

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEGATE PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

NOTTINGHAM

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122739

Headteacher: Mr G Bell

Reporting inspector: Mr David Collard
11122

Dates of inspection: 22nd - 25th May 2000

Inspection number: 189483

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitegate Primary School and Nursery Middlefell Way Clifton Nottingham
Postcode:	NG11 9JQ
Telephone number:	0115 9152944
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr Brent Charlesworth
Date of previous inspection:	23 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Collard	Registered inspector	Information technology Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
John Kerr	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Debbie Kerr	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Margaret Cooper	Team inspector	English Design and technology Special educational needs	
George Simpson	Team inspector	Geography History Music English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
Heather Toynbee	Team inspector	Science Art Under fives	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitegate Primary and Nursery School is a larger than average school situated on the outskirts of the City of Nottingham. The buildings are undergoing a major outside refurbishment. This includes replacing the walls and windows of each classroom. There are extensive grounds including green fields and an enclosed playground. Four hundred and five pupils are on roll with a substantially higher number in the juniors than in the infants. Sixty-three children attend the nursery on either a part-time or full time basis. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities and only two pupils have English as an additional language. There are 126 pupils on the special needs register, which is above the national average, and two of these pupils have statements, which is well below the national average. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds but there is a high level of unemployment amongst the local population. Attainment on entry into full time education is low especially in literacy, personal and social education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school where standards have been steadily improving. Although pupils are still not reaching national average levels in English, mathematics and science they are making good progress through the school from a low level of attainment on entry. In general the teaching is good even though there were a small number of weaker lessons seen during the inspection. The leadership and management of the school are good with clear educational direction, a strong commitment to the locality and to providing pupils and parents with high levels of educational opportunities. Major initiatives are being undertaken to ensure the school leads the way within the community. Finances are used wisely and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children make a very good start in the nursery and reception. The education provided is excellent.
- Pupils make good progress overall during their time at the school especially in the basic skills of reading and numeracy
- The management and leadership of the school have improved over recent years
- The overall quality of teaching through the school is good
- Behaviour, attitudes and relationships are good within the school community
- The school has established very good links with the parents and the local community
- The school makes very good use of grants and has developed very good educational contacts with local businesses

What could be improved

- Standards in English, particularly speaking and listening, mathematics and science could be higher
- The teaching, though good overall, is not consistently good in all year groups
- Some subjects especially religious education (RE), design and technology (DT) and art do not have enough time

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 September 1996 and followed up with an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors. Since that time the school has made good progress overall. The action taken in response to the issues raised at that time has been successful. Attainment has risen in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum co-ordinators now have a more active role to play in developing their subjects. The senior management team take a much stronger lead in developing new initiatives. Since the infant and junior schools successfully amalgamated, planning has been much simplified and because of this most lessons now have clear objectives. Assessment procedures have been improved and now give clear indications about the progress that individuals and groups make over the time that they are at the school. The school continues to provide a positive and caring ethos in all its work. In addition, the quantity of good teaching has improved greatly and this is the main reason why standards are improving.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	E	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	E	C	
Science	D	D	D	B	

The table above shows that pupils' test results in English and mathematics in 1999 were well below average when compared with all schools and below average in science. When compared with schools of similar types, pupils were also well below in English but in mathematics they performed at average levels and in science at above average levels. These differences occurred because the number of pupils reaching the average level 4 was high but not enough pupils gained the higher level 5 in English. Standards have continued to improve steadily since the last inspection, at least in line with those nationally, but there has been a better improvement in reading and writing at Key Stage 1.

Improvement has not been established long enough for test results to fully reflect the progress that is now being made particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is low. Pupils in the present Year 2 have below average standards in English and science but they are close to the average in mathematics. They have made good progress. Pupils in the present Year 6 are attaining standards that are below average in English, mathematics and science although these pupils have also made good progress because of the more concentrated and focused teaching that has taken place over the last year. Pupils reach the national expectation in information technology (IT) at both key stages and they are close to but below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The standards that pupils achieve in art, geography and history is sound at both key stages. They are sound in music and physical education at Key Stage 1 and good in physical education (PE) at Key Stage 2 because of the wide range of activities that are offered. Progress is unsatisfactory in design and technology at both key stages. The school has set realistic targets for pupils based on thorough analysis of the data available. Despite the improvement that has been made, pupils still need to improve their skills particularly in the three core subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to come to school and are enthusiastic about the work that is offered. There is a sense of fun and enjoyment evident in discussions with pupils and the Year 6 pupils speak fondly of their time at school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school is good despite a small number of pupils who want to challenge authority. Even when teaching is not as strong, pupils do not misbehave badly. They concentrate well and, when given the opportunity, respond to the challenges that are set.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are respectful both of each other and of adults. They are willing participants in all the tasks that are set and work well together in groups.

Attendance	At national average for similar schools. This has improved since the last inspection because of the high priority put on it by the school.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching within the school is good. In the lessons seen, over nine in ten (92%) was at least satisfactory, seven in ten (70%) were good or better, and over three in ten (34%) were very good or better. Five lessons out of seventy one (7%) were excellent. In contrast six lessons (8%) were unsatisfactory or poor. The level of good and satisfactory teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is strongest in the nursery, reception and Year 5 where it is consistently very good and in Key Stage 1 where it is consistently good or better. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall although it is inconsistent from year to year. In the best cases it is inspirational, is well planned, exciting and the progress in learning is very high. Where it is not as good, pupils are not as well managed and the teaching methods are not as effective.

Teaching in English and mathematics is good through both key stages. Planning has improved using the new national strategies for literacy and numeracy and this has helped make learning more precise. It is making a major impression on raising standards. Teachers' knowledge of each subject is good except in design and technology and music. It is improving rapidly in information technology. The use of time, resources, support staff and appropriate teaching methods are very good in the nursery and Key Stage 1 and good overall in Key Stage 2. In all classes, pupils acquire knowledge quickly, are keen to find out more, but especially in Key Stage 2, are limited by their own personal experiences.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	An excellent curriculum is provided in the nursery and it is good through both Key Stage 1 and 2. Particularly good are the very good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and the contribution made by members of the community including local businesses and organisations
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is satisfactory provision for the identified pupils but provision is good for literacy, personal and social development. In the nursery, good, early identification and regular visits from specialists helps children make progress. Teachers throughout the rest of the school do not always take account of the individual education plans for subjects other than English and mathematics.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The number of pupils identified is very small and they do not need any additional support to access the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. It is very good for moral and social development, good for spiritual development but only satisfactory for cultural development because there are not enough opportunities to learn about the values and beliefs of other non-western cultures.
How well the school cares for	Good overall. It is particularly good in the provision for behaviour management. The school places a high priority on this area and this is

its pupils	valued by the whole community
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and there is a clear sense of direction. The senior management team, having been re-formed, provides effective support. Co-ordinators' roles are clear and they have an understanding of their own subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have responded well to the issues raised in the last report and to new issues as they have arisen. They are well-informed about the school and understand its strengths and weaknesses. There is a good balance between experienced and new members who work well as a team.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is a good understanding of the school's performance, what needs improvement and how this should be addressed. Realistic targets have been set for developing standards, the environment and particularly the school's role within the community.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well. The many grants, as well as local and national initiatives, have been exploited well. The school strives to make as much use as possible of the funding and help it can obtain.

