusiastic attitude to reading and discussing stories in their class groups. They make good progress in extending their phonic knowledge and developing strategies for tackling unknown words. However, for many who have poor language and literacy skills, pupils' progress is restricted by this, preventing them being able to read at the level expected by the age of seven.
8. Pupils' writing is below average at the end of the key stage. Progress in pupils' writing skills is slow for many pupils. Although some pupils make satisfactory short-term progress in lessons, the skills learned are not consolidated and carried across into their writing in English and in all other subjects of the curriculum consistently.
9. By the time pupils reach the age of seven, most are not confident in using speech in a variety of situations, and their standards in speaking are below average. Most pupils listen attentively to instruction and questioning and, for most pupils, this has a positive impact on their progress. As their range of vocabulary is extended, the confidence of all pupils is increased. The systematic teaching of vocabulary has a significant impact on attainment and progress in both under-fives and Key Stage 1. Pupils' skills in listening are average.
10. By the end of Key Stage 1, in mathematics, the current cohort of Year 2 pupils attain levels which are below average. However, progress through Key Stage 1 is good for most pupils. Skills in mental maths are constantly practised, and a minority of pupils are able to use an appropriate range of mathematical language. By the end of the key stage, the organisation and setting out of work is underdeveloped but shows more purpose. Effective use of extra support for pupils with special educational needs and bilingual assistants helps these pupils to make good progress in relation to their prior learning.
11. In science, at Key Stage 1, pupils' levels of attainment are below average at the end of the key stage, but they make good progress over time. A minority of pupils make appropriate predictions, and a smaller minority carry out a fair test with help from the teacher. Pupils show average ability in responding to questions on how to find things out, although their ability is below average in making their own suggestions.
12. At the end of Key Stage 1, in the other two core subjects, which are information technology and religious education, standards have improved to a satisfactory level in information technology since the previous inspection, and are now in line with national expectations. Standards of attainment in religious education have been maintained and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at Key Stage 1.
13. Throughout Key Stage 1, the work seen in the non-core subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, is about what is expected of pupils of this age. Progress is satisfactory in all of these subjects.
14. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is due to precise learning targets in their individual education plans and generally good teaching.

15. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make particularly good progress. The pupils make gains in knowledge, understanding and skills in lessons and over time. The progress of the pupils is carefully monitored by regular review meetings and is well documented. Many children come to school with a small amount of understanding of spoken English but with little ability to express themselves in English. By the time they leave the school at the age of seven, they are able to express their feeling and thoughts more ably and they show good progress in their writing. Many pupils attain levels of competence in English that enable them to function on a day-to-day level with their peers, and understand what is required of them in the classroom. However, their comprehension of texts is often weak and their vocabulary limited. This is especially true of the specialist language used in subjects such as science, and information technology. They frequently understand more than they can express and make many mistakes. Sometimes they lack an awareness of the nuances of English. Given the very low levels of attainment on entry, many pupils are achieving well because of the great efforts made by the school.
16. Pupils' skills in literacy are given good emphasis in other subjects. Pupils' writing skills are utilised appropriately, and sufficient opportunities are provided to write for different purposes in science and in history. A minority of pupils are able to use appropriate subject specific language in geography, history, science, information technology and mathematics.
17. Pupils' standards in numeracy are below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Only a minority of pupils are able to use numbers appropriately and recall number facts in work across the curriculum. Although their skills in numeracy are not well developed, pupils generally make good progress at Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, quite a large minority of pupils use their mathematical skills appropriately to support learning in other subjects such as science, art and design and technology.
18. The attainment of pupils is satisfactory in information technology, and they use information technology appropriately in other subjects such as English, mathematics and science, for example when studying the bones and looking at healthy diets.
19. At the end of both key stages there are no significant differences in levels of attainment between boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Pupils' attitudes and values and personal development are good. Pupils are happy to come to school and are interested in their lessons. They enjoy the work and are willing to listen and try hard, even though for most pupils lessons are difficult, because their lack of English limits their understanding. Most pupils are keen to start an activity but some have difficulty in keeping their concentration and sometimes become restless and fidget.
21. Behaviour at the school is good, and this is also the view of parents. Pupils are mostly polite to each other and they show appropriate respect for adults. Pupils behave well in classrooms and when moving around the school. Behaviour in the playground is lively, and children play well together, but the game, which involves children running around in line hanging on to each other's coats, can be too lively and has the potential to result in an accident. Some of the younger children take a long time to get into line at the end of break, but once in line their behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions at the school over the past three years.
22. Pupils work well together and share well; for instance, when pretending to do the ironing, making the tea and washing up in the role-play kitchen. Whilst they are doing

this they chat to each other about what they are doing, and take turns to use the equipment. Disputes if they do occur are usually amicably resolved. Children generally relate well to each other. They are developing a suitable understanding of the effects of their behaviour on others; for example, in a reception class, a boy knew that if someone hurt you it would not be the right thing to retaliate because you might harm them. The school is sensitive to the feelings, values and belief of others, and this is reflected in the respect that pupils show towards other religions and cultures. Pupils are sensible and responsible when carrying out tasks and are proud to be chosen to help.

23. Attendance rates are low by comparison with other schools, and are unsatisfactory. This is because some parents take their children on extended family holidays, which means that pupils are absent for long periods. This has an adverse effect on pupils' attainment and progress. There is no unauthorised absence, and most pupils are punctual at the start of the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching is good overall and a small amount is very good. Of the lessons observed all were at least satisfactory or better, 42 per cent were good and 13 per cent were judged to be very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, and most of the minor shortcomings noted in that inspection have been overcome.
25. Overall, the quality of the teaching with the children under five in the nursery and reception classes is good. This good teaching is characterised by good planning with very specific learning objectives across all areas of learning. The organisation to facilitate progress is good and ensures a good pace of learning throughout each session. The range of activities available through the careful planning means that the children are always on task and well challenged. A particular strength of the teaching with the children under five is the very good use of all classroom assistants, who work closely with the teachers and have a good understanding of the needs of children of this age. For example; the use of classroom support assistants in the role-play area makes a very good contribution to the development of children's speaking and listening skills. The governors have also ensured that the classroom support assistants are suitably qualified to work with children under five and receive regular professional development.
26. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subjects that they teach and understand the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. They have high expectations of behaviour and attainment and constantly challenge pupils to achieve high results. The high quality questioning of most teachers demands a high quality response from the pupils and thus deepens their understanding; for example, in a mathematics lesson where pupils were questioned to determine the methods that they had used for mental calculation. However, this questioning is inconsistent. A small amount of questioning tends to be on a more individual basis, which limits the opportunities for pupils to develop understanding through group discussion. The school is aware of this and has included it in the school development plan as an area to address.
27. All teachers and support assistants are very aware of the very differing needs of pupils. Work within the class matches the needs of all pupils well. Pupils' high prior attainment is well catered for with appropriate extension activities. The use of support assistants and parents to support pupils is very good. Most teachers are experienced and use a suitable range of appropriate strategies to develop pupils' learning. This was very apparent in a number of lessons when the teachers moved from whole-class

exposition in literacy or mathematics sessions to group work. Throughout the school teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils, and class discussions are always lively and challenging. Questions are well focused and designed to bring all pupils into the discussions; for example, in a science lesson where pupils were looking at the issues of safety, especially methods of crossing the road. This helps all pupils to make quick progress towards the particular learning objectives. Teachers use a good range of methods and groupings which are well matched to the lesson's purpose. The quality of whole-class teaching in the literacy and numeracy sessions is generally good.