There is very good level of accommodation although much of it is still in need of refurbishment especially the interior. Classrooms are sufficient, of good size and well resourced. The grounds are extensive and could be used for expansion. The management of the school is good, based on thorough scrutiny of all the available information. The governing body are provided with sufficient information about the day to day running and performance of the school through regular meetings with staff. The school provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • They make good progress • There are high expectations about behaviour and that teaching is good • Homework is good and they are well informed about their children's progress • The school works closely with parents and there are good systems should problems occur • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents would like to see a wider range of activities outside lessons

The inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents. Inspectors do not agree that there are not enough extra-curricular activities. The school and staff spend a lot of time arranging activities both for the pupils and for the parents that includes educational encouragement for parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children entering the nursery have levels of attainment below that nationally. They are especially weak in literacy, personal and social development. The children arrive with very limited personal and social skills and little experience of the early stages of literacy. They make very good progress in their learning. Despite this, they still have below average levels of attainment when they enter the reception year. Teachers successfully combine their planning on the nationally recognised areas of learning and the need to start work on the National Curriculum particularly in literacy and numeracy. Overall, there are excellent opportunities for the children under five that raise their standards significantly.
2. Nationally at Key Stage 2 most children are expected to achieve level 4 with some achieving level 5. Analysis of the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in 1999 shows attainment in English at the age of 11 well below the national average, and also well below the average for similar schools. By the end of Year 6, the present pupils at Whitegate are achieving standards that are below average. Attainment has improved because of the more concentrated teaching of literacy that is having an impact on raising standards. Over the past four years standards in Key Stage 2 have risen broadly in line with the national trend, although they were static last year in contrast to mathematics and science which both showed improvement. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls. When compared with similar schools, standards in both mathematics and science were higher than in English because of the poorer speaking and writing skills.
3. There is a stronger picture in English at Key Stage 1. Although pupils in the present Year 2 have standards that are still below the national average, the pupils are doing better than those in similar schools in reading. The 1999 National Curriculum tests at the age of seven show results in both reading and writing below the national average. Teachers' assessments of speaking and listening show standards well below the national average. However, standards in writing are in line with the average for similar schools, and standards in reading are above the average for similar schools. At Key Stage 1, level 2 is what most children are expected to achieve, with some achieving level 3. At Whitegate larger numbers of pupils achieve the required level 2 although there are low numbers who are able to gain the higher level 3. There was a substantial improvement in both reading and writing results in 1999, well above the national trend. This is linked to the more concentrated and successful teaching that has been developed. Taking the three years 1997 to 1999 together, boys have performed relatively better than girls, which contrasts with the national picture.
4. In mathematics the standards attained by 7 and 11 year olds in last year's national tests were well below the national average. The results for seven years olds compared unfavourably with those for similar schools but results for 11 year olds were in line with those for similar schools. Inspectors found that standards are rising throughout the school as a result of the hard work that has gone into implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Standards attained by 7 and 11 year olds are now close to those expected nationally, particularly in number work. They are broadly average in work on shape, measure and data handling. In aspects of practical mathematics and problem solving, standards are appropriate for younger pupils but below those expected for 11 year olds.

5. Standards in science at the end of the present Key Stage 1 are below average and at Key Stage 2 they are average. In the 1999 teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentages of pupils achieving level 2, the expected level for their age, and the higher level 3, were well below the national average. At Key Stage 2 the proportion achieving level 4 was close to the national average and at level 5 it was below average. Taking the years 1996 to 1999 together, the figures show performance in science to be close to, although below, the national average. However, results show a steady improvement, in line with the national trend, over these four years. Overall, the performance in tests was above average in comparison with similar schools. At the time of the inspection, the year 2000 test results were not available, but teacher assessment in Year 6 indicates percentages well below those achieved in the previous year. This is attributed to a significant number of less able pupils who joined the school in Years 5 and 6 and who had lower standards in scientific understanding. In 1999 there was a mismatch of teacher assessments to test results because of low teacher expectations of what pupils might achieve and a lack of knowledge about the new entry of pupils.
6. Pupils reach the national expectation in information technology at both key stages and these have increased rapidly over the past year with the introduction of a new computer suite. There is a good balance of work although more emphasis still needs to be placed on the use of control technology at Key Stage 2. There is particularly good understanding amongst the pupils of the use of graphics and text as it is used in desk-top publishing. Standards reached in religious education are close to but below those expected from the locally agreed syllabus because there is not enough time allocated to the subject during each week. The standards that pupils achieve in art, geography and history are sound at both key stages. They are sound in music and physical education at Key Stage 1 and good in physical education at Key Stage 2 because of the wide range of activities that are offered.
7. Standards are unsatisfactory in design and technology at both key stages. This was an issue at the time of the last report and continues to be so. Teachers still have a lack of understanding about the specific skills that need to be developed and do not plan tasks that will help pupils understand how things are made. This inhibits pupils' learning as they spend much of their time on projects that are purely art and craft exercises. Singing has deteriorated since the last report as it does not develop sufficiently well through Key Stage 2. The school recognises this and is planning to employ a specialist teacher to help improve the standards.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Because of the low levels of literacy within the school these are mainly concerned with developing language but there are also some numeracy targets and support to help pupils improve in other subjects. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress through good support and planning. There are few gifted or talented pupils identified at the school but the school informally monitors the performance of pupils to ensure that they are supported. This includes talents in music, sport and art. There are no differences between the performance of boys and girls or pupils from ethnic minorities. Again, the school and local education authority monitors their performance.
9. Overall the targets that have been set for improvement in all subjects are realistic. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science much thought has gone into ensuring that these reflect the ability levels of the pupils concerned. Various forms of testing and assessment are used which are being refined in light of the progress that is made year on year. Some targets are used in other subjects such as information technology to help challenge, more appropriately, the progress that is made.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the school. They are interested in their work and like to be involved with all that the school provides. The atmosphere in classes is good and pupils value their friendships and the very good relations that exist between pupil and teacher.
11. Pupils are keen to come to school. There is a friendly start to the day and pupils set about their work intelligently. They answer questions carefully and listen to instructions so they are ready to start work. When teaching is imaginative, pupils are interested and ask questions to further their understanding. Only where teaching is unchallenging do they lose interest and waste time. Almost all pupils are well behaved in class and about the school. They are well mannered and they benefit from meeting the many visitors to the school. They are keen to talk to adults and discuss their work and their activities. They are polite to each other and to their teachers and work well in groups, sharing resources and ideas. There is a well developed behaviour policy and pupils know what is expected of them. Each class contributes to their own class rules.
12. There have been no exclusions for some time. Parents and pupils report there is very little bullying. If ever it occurs it is quickly dealt with. Pupils develop a strong sense of self-discipline. They have taken a sensible attitude to the building activities. Though they are interested in the development, the contractors report that pupils have a respect for the work and have followed safety warnings at all times.
13. Pupils have a natural concern for each other. Older children look after younger ones, being responsible for a particular child. If a conflict occurs, they are encouraged to talk between themselves and if necessary, a whole class may be involved to give a moral lead. Apologies are made to the injured party. Good discussions develop in subjects and as a result of story plots or circle time. Pupils listen carefully to what others have to say. For instance in Key Stage 2, investigations into historical reasons were widely discussed. Pupils show interest in the projects set and are able to work independently researching the internet. However, in general at both key stages, pupils are not given enough opportunity to show initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning. For instance, even in the best taught lessons there are few instances where pupils are able to plan or organise their work unaided.
14. Attendance has noticeably improved since the last inspection report. It is currently at the national average for similar schools. There are very few unauthorised absences. Pupils are punctual at the start of the day and for lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Since the joining of the infant and junior schools four years ago a good partnership has been formed amongst the teachers and the evident teamwork is now helping to ensure that standards are improved. The overall quality of teaching within the school is good. In the lessons seen, over nine in ten (92%) was at least satisfactory, seven in ten (70%) was good or better, and over three in ten (34%) was very good or better. Five lessons out of seventy one (7%) were excellent. In contrast six lessons (8%) were unsatisfactory or poor. The level of satisfactory teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is strongest in the nursery and Year 5 where it is consistently very good and in Key Stage 1 where it is consistently good or better. The teaching through Key Stage 2 is good overall although it is inconsistent across all the years, especially Year 4. In the best cases it is inspirational, is well planned, exciting and the progress in learning is very high. Where it is not as good this is due to the management of pupils and to the methods that are used to excite and interest the class.

16. Teachers generally have suitable subject knowledge except in design and technology. Their own understanding of language is high and this helps them to teach more effectively. When teaching, grammar, for instance the teacher is able to explain clearly the rules of English in a way that pupils can understand. Similarly, in numeracy lessons they are able to explain how number patterns are formed and to explain more complicated rules. In design and technology there is some misunderstanding amongst the teachers about how to approach the subject. Consequently, in one lesson the pupils were making models but had not had the opportunity to discover for themselves how to construct joints or to choose the correct materials. The lesson then became a craft exercise rather than learning about technological skill. In Key Stage 2, where pupils are expected to understand more complicated structures, the teachers, because of their lack of understanding, do not give sufficient time to allowing the de-construction of objects such as boxes and mechanical devices. There is some lack of musical expertise amongst the staff and this has had a detrimental effect on the teaching of music. This is to be remedied by more specialist teaching in the near future. Subject knowledge in information technology is improving quickly because of the way that lessons are conducted using the expertise of a classroom assistant. The use of coaches for teaching some aspects of physical education is good.
17. The planning for the under fives is very good. It ensures that the curriculum builds on what the pupils can do when they start school and that it is broad and balanced. The planning in key stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. English and mathematics are planned using the national guidelines but other subjects are planned using commercial schemes. These are in the process of being revised in light of the new requirements from September. However, at present there are some gaps in the long term planning of subjects such as history and geography and specific subject skills are not always developed each week to ensure that pupils learn these at the correct level for their age and ability.
18. Expectations about the levels that pupils should reach are very good in the under five classes and good in the rest of the school. In lessons, incisive questioning, demanding tasks and good reviews help pupils achieve more. In one English lesson in Year 6, the teacher explained clearly what was expected and calmly gave clear and simple instructions. Pupils were encouraged to participate in the lesson and the task ensured that by the end, pupils could re-organise the information from the diagrams that they had been given. They were enthusiastic about what they were doing, were willing participants and were able to talk about what had been learnt.
19. Most teaching methods are very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2, though they range from excellent to unsatisfactory. In the good lessons, which are the majority, the lessons are well-balanced, with discussion, practical work and review all given enough time. Teachers use various methods to keep up interest and enjoyment in learning and ensure that pupils make good progress. They engender excitement and the pupils respond positively to the challenges set. Particularly in English, the way that teachers use many different techniques, is having a positive effect in raising standards. In a small number of lessons this is not always the case. In the science lessons seen in Year 4 the teachers conducted a practical experiment from the front of the class, did not involve the pupils sufficiently and consequently they got bored. This put a strain on the relationships and in one class the behaviour started to deteriorate. There was also a different approach in the two lessons towards health and safety aspects of testing. There had been some difficulty in attempting the lesson because of the lack of water available and so the methods used were not suitable.

20. The management of pupils is good overall but ranges from excellent to poor. Whilst there are a number of pupils who could challenge the authority of the teacher this is very rare and only occurs when the methods employed are not suitable. In most lessons the teachers, and other adults, are sympathetic to the needs of individuals and are willing to take time to listen. They use many different strategies to divert any suspected difficult behaviour and use praise and reward well. Good behaviour is further praised during assemblies through the use of merits and certificates. Pupils are very responsive to this praise and work hard to gain recognition.
21. Time is used well. Teachers are always ready at the beginning of lessons and there is urgency about starting work. The majority of lessons move at a good pace and the pupils respond positively to this urgency. They are keen to learn and soak up information they are given. Support staff are used well throughout the school. They make a valuable contribution to the work in literacy lessons and support pupils with difficulties. Teachers take appropriate account of special educational needs but do not always consistently match the targets in individual education plans in all subjects. Special needs assistants are used well and provide high quality support for pupils with significant levels of need. The use of an assistant for information technology has helped to raise the standards in this subject. Many other adults help on a voluntary basis. This includes hearing pupils read, helping with physical activities and supporting teachers in the classroom. Pupils enjoy working with this wide range of people and always show respect and high levels of concentration. Resources are gathered together well at the start of each lesson although this system inhibits independence because pupils do always have enough freedom to choose what they need.
22. Marking is generally undertaken regularly although it is not so good in Year 4 where some books have little comment either to praise or correct mistakes. In the best cases marking helps inform teachers about the next stage of learning that will take place and records of this are kept to further inform this process. Homework is given regularly and there is a clearly laid out policy that is shared with parents. This includes the time, amount and what is expected both by the pupil and from home. In most cases this work is valued by follow up after it is completed. Its success is demonstrated by the number of pupils who bring in extra information about topics.
23. The level of good, very good and excellent teaching has a positive effect on the increasing levels of standards that are being achieved and the progress that is made by individuals. Pupils have a thirst for learning and acquire knowledge quickly. Their understanding is sometimes limited by the below average skills in literacy, especially speaking, and their limited personal experience. This is the reason that significant gains are made during Key Stage 1 but the school has more difficulty in raising the levels of understanding during Key Stage 2. In discussions with pupils, it is clear they know factual information but cannot always apply this into other situations outside their experience. All pupils want to learn even when the teaching is not as strong. They work at a fast pace, are keen to complete what they are doing and form good relationships when asked to work together.

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities across the school is good. Nevertheless, there are still some areas of provision which require further improvement. The previous inspection report found some weaknesses in curriculum planning which the school addressed through the purchase of published schemes of work. It is now moving from these to a new set of schemes and is still in the transition stage in some subjects, notably religious education.
25. The curriculum for children under five in the nursery and reception classes is broad, relevant and practical, and successfully covers all the recommended areas of learning, with a strong emphasis on personal development, language and mathematics. All the children, including those with special educational needs, have very good opportunities to learn and make progress, building on their existing knowledge and skills. There is good provision for purposeful play and talk, as well as opportunities for children to choose their own activities. The teachers plan and work well together to build on children's existing knowledge and skills.
26. The school provides a well planned curriculum at Key Stage 1 which is also broad, balanced and relevant to the pupils' interests and needs. A strong feature is the practical nature of the learning opportunities provided for pupils in these classes. The curriculum is not so well balanced at Key Stage 2. Here work is less practically based and in Year 6, additional time has been given to preparing pupils for the national tests at the expense of subjects like music, design technology and religious education. The school has implemented the national strategies for numeracy and literacy, and the teaching of mental mathematics and writing across the curriculum are both very good. Additional numeracy support is provided for pupils in Years 5 and 6. This enables them to work in smaller groups and receive more individual help in lessons.
27. The links with the local community, the visitors to the school and the visits, which are organised, all make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers organise a variety of day trips to places of educational interest in the area such as Perlethorpe, the city centre and the local church. The school has a long tradition of youth hostelling for its oldest pupils. Visiting theatre companies, artists and poets further enrich the curriculum. Links with the local community are very strong, for example, two of the local football clubs are actively involved with the school. Students from a nearby training college work regularly with pupils on art projects and the Area Health Trust links with the school's very successful Breakfast Club through its healthy eating project. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs on offer throughout the year covering a broad spectrum of interests. They include sports, drama, study support clubs and workshops for parents. Pupils take part in inter-school competitions and competitive games and links with the local secondary school are strong.
28. The curriculum promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development effectively. Provision for personal, social and health education promotes an understanding of healthy living and includes a clear programme of sex education and attention to drug misuse. Pupils are given equal access and opportunity to enjoy all curriculum subjects and aspects of school life. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs who receive a broad and balanced curriculum. There is good provision for pupils with significant needs, particularly emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are examples however, particularly in Year 6, of pupils with social and literacy needs spending too much time working in a group with one adult, and without the support of peers who can provide better models of social and language behaviour.