28. The good teaching at Key Stage 1 reflects the overall good subject knowledge across the most of the curriculum. Planning is successful and clearly identifies what pupils are to learn, and how the groups of pupils of differing prior attainments are to be taught. For example, in mathematics, teachers plan a good variety of practical work which pupils can undertake independently. Pupils of all abilities are given good support, which results in their good progress. Classroom organisation is good and all activities selected are appropriate to the identified learning objectives in the plans.
29. All teachers are careful to present good role models, and the most effective teaching ensures that other pupils are also used as good role models, for example, in a religious education lesson where the pupils were studying Islam and the class teacher told the children that their knowledge would be more than hers and they would learn together. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils throughout the school. They use praise well to modify behaviour and reward good work. Instructions given to pupils are very clear, and teachers listen carefully to pupils' replies and questions, and show they value them all. Teachers manage pupils very effectively which results in increasingly good behaviour. This was particularly true in a Year 1 lesson when the completed work of one or two pupils displaying challenging behaviour were used as good examples and kept their attention focused.
30. Assessments using informal strategies to gauge pupils' understanding are apparent in all lessons. Groups of pupils are also targeted suitably for assessment, and a range of checklists based on the lesson plans are used. Marking is generally effective overall and the way that the teachers of the younger pupils discuss their results rather than just write them in their books is particularly effective. Homework is used appropriately and effectively to support pupils' progress throughout the school.
31. The teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good overall and in one third of lessons it is very good. In class the seamless approach to language acquisition is a tribute to the high value that the school places upon support for pupils who have English as an additional language. Often teachers give instructions in English and the bilingual assistants interpret without the process interrupting the flow of the lesson. Teachers use a good mixture of strategies and teaching aids such as toys and magnet boards to help pupils to learn. They have a good knowledge of how to teach basic skills and have high expectations of what pupils are to learn. Specialist teachers and classroom support assistants manage behaviour well including some of which is very challenging. They work closely with the class teachers, using a mixture of in-class support and withdrawal groups. These groups are of limited duration, are designed to meet specific needs, and the work is always carefully related to that being pursued in the classroom. The school has placed a high priority on treating and teaching all according to their needs and respecting and valuing individuality and similarity.
32. Discipline is very good. Teachers manage pupils effectively. They make good use of praise to reward and motivate; for example, in an art lesson where the positive encouragement of the teacher motivated the pupils to produce work of a very high

standard. The classroom environment is calm, supportive and secure and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning and well being. Resources are used well and good use is made of the accommodation to provide additional teaching spaces; for example, using a spare classroom for a role-play area. In some classes the pace is brisk and promotes good progress, but in a minority of lessons the pace is too slow and this limits progress in those lessons.

33. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and make helpful oral and written comments. They know their pupils well and make good use of informal assessments to match work to the needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. Although teachers' short-term planning does not make reference to pupils' good quality individual education plans, pupils with special educational needs are assessed appropriately and work is well matched to their needs. Reading homework is set every night.

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

34. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is relevant to the needs of the pupils. All pupils have access to the curriculum and statutory requirements relating to the teaching of religious education are met. Personal, social and health education is a part of the planned curriculum. The governors' policy on sex education is that it should be appropriate to the age of the pupils, and is included as a part of health/science education. The school is currently developing a "Drugs Awareness" policy. The policy for special educational needs conforms to the Code of Practice. Individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs have suitably sharp, small step targets, especially where the special educational needs are very specific. Carefully planned activities and good well-targeted support enable pupils with special educational needs to follow their programmes without being withdrawn from class. Staff who support pupils who speak English as an additional language offer strong guidance and work well in supporting class teachers. High levels of co-operation and joint planning strongly underpin the school's support for special educational needs and English as an additional language pupils.
35. Appropriate time is given each day, in line with the school's policies, for teaching literacy and numeracy. This time is well used and is contributing to the good learning by the majority of pupils.
36. The school has effectively addressed the issues from the previous inspection. The long-term "curriculum map", drawn up since the last inspection, is very clear and effectively demonstrates how the school plans for the progressive development of skills and knowledge. Medium-term planning is well established. Short-term planning is now of consistently good quality. Staff have used training days to focus on its development with the specific aim of clarifying learning objectives. Weekly plans now highlight clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils at the beginning of a lesson. Recognition of assessment opportunities and objective evaluations of lessons, by staff, are examples of the good practice which is enabling pupils to improve their learning.
37. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are limited because many pupils attend the mosque after school. However a group of pupils attend football training, and the school is hoping to re-instate its recorder group, in liaison with the proposed Centre of Excellence for Music at the neighbouring junior school. Reasonable use is made of resources within the community, with visits out and visitors in contributing to pupils' learning.

38. The school has very good links with the community which are very effectively enhancing the curriculum. There is good support from local services such as the police and fire; and the school nurse is a regular contributor, talking to children about health related matters. Visitors bring their skills into school, and pupils have for example, though a link with local bakery opportunities to watch bread being made and then to make bread themselves. The school effectively uses local industry to give pupils insight into shoemaking and is quick to seize opportunities when they arise, so that when some houses were being built nearby, the school used this to further enhance the curriculum. The school has a good relationship with the local junior school, and a governor sits on both the school's governing bodies. The arrangements for pupils transferring to the junior school are good, with appropriate transfer of information. However, although the schools have curricular links, these are not well established to promote continuity from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. The school has established an effective link with a rural school which benefits both schools. Students from a number of different institutions work in the school and their impact is positive.
39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school's ethos is sensitive to the culture and beliefs of others, and through this pupils are developing a sense of themselves and learning to value others. The school has a good range of dual language books, and books depicting people from many different ethnic backgrounds. There are dual language notices in the library and around the school and this helps pupils to feel that their culture and their beliefs are important and are valued. Assemblies are well planned, and there is a good sense of the school coming together in an act of corporate worship, which does not compromise pupils' own religious beliefs. In lessons, opportunities for awe and wonder are well used.
40. Pupils' moral development is good. Through circle time, pupils are given effective opportunities to think about what is and is not the right way to behave. They understand the school's behaviour code and are learning about rules through for example, the three-finger rule in assembly to which pupils respond immediately and appropriately.
41. There are some very effective social opportunities which make a strong contribution to pupils' personal and social development. In the kitchen role-play area, children chat to each other whilst they pretend for example, to make a cup of tea, and whilst doing this they learn about sharing and co-operating. In classrooms, and around the school pupils have jobs, and these encourage them to be responsible and provide good opportunities for them to take responsibility. Most adults in the school, particularly classroom staff, set a good example of polite social behaviour. The theme for class assemblies was "please and thank you" however, not all staff reinforced this requiring or expecting polite behaviour from pupils.
42. There are some very good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures. The school places considerable emphasis on pupils' cultural development with for example, a dedicated art week. There are a number of visitors that come into school to do workshops and to perform for pupils. There are visits to a wide range of museums and places of interest. There is very good multicultural provision and the school effectively draws on the pupils' own culture, by for example involving parents in cooking and by giving them good opportunities to listen to Asian music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainments are good. There is an efficient system for assessing, tracking and recording progress in the early years. Thereafter, the school has developed a comprehensive "calendar" of assessments to check on pupils' standards and progress. Staff compile and record a great deal of information from the

results of baseline tests, school and national assessments. The school has collections of work in mathematics and science, and is developing one in English, which illustrate levels of attainment at various stages of education, and provide a reference point for teachers when assessing pupils' work. The school also takes part in "agreement trials" with other schools in the group, in order to check, and improve, the accuracy of its assessments.