29. The good provision for personal development, including spiritual, social, moral and cultural development has been maintained since the last inspection. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. In class circle time and in school assemblies, time is given for reflection and prayer. Pupils are encouraged to explore values and beliefs and to reflect on their own experiences. Religious education lessons promote spiritual development by helping pupils to develop an understanding of what faith means in everyday life. Experiences in music and art encourage pupils to value beauty and feelings, although there are more opportunities for these in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2.
30. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Expectations of good behaviour are high and this helps to encourage and develop positive attitudes. Respect for pupils is shown by all adults and helps to foster respect among the pupils themselves. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and this is seen throughout the school. Pupils are taught to be considerate towards each other and to accept those who are different from themselves. This very good provision helps to promote good behaviour and relationships. The school's provision for social development is also very good, particularly in the younger classes. Here there are excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through imaginative role-play and collaborative work. Older pupils learn to work together co-operatively and basic social courtesies are expected but for these pupils there are fewer opportunities planned for them to take responsibility for aspects of their work or to use their initiative.
31. The provision for pupils' cultural development is sound. Pupils have a developing knowledge of their own culture, and there are a number of displays around the school, which increase pupils' awareness of other cultures. The RE programme provides appropriately for teaching about major world faiths. For example, Year 3 pupils had carried out a detailed study of Judaism and Year 5 pupils had written about the story behind the festival of Divali. A small number of teachers do not teach the RE syllabus in sufficient depth and here the awareness of other faiths is more limited. In general, the school does not place sufficient emphasis on celebrating the richness and diversity of other cultures and traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school provides a safe environment where pupils can work towards achieving their full potential. Teachers know their pupils well, making provision for their individual needs. Procedures for child protection are good. The headteacher is the child protection officer. He pays close attention to the child protection policy and makes sure that procedures are carried out correctly. Procedures follow locally agreed practice and though training is not right up to date, new and experienced staff are well aware of the correct practices. Regular health and safety checks are made by the headteacher and by a governor who is experienced in premise security. The school staff have been particularly vigilant while contractors are on site.
33. Pupils are well supervised at playtime. Facilities for the under fives are excellent giving them self-confidence in climbing and balancing in a secure and dedicated area. Older children play well together. There is a scheme where older children take care of younger children who may be new to the school or who are finding it difficult to mix. The school nurse visits regularly to monitor pupils' health and there are first-aiders throughout the school. Pupils with minor injuries are dealt with efficiently and there are proper procedures if parents have to be contacted with more serious matters.

34. The staff have worked well together, with the assistance of the education welfare officer, to promote the new attendance policy. This has already shown improved levels of attendance. Parents are contacted immediately if a child is absent. Contact is efficient and friendly and parents appreciate their role in the schools effort to improve attendance. Staff also work well together to promote good behaviour. Management in the main is discreet and as a result, teachers earn the respect of their pupils. This applies equally in the under fives and throughout the school. It is only where teaching standards are poor that behaviour management is also weak. Bullying, if it does occur is not tolerated. Parents are satisfied with the standards of behaviour and give the school their full support if a pupil continues to misbehave.
35. The school has already identified that aspects of the programme for personal and social education are in need of revision. The main elements of health and sex education are satisfactorily in place while others such as anti-bullying are being revised. The school lacks a full policy on personal and social education with clearly defined aims. This has a detrimental effect on the development of pupils' self-esteem and their individuality. The school has good procedures for identifying special educational needs. Individual education plans are prepared at least twice each year, although development is required to ensure these contain clear targets, and that progress is recorded. The school makes good use of advice and support from external specialist agencies. The provision outlined in statements is implemented, although there are some inconsistencies in the match between individual education plans and agreed learning objectives. A notable feature of the school is its policy of inclusion and the extent to which it offers learning opportunities for pupils with significant levels of need who have been unable to remain at other schools.
36. Baseline assessment on entry to the nursery and the continuous day to day assessment make a valuable contribution to the continuity of learning and paves the way as children join the reception class. Yearly assessment is carried out in English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 1 and 2. These include standardised tests with co-ordinators selecting particular focus and tasks. The outcomes of these assessments are used to inform teaching groups, to improve the curriculum and to raise standards. The result of termly reading tests enables individual pupils to be targeted for extra support if necessary. Additional support is also given for mathematics. There are no individual learning targets set for the majority of pupils, although the school's policy for marking includes some target setting. There is a move towards formal target setting in English.
37. Since the last inspection report, pupils' academic progress is now consistently monitored throughout the school. There has been a quality assurance manager in post for two years during which time progress has been made. However, assessment information is not used effectively to meet the needs of the more able. Tasks do not always challenge higher attaining pupils in many lessons, particularly in English, maths and science. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is still inconsistent as it relies heavily on the teacher's knowledge of each individual. There is no regular assessment of this other than in the annual report to parents. These personal assessments are not always very perceptive.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents have positive views of the school. They are very satisfied with the way in which the school is led, the way the school relates to parents, and their children's progress. In their opinion, this is achieved through the quality of teaching and the high expectations of the teachers, which helps to produce mature and responsible pupils. Parents' views are correct although, as stated elsewhere in this report, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to be responsible for their own learning.
39. The school has developed very effective links with parents. Parents find it easy to make contact with either the teachers or the school management if they have a concern. Day to day contact with parents of the under fives helps to ease the transition from home to school. There is a parent toddler group that is very well run by one of the nursery nurses. This is valued by the school and well supported by parents. It teaches early social skills to children, many of whom will join the nursery. A crèche is often provided if parents are actively involved elsewhere in the school. These activities include classes for parents to learn basic skills such as IT and there is a club where parents can work with their children in construction and sporting activities.
40. Governors are constantly seeking parents' views and management and school events are well attended, raising funds to benefit the pupils. A home school agreement has been in place for some time and is regularly reviewed. Parent volunteers are well used and integrated in the teaching and other activities and there is no shortage of parents offering their services as governors.
41. The quality of information provided for parents is generally good. Communications are effective and letters and documentation such as the prospectus are helpfully written. The format of the annual reports to parents is under review. Recent developments resulted in the reports being impersonal. They did not state what the children could do or how they compared with defined standards in the core subjects. In addition, they made no suggestions as to how parents could assist in their children's progress. These shortcomings are being remedied this year. Good use is made of reading record books and most parents are regularly involved with the programme of home reading.
42. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed, and the school involves them closely in reviewing and supporting their children's progress. A strong feature is the recent introduction by the co-ordinator and governor with responsibility for special educational needs of a parents' forum, which provides an opportunity for parents to share their concerns with each other.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The governors and headteacher have responded positively to issues raised in the last report and leadership and management of the school is now good. The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear sense of direction for both the school's academic and pastoral development. This sense of purpose is shared by the recently constituted senior management team, which has worked together to establish a collegiate approach to decision making. Its involvement in both monitoring the curriculum and teacher appraisal has been instrumental in raising standards in teaching and learning. This is an improvement on the previous report. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and subject co-ordinators are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. They gather information by scrutinising plans and pupils' work, as well as observing classroom practice. This improvement has also helped raise standards, especially in the key areas of English, mathematics and science.
44. The school is supported by a very good governing body, which shares the staff's commitment

to raising standards. The governors have organised themselves very well to make best use of their areas of expertise. Many have a long term association with the school and parents have always been willing to become governors, which is very important for the school's development. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are influential in shaping the educational direction of the school. They are fully involved in the school on a day to day basis and make a valuable contribution to raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities for meeting special educational needs, and have appointed a committed co-ordinator, as well as a part-time special needs teacher. The governor with responsibility for oversight of special educational needs works closely with the headteacher and SEN co-ordinator, and provides strong support. The governors are also particularly concerned with the community responsibility of the school and have both short and long term plans for developing this very important aspect of the school's work. All governors receive training when necessary. There are designated governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. Statutory duties are met.

45. Headteacher appraisal is organised by the governors and targets are set and monitored. The headteacher and senior management team has provided a framework for professional development that involves all members of staff. This has targets according to both individual and school needs and successfully promotes a whole school approach to teaching and learning. Staff development is linked to both the appraisal procedures and the targets in the school improvement plan. All staff, including non-teaching staff, receive training, which improves their performance and has a positive impact on raising standards.
46. The school improvement plan is constituted after due consultation with all involved parties. Appropriate priorities are identified according to the school's needs after discussion between governors and staff. Progress towards meeting targets is carefully monitored. An example of its effectiveness is the decision to concentrate on English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1, by keeping classes as small as possible, with the intention of giving pupils the best start possible. This has resulted in rising standards in academic performance, behaviour and attitudes towards learning. The school uses current, as well as historical data when formulating the plan.
47. Good financial planning supports educational priorities. The budget is formulated following an appropriate cycle. Specific grants are well used for their designated purposes, for instance, the grant for special educational needs. Governors look for best value when making spending decisions. They receive tenders, look for alternative sources of supply, compare the performance of the school with other schools and challenge the traditional spending patterns. They also look for ways of making the teachers' roles more efficient, by examining, for example, the need for more non-teaching support. They seek to ensure value for money by being prudent, by monitoring expenditure and evaluating outcomes. They do this both formally and informally, for example, by analysing test results, by seeking informed opinion and by observing the impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
48. The school's administrative officer is very efficient. She makes very good use of new technology, even though recent changes at local authority level have created difficulties. She provides the governors with all the information necessary to carry out budget monitoring. Along with her colleague in the school office, she provides very effective day to day administration, which enables teachers to concentrate on their teaching responsibilities. The office staff also fulfil an important community role, which is evident by involvement in the day to day events which occur within local families. They are caring, understanding and supportive in any situation. They make all visitors feel welcome and provide an invaluable service to the school and its wider community.
49. There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. Teachers are aided by a

strong team of well trained support staff, who make a positive impact on standards in the school. The work of the well trained nursery staff is very influential in ensuring that pupils get the best start possible to their life in school. New staff are quickly integrated into the routines of the school and newly qualified teachers receive the benefit of a supportive induction programme.

50. The accommodation is good in terms of its spaciousness. The refurbished nursery provides very good accommodation. Current work to upgrade the fabric of the building means that all in the school are working under very difficult circumstances. It is to everyone's credit that the school is functioning as well as it is. Teachers have to teach with intrusive background noise and, for periods of time, in temporary classrooms. Nevertheless, they create a stimulating environment for pupils wherever the teaching base happens to be. Classrooms are bright and colourful and most teachers work hard to provide an environment, which is conducive to good learning. The school still lacks a common staffroom, but plans exist to rectify this situation in a future building programme. Resources are generally good, well stored and, normally, accessible. The school site is well maintained by the caretaker and pupils respond to the level of care shown.
51. Given attainment on entry, the quality of education experienced, the progress that pupils make and the improvement in standards, the school gives good value for money. This is better than the previous report.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further the headteacher, governors and staff should:

Improve standards in English at both key stages by continuing to implement the action plan and by:

- developing planning for speaking and listening and ensuring full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study for this attainment target
- developing effective procedures for assessing performance and progress in speaking and listening to inform further learning
- ensuring that the action plan also develops the progress of the higher achievers
(*See particularly paragraphs 2, 3, 55-57, and 63-70 of the main report*)

Improve standards in mathematics at both key stages by:

- providing more opportunities for learning through practical problem solving at Key Stage 2
- reducing the use of published worksheets at Key Stage 2 so that pupils can organise and record their work independently
- ensuring that work is marked so that pupils know how they are doing and how they can improve
(*See particularly paragraphs 4 and 71-75 of the main report*)

Improve standards in science by:

- ensuring that by the end of Year 2 all pupils have experienced the full range of recommended units within the national guidelines
- monitoring and evaluating teaching?
- providing support to improve teaching
- improving standardised form of assessment and recording so that pupils' progress can be consistently monitored across the key stages
(*See particularly paragraphs 5 and 76-81 of the main report*)

Improve all teaching to the level of the best by:

- monitoring work across subjects and classes to ensure that parallel classes work consistently and that progression is good in each year especially in Key Stage 2
- ensuring that professional development focuses on the good use of time and the way pupils are managed
- ensuring there is a progression in the specific skills being developed for subjects especially art and design and technology
- ensuring that all subjects, but particularly religious education, receive an appropriate amount of time
(*See particularly paragraphs 15-23 of the main report*)

In addition to the key issues above the governors should also consider the following minor points:-

- the progress made in design and technology and music (*paragraphs 7, 86-89 and 105-107*)
- providing more opportunities for initiative (*paragraph 13 and 38*)
- better role models (*paragraphs 28 and 35*)
- monitoring personal development (*paragraph 37*)
- providing a staffroom for the whole school (*paragraph 50*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	167

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	27	36	21	7	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	342
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		128

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	126

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	17	29	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	10	11
	Girls	25	23	24
	Total	38	33	35
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	83 (52)	72 (33)	76 (74)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	24	25	25
	Total	34	35	36
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	74 (53)	76 (66)	78 (60)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	32	29	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	15	25
	Girls	19	19	24
	Total	28	34	49
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	46 (49)	56 (44)	80 (65)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	5	11
	Girls	9	11	13
	Total	11	16	24
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	18 (49)	26 (45)	39 (66)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	291
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.5
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	170

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	18.37
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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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	706429
Total expenditure	722994
Expenditure per pupil	1730
Balance brought forward from previous year	41174
Balance carried forward to next year	24609

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

403

Number of questionnaires returned

30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	60	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	57	3	0	0
The teaching is good.	57	43	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	43	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	27	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	43	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	47	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	47	0	0	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. Children are familiar with the school even before they enter the nursery. A well-organised and resourced playgroup, run in the infant hall by an experienced school nursery nurse, offers children and parents their first links with the school. This is followed by very good arrangements that give parents and children a smooth and well-informed introduction to the nursery. These very successfully encourage confident and enthusiastic attitudes to the school from the very beginning.
53. On admission to the nursery, most children's attainment is poor and well below that expected for their age. Literacy and social and personal development are particularly weak. The children make very good gains in their learning, but their attainment is still below that expected for their age on entry to reception. The children continue to make very good progress especially in literacy and personal development, but by the time they are five their attainment is still below that expected for their age, although the majority are ready to start work within the National Curriculum. The nursery curriculum is soundly based upon the nationally recommended areas of learning for children under five. Work in the three reception classes successfully combines these and aspects of the National Curriculum, in particular literacy and numeracy. Overall, there are excellent opportunities for children to learn through an extremely good range of activities.
54. Many children enter the nursery with well below average personal and social skills. Teachers are skilful in developing these well and, by the age of five, many attain the agreed learning outcomes. The children quickly acquire a good understanding of class routines and make friendly relationships with the staff and with each other. The way in which children in the nursery are encouraged first to choose the activities they would like to do, and then to work on these independently, is particularly good. They take responsibility for the resources they use and clear up carefully at the end of lessons. By the time the children reach the reception classes, they are able to work on their own when not the focus of their teachers' attention.
55. The children make very good progress in their acquisition of language and literacy skills. They listen attentively to instructions, comments and stories and there are many opportunities for them to develop their speaking skills. All staff are particularly expert in talking with children, helping them develop ideas, listening to what they have to say and responding accordingly. In all classrooms there are exciting opportunities for role play. However, many of the children start school with poor speaking skills and a limited vocabulary. Even though they make very good progress, many still find it difficult to respond readily with views and opinions or even to talk to other children in group activity situations. For the majority, attainment in this aspect is still below average when they reach five.
56. The children enjoy listening to their teachers reading to them. Most take great pleasure in looking at books and can talk about the pictures and characters in the stories. Even the youngest ones have developed early reading skills such as holding a book correctly and knowing that print tells a story. A few more able, older, children have begun to read independently, some with growing expression. They have attained at least the expected level of reading for their age. The majority of the children know certain initial letter sounds and can point out some words with the same ending. They use picture clues to help them tell the story in their own words but their reading skills are not sufficiently advanced for their age.