44. Assessments in the 'core' subjects are made at the conclusion of a topic, or each half term, whilst assessments in the 'non core' subjects are made against the key learning objectives, outlined in planning. There is a coherent system whereby teachers use the information gained as a firm base for future planning, both in the short and long term. In the short term, teachers assess understanding in lessons through skilful questioning and careful observations. They record assessments on weekly planning sheets, and these, plus evaluations, often lead to adjustments in planned work. This occurred when a teacher observed that pupils were confusing 40 and 14. In the long term, analysis of formal tests leads to the development of revised programmes of work.
45. Detailed analysis of the school's own baseline tests of reading skills has led to the development of improved reading programmes, with more clearly defined short step objectives. Close analysis of standard assessment tests (SATs) results has enabled the school to improve its planned programme of teaching spelling, including a revision of time allowed, development of the scheme of work and provision of homework opportunities. Also, further analysis of these same results revealed no significant differences in the performance of different ethnic groups, or between boys and girls.
46. Assessment information is contained in each pupil's portfolio. The school also maintains a 'personal and social profile', which records details of attendance, personal and social development, and medical requirements. Assessing and tracking pupils' learning and attainments are key parts of the planning process which is helping to raise levels of achievement. The staff knows their pupils well.
47. The school has a strong commitment to pupils' welfare, health and safety, and parents are very satisfied that their children are well cared for and well supported. There is a very effective health and safety policy, and regular monitoring by staff and governors. There has been a recent audit and the school assesses the risks for example, before a school visit, and staff have received training in risk assessment. Child protection arrangements comply with local procedures and there is a high level of awareness by staff. Pupils are taught appropriately about looking after themselves. All staff are clear about what to do in the event of an accident.
48. The school keeps meticulous records of pupils' personal development and these provide an effective basis for monitoring. Monitoring of attendance by the school's administrator and the educational welfare officer is done weekly. This works well and enables the school to identify those pupils whose absence is a cause for concern, and to act quickly.
49. The induction arrangements for children coming into the nursery are good. When children start in the nursery the times are made flexible to meet individual needs, and staff visit children in their own homes.
50. Staff are effectively managing behaviour, often by a very firm approach, and although this works well for behaviour it does not consistently promote self discipline and personal development. The behaviour policy document is six years old, and is planned for review. The principles of the policy document are good and are reflected in the practice of the headteacher and most of the staff. However, some staff are much firmer with the children and more directing than the policy implies. Reviewing the policy

as planned will provide an opportunity to consider consistency of practice, and ways in which children should be encouraged to develop self-discipline.

51. The school has effectively created a climate in which differences are valued and celebrated, and incidents of bullying are rare. Through circle time and collective worship, pupils have good opportunities to talk about the effect of their behaviour on others and how they should behave towards others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school has a strong commitment to working with parents and carers, and has established a good relationship with them. It is an open friendly and welcoming school and parents are very satisfied with it.
53. Links with parents and carers are good. Information for parents about the school is of a good quality, and much of it is in two languages. Reports for parents are sound. They are mostly clear about progress but in a minority of reports information about what pupils know and can do is presented in a list form and is not particularly helpful or evaluative. Some reports have useful information which tells parents how their child's work could be improved. All parents attend parent consultation evenings and many enjoy class assemblies.
54. Through the home-school agreement, parents and carers are clear about their responsibilities, and they support their children well. The school tries hard to involve parents in learning, and there is good support from families for reading at home. Parents make good use of the toy library and a small but dedicated and hardworking group of parents are helping to make story sacks for children and their parents to use at home. A very small number of parents have been trained in the 'better reading project' and the school is hoping to attract more parents when it repeats the course.
55. Information about what is being taught is available for parents in the form of the topic plans. The school is aware that these are not easy to understand, and it intends to send parents more frequent and clearer information about what is being taught, with ideas for ways in which they can help.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good. The school is very well managed. An effective and hardworking governing body supports the excellent leadership of the headteacher. All staff with leadership responsibilities exercise them well. The headteacher has a very clear educational vision and has established a clear partnership with the governors in which they have a shared vision of how the school can improve further and achieve high standards. She is a very effective manager of the school, and has a deep understanding of the school's corporate needs and is aware of what has to be addressed in order for standards to improve further. The senior management team are very aware of their particular roles and responsibilities and support all school developments with a zeal and commitment that is very impressive. They are fully aware of the school's aims, values and policies that they helped to formulate and are particularly effective in supporting the necessary innovations. The way that the deputy headteacher was able, through exceptionally hard work and insights, to maintain the drive of the school whilst the headteacher was seconded to the local education authority, and with governors and staff support in the school was exceptional.
57. The governing body has a clear committee structure to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities, and all statutory requirements are met. Regular meetings of the

governing body and its committees have clear agendas and are well minuted. Governors are very supportive of the school and closely involved in its day-to-day life. They visit the school regularly and take an active role in monitoring the quality of education.

58. The clear set of aims that are outlined in the prospectus are met and the ethos of the school is very good with a very clear commitment to high standards. The school development plan is an effective tool for guiding school improvement. It is based upon a realistic evaluation of what needs to be done in the school and is modified appropriately in the light of changed circumstances. The school has set itself realistic but challenging targets in the areas of English and mathematics.
59. The quality of leadership and management has been at least maintained at the good level noted in the previous inspection, and in many areas management has improved. Overall management of the curriculum is good. Subject co-ordinators provide good leadership. Arrangements for the monitoring of standards of attainment and learning are good and the arrangements for the monitoring of teaching are effective. Core subject co-ordinators have release time to enable effective monitoring and support.
60. The management of special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed a comprehensive policy, which covers all the various stages of need and arrangements for referral. All staff are fully aware of these. The special educational needs teacher and support assistants provide very effective help and work closely with the class teachers in planning, assessing and monitoring pupils' achievements. Individual education plans are suitably detailed and regular reviews involve the parents concerned. There is a governor with responsibility for special educational needs, and her role is developed fully to include classroom visits. All the statutory requirements of the Code of Practice are met.
61. English as an additional language provision is also good. The funded teacher, and bilingual support staff have, with the headteacher, developed a good policy and set of procedures which covers all aspects of the pupils' needs and ensures that the provision is an integral part of the school. All staff are involved in the process of support, planning, assessment and monitoring of pupil progress are very effective.
62. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and other classroom staff match the demands of the National Curriculum. All teaching and support staff are conscientious and work very effectively as a team, contributing to the good quality of education provided. The learning support staff are well qualified and experienced and make a very significant contribution to pupils' progress. The school has several members of the staff who are bilingual and come from the same background of the majority of the pupils in school. As a result, the pupils, especially those at the early stage of English language acquisition, receive effective mother tongue support which expedites their learning of English language and enhances their understanding of the concepts taught in various curriculum areas. Arrangements for the professional development of all staff are very good and always linked carefully to whole-school needs identified in the school development plan.
63. Appraisal of teachers takes place regularly and arrangements for the development of staff are good. The professional development of staff is both regular and linked very well to the identified needs of the school and the staff. All staff have appropriate job descriptions. This makes positive contributions to the improved standards of teaching. Learning support staff are well trained, including in literacy and numeracy. An appropriate induction program is in place and the newly qualified teachers and new members of staff receive good support. The school is developing an induction procedure for the supply teachers. Teachers work very closely with all support staff.