57. In writing, most children in the nursery are at the stage of making marks on paper with pencils or crayons, with some attempting to write their name. In the reception year, most can write their own name and are beginning to form simple words. A few high attainers are able to write in sentences. By the time they are five most children are working towards the national expectations for five year olds but even though they make very good progress only a few will come close to reaching these levels.
58. There is a similar picture within numeracy. In the nursery the children are beginning to recognise numbers to ten, although some have difficulty in remembering these. Through activities, such as threading coloured cotton reels, they gain an understanding of pattern in number. Early recognition of simple shapes is built on in the reception classes, where children learn a suitable mathematical vocabulary to describe both two-dimensional and three-dimensional examples. In these classes pupils can write and count numbers up to, and sometimes beyond, 10. A few higher attainers have a good understanding of simple addition and subtraction. In all classes good use is made of real life situations. Dinner and packed lunch numbers are counted, milk cartons matched to numbers present and effective use made of rhymes and action songs. Play with water and sand provides good opportunities for children to experiment with containers and to find out how much each will hold.
59. On entry, the children's understanding and knowledge of the world around them is well below average. Practical, well-chosen activities promote very good progress and, by the time they are five, this situation has much improved. The children discuss past and future events and what clothes to pack in their holiday suitcase, they keep a daily weather chart, learn about why some things float and others sink and how plants grow. They find out about their own environment and, in it, what they like and dislike. Displays show that the children use a computer program to draw pictures and in support of their literacy and numeracy activities. However, many find it difficult to retain information or to talk about anything beyond their immediate surroundings without a great many probing questions to bring out responses.
60. By the age of five, the children make very good progress in their physical development. The nursery class has a special outside playground, with good quality outdoor resources, and this was used well during the inspection week. The children gain in confidence as they play in this area and their physical skills are built on and extended by its use. The children in the reception classes use the infant hall and enjoy working on balancing bars and mats. They are able to follow their teacher's instructions and use their imagination to devise their own way of moving on this equipment. The children have many opportunities to develop their control of simple tools, such as scissors, egg whisks and paintbrushes, and many will meet the learning objects for physical development by the time they are five.
61. The children's skills in art are developed well in all classes through a good variety of activities across a range of media. Children in the nursery use sand mixed with paint to draw textured patterns, they make close-observational drawings, print with their hands and produce large collages to illustrate their work in other areas of the curriculum. In the reception classes this work is built on and extended. The children use pastels to make pictures of flowers, print using cotton reels and mathematical shapes, and paint self-portraits. They learn about what happens when colours are mixed together. In all classes, the children experiment with playdough and make models using boxes, lego and bricks. The children in the nursery enjoy singing well-known songs and nursery rhymes. They follow their teacher's lead and respond enthusiastically with words and actions. They are given opportunities to explore the noises made by different musical instruments and know the difference between loud and quiet sounds. In the reception classes this early experience is suitably extended. The children know how to play untuned

percussion instruments. They explore and devise ways of using these to make happy and sad sounds.

62. Overall, the teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good. A particularly positive feature is the high quality of teamwork between the nursery teacher and the nursery nurses, who are exceptionally able and whose strong contribution makes a great impact upon the work in this area. In the reception classes, the learning support assistants are well-deployed in giving children much-needed individual and group support. All teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of children. Lessons take place in a very calm, purposeful atmosphere, in which routines are well understood and the needs of each child recognised. Very effective planning not only underpins the curriculum, but also ensures a consistent approach to the social development of the children. The progress made by all pupils is very carefully monitored, both formally and informally. This information is used very carefully to plan the next stage of work both for individuals, groups and classes. Highly effective support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and this allows them to make very good progress in relation to their capabilities. In all under-five classrooms high quality displays provide a very bright and stimulating learning environment and add to the very good provision made for all children of this age.

ENGLISH

63. In tests the standards are well below average at both key stages. A number of pupils achieve the levels expected for their ages at seven and 11, but few pupils achieve higher levels, and a significant number achieve lower standards. However, inspection evidence shows that standards are rising to below average, particularly in writing, and this is already seen in the improving test results at the age of seven. Attainment in language skills is well below average on entry to the school, but the children make a good start in this area of learning in the nursery and reception classes. Good quality provision in the older classes builds well on this early achievement so that pupils make good progress in the subject through both key stages, particularly in writing.
64. By the age of seven, pupils speak courteously to adults and to each other, listen carefully to stories and to teachers' instructions and usually respond appropriately to questions. Only a minority explain their ideas clearly and use the range of vocabulary expected for their age. They read simple children's story books with sound fluency and accuracy, and use their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively to read unfamiliar words. Few pupils are able to express opinions concerning the major events and ideas in the stories they read. The pupils write instructions, stories and retell traditional tales, communicating meaning in a sequence of sentences, sometimes correctly marked with capital letters and full stops. Most letters are formed correctly and many common words are spelt accurately. Higher attainers are developing a lively, interesting style, and include descriptive phrases to add detail and emphasis.
65. By the age of 11, pupils listen effectively and with increasing confidence. However, speaking skills are well below average and few pupils are able to develop their ideas or to explain and describe events and opinions clearly to others. They read junior novels and information books with developing fluency and accuracy, and recall the main ideas and events but show limited capacity to discuss their experience and preferences. The skills of locating and using information from books and the internet are well established. Higher attainers read with confidence and deepening levels of understanding. Pupils write in a range of forms, organised appropriately for the task and reader, including autobiography and story. They have learned how to take notes, and use redrafting and editing techniques to improve their work. Pupils develop their ideas logically and are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences to extend meaning. Most words, including those of more than one syllable, are spelt accurately,

- and punctuation within sentences is used with increasing accuracy. Many pupils use a joined handwriting style that is fluent and legible.
66. Pupils at both key stages with special educational needs make sound progress towards the literacy targets on their individual education plans.
 67. There has been substantial improvement since the previous inspection, and this is seen particularly in the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy that has been implemented very effectively. It is having a powerful impact on the progress pupils make, although has not been established long enough for test results to fully reflect this improved progress, particularly at 11. There has also been significant improvement in the quality of management, and in the resources available, particularly the big books and sets of readers acquired for literacy lessons, and the very high quality 'story sacks' available for younger pupils.
 68. The quality of both teaching and learning is good at both key stages. The vast majority of lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Teaching was good or better in 71 per cent of lessons, and very good or excellent in 29 per cent. Teachers have a clear grasp of the requirements of the National Literacy Framework and plan lessons effectively so that whole class introductions, group activities and plenary sessions are all used well to increase pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. They manage the pupils well, presenting new ideas in ways that capture their interest and concentration, and move from one activity to the next at a good pace so that pupils work productively throughout the lesson. A notable strength is the preparation of group tasks that are matched well to the differing needs of pupils within the class. Classroom assistants provide high quality support for pupils with literacy needs.
 69. Characteristic features of good teaching were seen in an excellent lesson in which Year 5 pupils increased their understanding of the purpose and organisation of persuasive writing. The combination of a very good rapport with the pupils and strong subject expertise meant he gave a lively though relaxed presentation, gave clear explanations, and the teaching points made were focused closely on the next step to be learnt, showing high expectations of the pupils' capacity to achieve. As a result, the pupils were clear about what they were learning, were deeply engaged, and showed confidence in sharing their own ideas with the group. The use of partner-talk tasks during the whole class presentation ensured all pupils were actively involved and also helped to promote speaking skills. The plenary session was used well to review learning. Individual efforts were compared with those from the previous lesson so that the pupils themselves recognised the progress they had made. A very good pace was maintained throughout the lesson. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen in Key Stage 2, the class teacher worked well with a small group, but had ineffective strategies for managing the whole class. As a result, many pupils worked at too slow a pace, and made insufficient progress in the time available.
 70. The two teachers, who jointly share responsibility for co-ordinating, manage the subject very well. There has been considerable monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards, with very effective strategies for improving performance. This has resulted in considerable improvement in the teaching of writing and in the progress children make in this aspect of English. Planning for literacy lessons is of high quality and based on the National Literacy Framework, which the school is adapting to meet the needs of its own pupils. Work in other subjects, such as science, is also used well to promote the skills of reading and writing. Speaking and listening skills are promoted in English lessons as well as in all other subjects of the curriculum, and the pupils make good progress in their listening skills. However, as a result of the recent strong emphasis on literacy, there has been insufficient systematic planning for progress in speaking skills. This is now a priority for development since poor speaking skills are limiting pupils' opportunities to progress in reading, writing, and in all other subjects of the curriculum. The school is developing some excellent arrangements for assessing standards and

progress, particularly in writing skills, and these include procedures for pupils to assess their own writing. The school has now identified the need to develop arrangements for assessing speaking and listening.