The school secretary, lunchtime supervisors, the site manager and cleaners, all make positive contributions to the life of the school. Staff are good role models.

64. The school is housed in a very pleasant, clean and well-maintained building, which allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The hall, although satisfactory in size, is used to store equipment, which limits space for movement in physical education. The high quality of displays around the school enhances opportunities for learning and clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to the multi-cultural nature of its community. The outside environment is satisfactory and the school has plans to develop it further. It is used very effectively, encouraging social behaviour during playtimes and lessons. The indoor accommodation for children under five is satisfactory. Resources are satisfactory and accessible to staff and children, and good use is made of them.
65. The quantity and quality of resources are generally satisfactory, except in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, and information technology where they are good. Resources are generally accessible although some are stored on shelves too high for infants to be able to reach them and are used effectively to enhance learning. The library is well stocked with a good range of non-fiction and reference books. Information technology is used effectively as a resource for language acquisition, art, and researching information. Satisfactory use is made of resources beyond the school, which includes borrowing artefacts and having visits to places of educational interest.
66. The efficiency of the school is good overall, with some very good elements. This maintains the standards noted in the last inspection. Financial planning is very good. The clear focus on raising standards ensures that financial planning is directed towards this aim. Governors evaluate the needs of the school identified in the school development plan and then link this very well to budget planning. For example, the planned decision to employ teachers on a probationary period has helped to raise standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and to develop further pupils' language acquisition since the decision was taken. Through the planning process this success has been evaluated and this year funds have been allocated to provide extra teaching in Key Stage 1 for the spring and summer terms.
67. School administration is very smooth and efficient. The capable school secretary keeps detailed records on all expenditure and provides monthly statements for the governing body, which monitors expenditure very well. All funds designated for specific purposes are spent appropriately. The governors employ the principles of best value in all of their decisions and monitor closely the effect of the spending. The governors recognise that there has not been a financial audit since the authority became unitary in 1998, and have identified this as a priority.
68. The cost per pupil is broadly in line with that found in similar-sized schools. Taking into account the starting point of the vast majority of the pupils, well below average, the learning and the consistently improving standards attained, the very many significant strengths of the school and the very good leadership and management, the school clearly gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. Cedars Infants School provides a happy and caring community in which pupils develop as well integrated, caring young people. It is a good place in which to learn. The weakness identified by the inspection, listed below, is far outweighed by what the school does well, but it will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school. In order to continue to raise

standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:-

Build upon the successful strategies in place to improve pupils' attainment in the core subjects by:-

- implementing the use of story sacks to extend pupils' reading experience;
- drawing upon the many very good examples in the school to reinforce teachers' confidence in providing further opportunities for investigation and problem solving in mathematics and science.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

70. Overall attainment of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and who are new to the school, is below, and sometimes well below, that expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1. However, some pupils are attaining standards which are at least in line with those pupils for whom English is their first language. Pupils make good progress overall. They make good, and sometimes very good, progress where they are receiving additional specialist help. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good and is a strength of the school. The school has one full time teacher, 2.5 bilingual nursery nurses and two support staff who are funded by the ethnic minority grant (SEMA). In addition the school buys another bilingual nursery nurse out of its delegated budget to provide uniform bilingual support for the children in the nursery and reception classes. The management and co-ordination for pupils who speak English as an additional language, are very effective. The SEMA staff are line managed and monitored by the headteacher. All work under SEMA is related to the curriculum and offered in the classrooms. There are clear and well-formulated guidelines and strategies in place to provide effective support. Joint planning is good with a specific language focus for the subject or topic. The SEMA staff work effectively in partnership with class teachers. The bilingual nursery nurses share the same home language as the children and provide effective support to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem by using their home language. All staff share the responsibility for assessment and monitoring of English as an additional language pupils' progress. Teaching of pupils with English as an additional language needs is good overall and in one third of lessons it is very good. Teachers manage behaviour well, including some which is very challenging. The designated teacher works closely with class teachers, using a mixture of in class support and withdrawal groups. At all times the headteacher and governors are keen to establish a community where all cultures are represented and valued and the full range of needs can be met. Pupils who are developing bilingually are well assessed and monitored through a range of tests that include their stage of fluency in English. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are well assessed, and their progress monitored, by the designated teacher and in conjunction with school staff.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	42	45	0	0	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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	211
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		92

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	64

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	198

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	9.8	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	30	31	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	19	21
	Girls	22	23	22
	Total	43	42	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (58)	69 (63)	70 (70)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	24	20
	Girls	22	23	25
	Total	42	47	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (60)	77 (75)	74 (79)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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	10
Black – other	0
Indian	54
Pakistani	133
Bangladeshi	10
Chinese	0
White	13
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19:1
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	299

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20:1

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7:1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	98-99
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	£
Total income	342444
Total expenditure	360744
Expenditure per pupil	1610
Balance brought forward from previous year	50543
Balance carried forward to next year	32543

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	170
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	17	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	29	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	24	2	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	64	25	7	1	1
The teaching is good.	81	16	0	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	28	0	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	29	0	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	18	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	64	31	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	75	22	0	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	24	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	27	6	1	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. Children under five are accommodated in the nursery and the three reception classes. Four full-time teachers, 5.5 nursery nurses and 3.5 bilingual assistants teach the children. When children first enter the nursery and reception classes their level of attainment is well below the average for children of this age. As a result, although they make good progress in the nursery and reception, when they enter Key Stage 1, their attainment is still below the average for children of five years of age. The results of baseline assessments for the present reception children confirm this.
72. The school's provision for children under five is good. Planning is in line with the 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning'. On first enrolment a vast majority of children have limited skills in oracy, literacy and numeracy and much of their work is focused towards the improvement of these skills. Bilingual support ensures equal access and opportunity for all children. They are exposed to a range of experiences allowing them to explore and make sense of the world. Careful planning, observation and assessment by the teachers and support staff are an integral part of the provision.

Personal and social development

73. By the time children are five, the majority attain in line with the Desirable Learning Outcomes for personal and social development. They relate well to each other; the staff and to other adults in the school and are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Most are developing appropriate social skills and are learning to share. They are well motivated in their play and take turns sensibly. They co-operate well in group activities, such as role-play in the play corner and the role-play area outside the classroom. They show awareness of class rules, for example, wearing an apron while working in 'Dr Foster's clinic'. Many work steadily at each task, demonstrating good levels of concentration. They move about the room and outside play area confidently and purposefully making appropriate selections of toys and equipments. They understand the rules of the classroom and most respond promptly and sensibly to instructions, for example, when putting books and equipment away. Children make good progress in this aspect.

Language and literacy

74. By the time the children are five standards in language and literacy are well below that expected. Children listen attentively to stories and some ask appropriate questions to guide their understanding. They enjoy taking part in rhymes and songs and are developing confidence in spoken English. They show great interest in books. They recall stories read in the class and narrate recent events. For example, children in the nursery relate to the story 'Blue Balloon' and retell the familiar parts of the story, predicting that the balloon goes up. In a reception class, children retell the story 'To Town' using pictures in correct sequence and discuss about the transport available in town. They handle books appropriately, look at and talk about the pictures and understand that print tells the story. Most children in the nursery recognise their own names. Many can draw simple pictures and there are some examples of emergent writing, such as mark making. In reception, children are beginning to name, sound and write individual letters and many write their names.

Mathematics

75. Standards in mathematics are well below that expected by the time the children are five. They can count up to five and some can count up to ten. They are familiar with number rhymes, songs and stories. In reception, most children can write and add numbers up to five. Some can count and match to ten. They understand how to make pattern and develop knowledge about three- dimensional objects through their design and technology work. They recognise and name shapes like cubes, cones, spheres and triangles. They develop appropriate mathematical language. For example, while investigating height they learn to use the language of comparison, such as 'taller than', 'shorter than', 'tallest', 'shortest'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. By the time children are five, standards they achieve are in line with the expected outcomes. A good range of activities and experiences enables the children to develop a sound understanding of the world. They explore the properties of materials and discover that ice changes to water, while observing a hailstorm. They plant spring bulbs and observe the growing process. In the play area, they make appropriate use of telephone booth and toys and understand that switches control machines such as tape recorders. Most can operate the mouse to draw baby faces and patterns with shapes. In history children observe their own baby photographs and discuss the changes as they grow up. They are beginning to develop a sense of chronology by using 'now and 'then'. In the reception class children under five begin to demonstrate a sound understanding of the properties of materials and the use of waterproof materials while experimenting on materials to find out the most appropriate material for the lollipop lady's dress. They are developing their mapping skills and draw their route to the school, observe weather and the physical features of school environment, such as trees and buildings. Children make good progress in this area.

Physical development

77. By the time children are five standards of attainment are in line with expectations for most of them. Both in the nursery and reception classes, children are developing their co-ordination and manipulative skills satisfactorily through the use of tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and felt pens and the use of large construction kits and jigsaws. Most can handle materials such as play dough and glue, cutting paper into various sizes and shapes to create collage pictures. They move confidently around the rooms and enjoy physical exercise outside. Children in the nursery demonstrate good control and co-ordination when using the climbing apparatus and bicycles in their outside play area. They learn to control their body movements in response to fast and slow music and develop spatial awareness. In reception children show satisfactory skills of body management on large apparatus.

Creative development

78. All children are making good progress in their ability to express ideas and feelings creatively through a wide range of experiences in art, craft, music and imaginative play and by the age of five attainment is as expected for children of this age. Their paintings and plasticine models show awareness of colour, shape and form. They can mix and name colours. They learn to create patterns by cutting, sticking, knotting and weaving threads and are able to make models of famous buildings using a range of materials, for example, models of Big Ben and the Taj Mahal. They enjoy singing songs and demonstrate a good sense of rhythm and tempo. In the nursery children listen to the music by famous musicians, for example, 'Electric Storm' by Richard Strauss and learn to express the mood of fast and slow music in body movements.

The Quality of teaching and management

79. The quality of teaching for children under five is good, overall in all areas of learning. The teachers, bilingual nursery nurses and the support assistants work well together demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of the needs and stages of development of children under five. The bilingual support offered in the classroom is invaluable for the children's conceptual and language development. Staff make very good use of resources to provide children with a wide range of experiences in all areas of the curriculum for children under five. Relationships between adults and children are good and the staff always value children's contribution in discussions. The teachers maintain good class control. Long and medium-term planning is good and learning objectives and assessment opportunities are clear. Good assessment procedures, including the baseline assessment are used effectively and the results inform future planning to ensure that children make good progress. The results of these tests are reported to individual parents. Parents are happy with the under-fives provision.

ENGLISH

80. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is below the national expectations overall. The attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected of children of this age. This is partly due to the high proportion of children being at the early stage of learning English. The 1999 national test results show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above in reading and writing is well below the national average. However, the results indicate improvement in reading and writing over the 1998 results. The analysis of results for the past few years shows a progressive improvement in reading and writing. Inspection findings confirm this and judge that, starting from a low base on entry, pupils make good progress across the key stage. The school's recent focus on reading and the detailed whole-school planning for the literacy hour has had a positive impact on attainment in English, especially in reading. This shows an improvement on the previous OFSTED report.
81. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is below the national expectations. Although their listening skills are developing well, their speaking skills are not so well developed. This is mainly because of their limited fluency in English. They are eager to respond to teachers and express their opinions and views as best as they can. It is evident that they express themselves effectively while speaking each other and the bilingual staff in their home language. Some talk about their experiences and can discuss matters of immediate interest to them. They answer questions, follow instructions and are beginning to engage in discussion with adults. Many are able to retell stories in the correct sequence.
82. Standards attained in reading at the age of seven are below the national expectations. From the very low base pupils make good progress. They enjoy books and reading and know that words and pictures carry meaning. During the key stage pupils extend their reading skills with a strong emphasis on phonics and word-building skills. Many read with increasing accuracy and fluency from the good range of books available. Some higher attaining pupils understand terms such as author and title. Most are able to discuss what they have read and predict what will happen next. They are beginning to use phonic and contextual clues effectively to determine unfamiliar words and establish meaning. Generally however pupils' ability to select and research from books is limited and this restricts the development of their independent learning skills. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to practise their reading skills and share their books with parents. The school is making very good use of the 'better reading project', and home-school diaries for involving parents and motivating pupils to higher attainment.