MATHEMATICS

71. Standards attained by 7 and 11 year olds in last year's national tests were well below the national average. The results for seven years olds compared unfavourably with those for similar schools but results for 11 year olds were in line with those for similar schools. Inspectors found that standards are rising throughout the school as a result of the hard work that has gone into implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Standards attained by 7 and 11 year olds are now close to those expected nationally, particularly in number work. They are broadly average in work on shape, measure and data handling. In aspects of practical mathematics and problem solving, standards are appropriate for younger pupils but below those expected for 11 year olds.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and some outstanding teaching was observed. None of the mathematics lessons seen was unsatisfactory although there are some unsatisfactory elements of provision in Year 4. In all classes, teachers' planning is based securely on the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines. As a result, lessons are very well organised and work is set for the full range of ability within each class. In a Year 2 lesson on the addition of money, the higher attaining group were working with coins to the value of £1, the middle group used coins to make totals of 50p whilst the lower attaining group worked with coins to a value of 20p. In Years 4, 5 and 6, the year groups are set by prior attainment and in Years 5 and 6, the use of an additional teacher enables pupils to work in smaller groups. As a result, pupils receive good individual support and tasks build effectively on what they have already learnt. A very good example was noted in a Year 6 lesson on decimal fractions with the higher attaining group. Pupils ordering sets of decimal fractions received very good support from their teacher as he moved around the class giving help and guidance. Some pupils who found the work more difficult had simplified examples to work with. By the end of the lesson all pupils had made good progress and had a fuller understanding of place value in decimal fractions.
73. A significant strength of the teaching of numeracy lies in the skilful way in which teachers manage the mental and oral sessions at the start of each lesson. These sessions are lively and brisk, stimulating pupils' interest and challenging their thinking. Quick fire questions keep pupils on their toes and they often have explain how they have arrived at their answers. Teachers make very good use of teaching aids such as white boards to ensure that all pupils participate by attempting every calculation and showing the answer simultaneously. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher used a finger puppet to guide pupils as they counted numbers to 10 forwards and backward along a number line. Similarly, teachers of older pupils make very effective use of flip charts and white boards to demonstrate and illustrate mathematical processes. Their clear explanations ensure that pupils fully understand the task in hand and give them confidence to persevere at it. In almost all classes, the quality of relationships between the teacher and pupils is strong, so pupils respect their teacher, are confident to ask questions or say when they need help. The exception to this is in Year 4, where the rapport between the teachers and pupils is less secure and this limits the quality and pace of learning.
74. A notable strength of the teaching in the infant classes lies in the range and quality of the practical activities offered. Teachers are imaginative and pupils enjoy working at the tasks they plan. In a Year R/1 class, the youngest pupils learning about money sorted giant coins in the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' castle. Others bought and sold sweets in the class shop whilst the higher attaining pupils sorted their coins on laminated work cards. There are fewer

opportunities for practical mathematics and problem solving activities further up the school and this is a weakness in the Key Stage 2 curriculum which the school plans to improve. At present, pupils spend much of their lesson working at examples from text books or published work sheets. They rarely have the opportunity to develop their own way of organising their work or to use the knowledge they have gained to solve mathematical problems in practical situations. This limits their personal development as well as their understanding of how to apply mathematics. An example of this was seen in work on data handling. Most of the graph work in pupils' books is based on text book examples rather than data generated by the pupils themselves.

75. The subject owes much of its improvement since the last inspection to the expertise and enthusiasm of the two subject co-ordinators and to the priority that has been given to the subject this year. The programme of classroom monitoring has helped to raise standards in teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2 where weaknesses were noted. Nevertheless this has failed to pick up and address some of the weaknesses still apparent in Year 4, the large amounts of unmarked work, for example, which continue to limit progress in these classes. Another minor weakness in teaching relates to the subject's contribution to pupils' speaking skills. Because older pupils rarely work at collaborative or practical tasks, they have too few opportunities to talk about their work, explain their thinking or develop the ability to use mathematical language confidently.

SCIENCE

76. The inspection findings are that at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils achieve standards below the national average, but that they make satisfactory progress. These judgements are similar to those in the previous 1996 report. Scrutiny of work at the end of Key Stage 1 shows that there is some inconsistency between classes in the range of work presented. In the Year 2 class there is much emphasis upon looking at life processes and living things, for example the life cycle of a butterfly and frog, labelling body parts and an investigation about what a plant needs to grow. In the Year 2/3 class, the pupils follow the Key Stage 2 programme of study and there is evidence of a much broader development of scientific knowledge and understanding. This includes work on the use of electricity and experiments involving friction. The more able pupils use standard measurements when recording their work, but many find it difficult to produce any clear account at all.
77. By the end of the present Key Stage 2, the majority of the pupils achieve standards in line with those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last report. There is little evidence that a significant number of pupils will reach a higher level than average and this is the reason that test results are lower. Overall, the pupils make good progress in this key stage, although there is a dip in achievement in Year 4. In Year 6, the pupils in both classes experience a very wide range of scientific principles, including work with magnets, the properties of materials, aspects of healthy living and seed dispersal. There is evidence of a good understanding of how to set up a fair test, carry out an investigation and record work in a variety of ways, using tables and appropriate measurements such as Newtons. In two very good Year 6 lessons the pupils worked well in groups to build towers made of rolled newspaper. They absorbed a great deal of subject knowledge in the process and extended their understanding of forces, balance and the strength of materials in so doing. At the same time, they were able to draw conclusions from the difficulties they encountered and overcome these in scientific ways. The activity allowed less able pupils, who have difficulty in expressing themselves in speech and writing, to achieve well in a practical situation.
78. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1. Overall, the teachers have a good knowledge of

the subject although there is some variability in their approach to investigative work. In one mixed reception/Year 1 lesson about pushes and pulls, the teacher employed good strategies to arouse the pupils' curiosity and used a puppet to hold their attention. Good questions were asked to develop enquiring minds.

79. Overall, the quality of teaching is also good, but more variable, in Key Stage 2. The school has adopted the successful strategy of using a specialist support teacher in one Year 6 class. Where the teaching is very good, the pupils are highly motivated and enjoy their science lessons. They make significant gains in their learning of scientific principles. Lessons of this calibre were seen in Years 5 and 6. In the good lessons, effective questioning by teachers improves the pupils' understanding and helps them make links with previous work. The teachers are aware of what constitutes a fair test and how to encourage simple investigative work. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and the needs of pupils of differing abilities. In the satisfactory lesson, although many of these elements were present, the pupils were not so highly motivated and they found the follow up worksheet too difficult to complete successfully. The quality of teaching in Year 4 is unsatisfactory, due to too much teacher direction and insufficient pupil participation in investigative activities.
80. The time allocation to science is adequate. It allows sufficient development of all aspects of the work, resulting in a good curriculum balance in Key Stage 2 with appropriate links to health and sex education. There are good cross-curricular links with mathematics, especially through data handling and measuring. The strong Science Club mentioned in the previous report has been disbanded, but the co-ordinators plan to hold a Science Day once a year. A number of visits are arranged which enable pupils to develop their understanding and interest in science and these include pond dipping and a visit to Perlethorpe environmental centre. The Life Science Trailer calls annually.
81. There are two new, enthusiastic co-ordinators for the subject, but at the moment neither has release time in which to work alongside colleagues in classrooms. The new national guidelines for science have been adapted to suit the needs of the school and appropriate units and objectives are being phased in from Years 1 to 4. This planning is to be extended to Years 5 and 6 and should underpin continuity and progression throughout the school. The on-going assessment of pupils' progress is currently left to individual teachers, but it is in the co-ordinators' action plan to develop a whole school version. Once a year the co-ordinators set an assessment task for the pupils in each year group. This year the focus of this has been on Attainment Target 1, with its emphasis on investigative science. Teachers meet together in order to look at examples of the pupils' work and agree the levels of achievement demonstrated by these. The moderated work is then kept in a school portfolio. The purpose of this activity is to improve the teachers' assessment of the standards achieved by their pupils and to make the forecast of test results more accurate.