83. Attainment in writing is below the national expectations. In Year 1, pupils retell stories through speech bubbles, using simple phrases. In Year two, a few pupils write stories and factual accounts with increasing accuracy and clarity. They are beginning to use capital letters and full stops in their writing with increased accuracy and beginning to use speech mark. Pupils recognise that stories have plots and develop clearer understanding of story structures, such as, the use of appropriate beginnings and endings. They are able to organise instructions sequentially, such as 'How to make a doll' in design and technology. Most are developing consistently formed handwriting. Although, they are given opportunities to write for different purposes, the volume of work is limited. Spelling application in writing is generally weak.
84. Pupils enjoy the shared text sessions during the literacy hour and are eager to join in reading the text. They remember stories and are beginning to use the story models for writing their own stories. They listen with interest to their teacher and to each other. They settle quickly to tasks and concentrate well. Most work well in small groups supporting each other, sometimes using their home language.
85. The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are appropriately planned following the literacy strategies. Teachers are enthusiastic, know their pupils well and plan appropriate work to match the ability of their pupils. Teachers have a secure command of the subject and use a variety of teaching strategies appropriately and clear instructions are given for tasks. Resources are generally well prepared by teachers. They make good use of questioning techniques to assess pupils' progress and assessment results are effectively used to inform their planning. Homework is used consistently to enhance pupils' reading skills. Individual educational plans are used well to design appropriate English and literacy tasks for lower attaining pupils and for those with special educational needs. Support staff are very well briefed and make a significant contribution to the progress that these pupils make.
86. The management of English is good. The school successfully follows the scheme of work as outlined in the literacy scheme. The co-ordinator manages the subject competently. She has secure command of the subject. The policy is informed and well constructed. The co-ordinator has completed the necessary training for the literacy hour and ensured appropriate training for the teachers and support staff. She monitors teaching and planning thoroughly and has put in place an effective assessment system for tracking pupils' progress across the years. Detailed analysis of the national test results and the results of the reading tests are used effectively for setting targets for all year groups in order to raise their standards of attainment. Resources for English are good. Class libraries include a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and these are used effectively to enhance pupils' reading skills. The library is well resourced, particularly with well-stocked stories for class and group reading, reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of the school very well. The school funded 'better reading project' is also used very effectively to raise pupils' attainment in reading.

MATHEMATICS

87. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below national averages. However, when judged against schools of similar intake attainment is broadly average. National tests in 1999 showed that the school's results were well below national averages. However, over time, standards are rising in line with the realistic school targets. Many pupils speak English as a second language, and a significant minority experience extended periods of absence. Despite this, many pupils, including those with special educational needs, although starting from a very low base, make good progress with their learning and improve their attainment.

88. By the end of the key stage many pupils count reliably and carry out simple computations. They count sets of objects and show some understanding of odd and even numbers. More able pupils calculate with larger numbers up to 100. However, minority of pupils do not mentally recall number facts and many are confused by place value. Pupils become more skilful at estimating before counting and measuring, and can use both non-standard and standard units of measurement. Pupils measure up to 30 centimetres using standard units and some estimate such lengths with reasonable accuracy. They learn to match the position of hour and minute hands with the given time. More able pupils record and compare times using analogue and digital clocks. Pupils collect and record information using tally charts and block graphs. More able pupils are able to comment on what the results show.
89. The quality of teaching is good overall. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory and 75 per cent were good or very good. This good quality teaching directly relates to the good progress pupils make with their learning. Teachers plan tasks, which make effective links with what pupils have done before, and different work is given according to the pupils' abilities, so that all have a chance to progress. Teachers have clear learning objectives for the lessons and share these with the pupils so they know what the targets for the lessons are. Very effective teamwork from teaching and support staff is a feature of the lessons. In one lesson with some of the younger pupils, the "distractions" being caused by a pupil with special educational needs were not allowed to disrupt the lesson. All adults had planned their work carefully, knew exactly what they had to do, and there was a clear determination from all, adults and pupils, that the lesson would proceed as planned. Teamwork and close support for special educational needs and English as an additional language, including bilingual support, enabled all pupils to take part and have a chance of learning. The pupil initially causing the distractions was supported with care and firmness, was given work appropriate to the needs and by the end had been included in the learning process. Teachers question well, continually testing alertness and probing understanding. One teacher asked a pupil to add seven and six in his head. The reply came quickly "13". The teacher praised the pupil for giving a correct answer and then asked "What are the digits and do they have to go in that order?" The pupil's response and reasons were correct and indicated to the teacher a sound grasp of place value. Another teacher asked one of the younger pupils about a "sphere". The pupil replied "It hasn't got any sides". The teacher continued, "Do you think it will roll smoothly?" After some further discussion the teacher introduced the "cone". The group examined it for a short time and when the teacher then asked "Will the cone roll smoothly?" one pupil said "Yes but it kind of goes round in a circle". By the end of the lesson many of the group could sort a variety of solid shapes into sets according to characteristics. Words such as "face", "edge" and "corner" were being used confidently. Teachers have worked hard to implement the National Numeracy Strategy. They give pupils good chances to improve their ability to calculate mentally. Opportunities for speaking and listening are an integral part of lessons and help develop literacy skills. There is a constant emphasis on developing mathematical vocabulary as in a lesson with some of the older pupils where the teacher was working on adding numbers of 10p coins to the value of £1. On the teacher saying "10p+10p+10p+10p" one pupil said "Oh that's repeated addition" and the teacher then developed the links between this and multiplication. During the final part of the lesson many pupils' responses to questions showed their understanding of such terms as 'equivalent' and 'strategy'. This "plenary" session is well used by teachers to evaluate, with pupils, how far the learning objectives of the lesson have been achieved, and enables the feedback given to pupils to concentrate on this intended learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

90. The school has a detailed framework for the planning of mathematics, which covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. The school is working hard to integrate the numeracy strategy with its own school based programmes. Planning is good. The long-term curriculum map demonstrates the continuous, progressive quality of the maths programme. Short-term planning is more consistent than before, showing how learning is to be assessed and evaluated. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection. Cross-curricular links are well used. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy skills in such lessons as science, art, geography and history. The use of information technology skills in mathematics effectively supports data handling and work on shape.
91. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, hard working and has a clear view of the need for continued improvement. Strategies for developing in-service training, and monitoring of planning and teaching are effectively implemented. Initiatives to provide each staff member with a comprehensive list of appropriate mathematical vocabulary for each area of mathematics, and the breaking down of "key objectives" into more sharply focused areas, help develop understanding and raise teacher expertise. These factors, allied to positive attitudes from pupils, good relationships and good use of a range of resources contribute greatly to the good learning demonstrated by the majority of pupils.

SCIENCE

92. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 aged seven are below average. However, when set against their prior attainment the achievement of the pupils is good and improving.
93. The results of the 1999 national teacher assessments for pupils aged seven were well below the average in comparison with all schools. However when the results for the pupils aged seven are compared with those from schools with pupils from a similar background they are close to the average.
94. Standards are rising steadily. At the time of the last inspection national assessments showed standards to be well below average. Over the four years 1996 to 1999 the rise in standards is still below the national trend, but is in line with the school's targets. Information from the school indicates that a significant number of these pupils had joined the school during the last few years and many had come to the school with science skills and knowledge that were significantly below those of pupils already in the school. This situation is still occurring. A particular problem for the school is that many of the pupils joining have either special educational needs or speak English as an additional language. As a result a significant number of pupils have difficulty in reading the teacher assessment papers fluently and this affects the levels that they achieve.
95. Examination of the work of the current Year 2 pupils and discussion with them shows that their knowledge and understanding and their investigative skills are below average. However, the oral work that many of these pupils are doing and the speed at which they are learning shows that standards are higher than those indicated in last year's national assessments. The school is not only improving standards but is increasing the rate at which standards are improving. This is, however, still limited by the turnover of pupils in the class and disruption that many of them have had to their prior education.

96. At Key Stage 1 pupils sort and classify materials using a range of simple criteria, such as items that move or do not move. They study themselves and many are aware of foods that are good for them and those which are not. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development as they consider how things feel and smell when studying the senses.
97. Recording skills are limited by pupils' low levels of literacy and numeracy skills but are beginning to improve as teachers focus on this area. The use of information technology to support science is in an early stage of development.
98. The majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning in science but in each lesson observed a significant minority find it difficult to sustain concentration throughout the whole of the lesson. This limits their learning but due to the good support given by the learning support assistants and the good behaviour management by the teachers, the learning of other pupils is rarely affected to a significant degree.
99. The quality of teaching observed was mainly good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers are very aware of the limited literacy skills of the pupils and plan accordingly. Good use is made of questions to extend pupils' learning through discussion. Lessons move at a good pace and the quality of learning is generally good.
100. Science is a priority on the school development plan and new co-ordinators have been appointed to take charge of science and implement the changes outlined in the action plan. The school has recently adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work and is supporting this with its own school-devised scheme to guide teachers in their delivery of the curriculum. Resources are good and are prepared well to ensure that they help the pupils understand tasks set.

ART

101. Standards in art are in line with those expected of pupils of this age, and progress is satisfactory.
102. The youngest pupils learn how to handle paints effectively and express themselves using a variety of media. They create different colours by mixing two primary colours. Pupils print onto fabric, and look at textiles, exploring the weave in an attempt to create their own 'tactile' picture. The range of work covers a wide spectrum of media. Pupils create attractive tie-dye patterns using tea bags. They create designs using knots made from ribbons and threads. Older pupils study the work of artists such as Kandinsky and Van Gogh, and mix colours to create their own pictures in similar style. They use clay and plasticine to create three-dimensional sculptures of faces. This work reveals developing observational skill, and an increasing ability to represent what they see, hear, touch and imagine.
103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good. Effective use is made of demonstration and questioning, so that pupils understand their tasks. There is a good balance of class discussion and activity. Tasks are suited to the pupils' skills and are often linked to other curriculum areas. Portraits of kings and queens of England, using a variety of media, arose from research in history, as did co-operative work depicting "The Great Fire of London" using card, paint, tissue paper and lollipop sticks. Pencil and crayon drawings helped form a collage depicting "The Pied Piper". In a lesson with the oldest pupils links with the pupils' literacy work were exploited when the story of 'Rumpelstiltskin' was used as a stimulus for pupils to create some imaginative "scary-face" sculptures. Appropriate use of questions helps pupils to develop ideas. In a lesson with some of the younger pupils a pupil was asked, "What have you drawn?" "A

bus" replied the pupil. "Well, what does the bus have along its side?" "Lots of windows". "Do you think you could draw some?" asked the teacher. After considering this for a short while the pupil not only added windows but further details of his own. Opportunities are frequently developed for review and evaluation of work and this is an improvement from the previous inspection. Close adult support, where necessary, enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to tackle the tasks set.

104. The co-ordinator works hard to support the staff and develop her own knowledge. An effective policy and scheme supports teachers in their planning. The co-ordinator is developing a portfolio of samples of work to help teachers interpret the key objectives. Work produced is then assessed against these objectives. Development of a whole-school policy for 'display', and commitment to it, is reflected in the numerous attractive displays around school. Pupils know their work is valued, and their learning is stimulated through variety and example.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Only one lesson was observed. Based on this lesson, scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with the co-ordinator it is judged that attainment in design and technology is in line with the standards that are expected of this age. Pupils make good progress throughout the key stage.
106. In Key Stage 1 pupils can measure and mix ingredients and have begun to discuss their work with increasing fluency. They have also begun to acquire a basic vocabulary of taste, colour and healthy food. They manipulate simple tools and use both pictures and words when communicating designs. They learn basic cutting and joining skills and use scissors safely.
107. In Year 1, pupils design and make toys and identify the materials used. They design booklets to develop an understanding of how to create designs based on information available. In Year 2, pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of movement to design and make a number of different models of axles. They make dolls and information books for healthy food, giving appropriately sequenced instructions. They all learn to evaluate their work and make appropriate suggestions for improvement.
108. Pupils' attitudes to their work are always good. They are well behaved and committed to the tasks they are set. They enjoy lessons, show great interest in their activities and often take part in discussions when sharing their ideas and opinions informally with each other.
109. In the only lesson seen during the inspection period, the quality of teaching was good, but it is insufficient evidence to reach an overall judgement. The teachers plan their lessons very carefully, using the scheme of work to provide appropriate experiences for all their pupils. Lessons focus on what pupils will learn from each activity, so that they develop skills well. Good cross-curricular links support pupils to build on what they have learnt before, for example, making healthy sandwiches while studying about the human body in science.
110. The co-ordinator manages the subject efficiently and supports staff effectively through informal advice and devising appropriate learning materials. Resources for design and technology are adequate, well stored and accessible for pupils and teachers.

HUMANITIES (History and geography)

111. It was not possible to observe any lessons in geography or history during the inspection apart from a group of pupils working on a computer. Examination of pupils' previous work, displays in classrooms and discussions with pupils and staff indicates that standards are about those normally found in pupils of a similar age. A significant factor limiting attainment in these subjects is the low levels of literacy due to the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language. The school is quite rightly focusing on raising standards in the core subjects. However, history and geography are not ignored and practical activities are emphasised. An appropriate amount of time is spent studying the subjects.
112. Pupils study homes and simple routes and learn about themselves as babies. Time lines develop their sense of chronology. They learn about the main features of the world such as oceans and deserts and compare their own area with one further away.
113. Good use is made of information technology to support these subjects; for example, pupils use the computer to type their sentences. The use of information technology stimulates pupils and helps develop their literacy skills. The capable co-ordinator is aware of the limitations in the subject and is reviewing the scheme of work to provide a curriculum that is as appropriate as possible. The rich source of information brought in by pupils from other countries enlivens pupils' understanding and in discussion pupils refer to the parts of the world from which they come and make comparison with their own locality. For example, when a pupil talked about his trip to Pakistan and what he had seen. This type of discussion enables other pupils to develop a better understanding of other cultures and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

114. The majority of pupils' standards of achievement are in-line with the nationally expected levels throughout the school. This is due to the recent acquisition of some new machines; the very careful and enthusiastic guidance being supplied by support assistants; the use of time to maintain the machines; a new policy and the small number of pupils who possess and use computers at home.
115. By the end of Year 2, many pupils know and can name different parts of the equipment. Most pupils can use the mouse with confidence to load and select various functions to draw different patterns with colour in an art package. Many are able to use simple software to enhance their numeracy curriculum, and they can input text into a word processor and draw using different software packages. There is some evidence of redrafting, and desk-top publishing, where text was copied, deleted, and moved.
116. Progress through the school is good, and there is work evidence and observation of pupils handling different kinds of data through information technology in a progressively more complicated manner. In the under-fives classes the pupils begin to learn how to use the shift and return keys and to write in their own words through using different software. The accent on information technology skills is bringing good progress and teachers are developing greater awareness of the content of the programs they are asking pupils to use.
117. Only one instance of direct teaching of information technology was seen during the inspection, but it is clear that teachers have sufficient knowledge to load programs from the beginning and get pupils underway, and many have the understanding to make their use of information technology enjoyable and meaningful. Opportunities for

information technology are identified at the long-term planning stage where the emphasis on skills is now highlighted. There is a good, recent, policy for information technology and the school's scheme of work has recently been enhanced by consideration of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. There is a checklist to identify work covered in some classes. There was evidence to show that information technology is occasionally being used to enhance the curriculum in mathematics, English and history, and the essential planning to ensure continuity of provision and steady progress is now in place.

118. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the examples seen of information technology in use are good. They are keen to participate, often using their own initiative to take their lessons further. For instance, a good deal of interest and sustained concentration was shown by the pairs using computers to identify their clowns in Year 1. Pupils are always happy to share their use of the keyboard and mouse.
119. The co-ordinator has anticipated outcomes of the use of information technology, and has made improvements. She is now involved in refocusing the school's attention, on the required in-service training and overall re-organisation necessary to make the most of the arrival of new computers, including the need to have regular maintenance support.
120. There are a number of computers in the school, most with a printer, they are more than adequate to deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum.

MUSIC

121. The standards in music are in line with those expected and pupils' progress is satisfactory.
122. Pupils learn to start and stop together and develop a sense of steady beat. They sing clearly and many are able to sustain accuracy of pitch. Most pupils understand the teacher's signals to say 'louder', 'softer' or 'change speed'. In one lesson, developing accompaniments to each verse of 'This Little Train', groups of pupils were able to use instruments, and clapping rhythms to provide a different 'tempo' to each verse and many were able to identify which instruments would be most appropriate to which verse. Pupils enhance their knowledge of songs, many of which they know from memory. They learn call and response songs and sing in rounds. Pupils enjoy listening to music and can identify sounds made by such instruments as castanets and maracas, as well as identifying the string, brass, wind and percussion families of instruments.

123. Pupils enjoy the activities and this is due in no small measure to the enthusiasm and hard work on the part of the teachers. All teaching seen was at least satisfactory, and in 50 per cent of lessons was good. Individual lessons are well planned and close guidance from support staff enables pupils with special educational needs to take full part in lessons. Where teaching is good pupils are able to take part in a range of practical activities that develop their musical understanding. In one lesson the teacher effectively used the story of 'The Billy Goats Gruff' in developing musical accompaniments using tuned and untuned instruments. Pupils were encouraged to consider "Why do you think she chose that instrument for the middle sized billy-goat?" and were given opportunities to practise and evaluate their performance. As the pupils were looking at traditional stories and rhymes during the literacy hour this work was particularly appropriate.
124. The subject is well managed by a co-ordinator who has good musical expertise. Each class has a supply of untuned instruments, and other resources are located centrally. Since the previous inspection, as a result of monitoring, the planning and teaching in the subject has improved, the co-ordinator intends to try to draw up "model lesson" plans in order to improve staff expertise, and in some cases, confidence. Professional musicians are invited into school to involve pupils, and parents, in workshops based on African and Indian music. The local junior school is being developed as a Centre of Musical Excellence, and the school has been invited to share in this venture. The co-ordinator is keen to use further opportunities to develop instrumental work, and practice at lunchtimes, using good facilities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. The pupils' level of attainment by the age of seven is satisfactory and as expected for pupils of this age.
126. Although many aspects of physical education were not seen, evidence collected from planning and discussion with staff and pupils indicate that pupils have experience in games, gymnastics and dance. At present there are limited opportunities for outdoor activities although these are increased during the summer term.
127. Pupils make satisfactory progress when lessons are well structured and pupils are well managed; for example, in one lesson pupils practised their jumping skills transferring their movements from using the floor space to using simple apparatus. In these lessons pupils were also given opportunities to appraise performance.
128. Pupils' attitudes to the subject range are good. There is evident enjoyment of the subject. Attitudes are good and pupils are enthusiastic. They listen carefully and are responsive to instruction. All pupils have access to the curriculum and are given the support where appropriate.
129. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is good and teachers have secure subject knowledge and confidence in their own skills. In these lessons they also manage pupil behaviour very effectively. They understand the principles of physical education and lessons are well structured. They also provide opportunities for pupils to observe, evaluate and refine what they are doing. Attention is paid to the need to warm up and cool down. Pupils are made well aware of safety factors and staff dress appropriately and encourage their pupils to do so.
130. There is a scheme of work but the school aims to adapt it following study of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority scheme which is available in February.

131. The physical education programme has been enhanced by extra-curricular football activity. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding and enjoyment of the subject and gives good support to staff, some of whom are much more experienced and confident in the subject than was evident during the last inspection. The school also enjoys a sports day that is supported and enjoyed by parents.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. Pupils learn well and standards in religious education are overall in line with the requirements of the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus and are good in certain areas.
133. Through the key stage pupils are developing an awareness of themselves, the cycle of life and the changes that happen in growing up. They are given opportunities to reflect on moral issues and on values beyond the material. This was well illustrated during a class assembly when pupils were asked to think about “The quiet things that God has made”. At the end they had the chance to “Talk to God in your mind” and “Find something to say thank-you to God for”. Pupils begin to understand that there are a range of religious beliefs, and that each has distinctive traditions, practices and festivals. They know stories which illustrate the origins and beliefs of festivals associated with Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject, and show respect for each other’s faith backgrounds, an attitude encouraged by teachers, who readily draw into the lessons the religious experience of the pupils. Through visiting local churches, meeting with local clergy, daily acts of collective worship and in lessons, pupils are able to develop an understanding of the meaning attached to artefacts and ceremonies, and that beliefs affect the way people live.
134. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are well prepared in line with the agreed syllabus. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and value what pupils bring to lessons from their own experiences. In a lesson looking at the significance of Hajj in the Islamic faith, a very good lesson was built around hearing the experiences of many of the pupils’ families on a pilgrimage, demonstrating some of the ‘special’ clothing worn, using appropriate artefacts, and putting the events and traditions in context. Pupils’ understanding was widened. Teachers develop literacy skills well, through the use of ‘faith centred’ texts such as ‘Lost Coin’, ‘Monkey King’ and ‘Creation’ and through providing numerous opportunities for speaking and listening. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Since the previous inspection the syllabus has been modified to take account of Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidelines and to make it more ‘school specific’. Resource portfolios have been established, and assessments are made against key objectives.
135. Importance is attached to community involvement and pupils visit a mosque, and the cathedral in Blackburn. The school embarks on exchange visits with a nearby village school, enabling groups of pupils to compare and contrast a local village church and a town mosque.