ART

82. Only two art lessons were observed during the inspection because of the timetable arrangements. Judgements, therefore, have been made on the basis of a scrutiny of planning and pupils' work in folders and on display. These indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. For Key Stage 1 this judgement is below that made in the last report, but in line with that for Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school, the quality of the art produced in the classroom situation is at a standard expected for pupils of this age. It is good or very good when students from Nottingham and Trent University (NTU) work with groups of pupils in the school, which indicates that the potential ability of the pupils is not being sufficiently developed in ordinary lessons.

83. Pupils use a satisfactory, but limited, range of two-dimensional materials, media and techniques to express their ideas. There is little evidence of three-dimensional work and the school has no kiln. The use of art is usually linked to other subject areas. For example, in Year 5 it illustrates aspects of the solar system. Occasionally there are good examples of close-observational work, as in one Year 3 lesson in which pupils were drawing details from an animal picture or from a piece of fruit. However, this skill is not sufficiently built on and extended on a regular basis. The pupils gain a sound knowledge of the work of other artists, for instance that of Mondrian, and copy the style in their own pictures. In one Year 2 lesson observed pupils discussed a variety of pictures by well-known painters and showed an interest in the content and techniques used.
84. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in art to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. However, observation of pupils' work shows that art is appropriately taught and in the two lessons seen the pupils were well behaved and worked co-operatively, sharing equipment and ideas. The present time allocation to the subject is at the moment low by national standards and this results in art lessons being cut short just when pupils are at the height of their enthusiasm and creativity. The pupils' work is carefully presented and colourful displays throughout the buildings help to make the school an attractive and stimulating environment.
85. At present there is no scheme of work for the subject and this results in a lack of progression in the introduction of art skills and techniques throughout the school. It is proposed to use the new national guidelines for art when developing a scheme for implementation in September 2000. The co-ordinator has been very busy planning and introducing the new literacy strategy in his other role as one of the English co-ordinators and has not had sufficient time to devote to this foundation subject. There are no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms and pupils' work is not assessed. There are insufficient links to art from other than Western cultures and the use of information technology is very limited.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

86. Only one lesson was seen during the period of the inspection, and there is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on teaching. However, the evidence from the lesson seen, as well as discussion with pupils and scrutiny of planning and pupils' work, shows that the progress pupils of all abilities make in this subject is unsatisfactory at both key stages.
87. However, there are good examples of work in some classes. Year 1 pupils, for instance, have investigated hinges and applied their knowledge and skills to making models of homes in three dimensions. Year 3 pupils investigated young children's toys and then successfully designed and made their own toys with freely moving wheels.
88. The lack of progress arises largely from weaknesses in planning which fails to ensure that activities build systematically on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. Shortcomings in teachers' expertise in this subject also limit the progress made. These two factors were evident in the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, in which pupils lacked a methodical approach to designing and making, including evaluation and modification. They were also given insufficient opportunity to make their own decisions, for example about method and resources, and to carry these through to the making stage.
89. Although the school has identified shortcomings in its provision and planned a programme of development, there is no co-ordinator for design and technology at present. Current

arrangements for managing the subject are unsatisfactory and there has not been enough improvement since the previous inspection. Development is required in raising teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, in improving the management arrangements, and in implementing a scheme of work that ensures pupils throughout the school make sound progress.

GEOGRAPHY

90. Geography was only seen in Year 1 and Year 4 during the inspection. A scrutiny of work, both in books and on display, combined with discussions with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils indicate that standards have been maintained and progress is satisfactory. Year 2 pupils know how to plot routes from home and around the school. They are able to compare Clifton with the Isle of Sruay. They talk enthusiastically about the visit to Perlethorpe and describe some of the things they learned from this experience, such as the route of their walk. Although they discuss aspects of life in their locality, their suggestions as to how the environment could be improved are limited, for example, to the provision of more play parks. The limited command of geographical vocabulary hinders their further development and inhibits deeper understanding of the subject.
91. During this year, Year 6 pupils have studied the development of settlements, as well as river systems. In discussion, they describe types of settlement, but their understanding of why settlements develop in particular situations is insecure. Although they use some technical vocabulary when talking about rivers, such as source, mouth and meander, their depth of understanding does not include how meanders are formed. They do understand co-ordinates when reading maps. They also talk with some commitment about how man spoils the environment and what needs to be done about this. The recall of geographical facts experienced earlier in their school life is limited and, this inhibits better learning.
92. Changes since the last inspection include a better planning format linked to the recently adopted national guideline, which is being phased in. The use of this guide results in better focused lessons. Higher attaining pupils will also receive greater challenge. The continuation of field trips makes a valuable contribution to the subject.
93. The quality of work in books and on display shows that learning is at least satisfactory. The lesson seen at Year 1 was satisfactorily planned and the management of learning was good. The teacher worked well with individual pupils, but there was not enough challenge for some pupils. Pupils responded well to questions in this lesson and they worked well together. Although they knew what they had to achieve, they were not so clear about how they could improve their work. Teaching and learning in the two lessons in Year 4 were unsatisfactory. In these lessons, unrealistic expectations of what the pupils knew and could do meant that pupils were unable to build on previous learning and little progress was made. Resources were inadequate to fulfil the learning intentions and behaviour was not managed well.
94. The two subject co-ordinators are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. They have supported their colleagues by carrying out an audit of resources and supplementing the provision. The introduction of the national guideline means that the necessary elements of the subject are planned. This should result in the subject being given greater emphasis in the future. It is essential that the development of geographical skills systematically builds on what pupils have already learned. The Youth Hostel experience has an important role in this development.

HISTORY

95. The standard of work attained at the end of each key stage indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress in history throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 are able to describe their feelings when listening to sounds of an air raid and some are beginning to empathise with people who experienced World War II. Few, however, understand what an evacuee is. By Year 6, pupils examine a number of artefacts and relics of the Viking period and are learning to formulate hypotheses and make deductions from this evidence. This work is well supported by a visitor from the Nottingham Castle Museum, whose knowledge and understanding of the subject help to bring it alive and make it more meaningful.
96. Despite this good work, it is evident that pupils' command of appropriate technical language is limited. This is also apparent in discussion with pupils from both Years 2 and 6. Although the pupils can talk about what they have learnt they find it difficult to remember what they have learned or the important vocabulary. This means that their explanations and descriptions are not precise or accurate enough. The over-use of photocopied worksheets does not help pupils to develop their own skills in gathering and presenting information. There also needs to be more clarity in deciding what it is essential for the pupils to learn. Although pupils have worked with time lines and have developed a sense of chronology within each period studied, they are unable to place the periods studied in the correct order. Pupils with special educational needs receiving extra support in their studies. In the lessons observed, higher attaining pupils are challenged by the need to make their own conclusions from the presented evidence. This is also an improvement.
97. Changes since the last inspection include the gradual introduction of the new national scheme of work, which, when fully in place and established will enable teachers to build systematically on what the pupils have already learnt. This is not happening at the moment and means that standards are not as high as they could be. Assessment is addressed by scrutinising displays and pupils' work and this is an area for future development although this is being reviewed in light of its effectiveness. Planning systems have improved and provide a more uniform approach to the subject. They do not yet make the learning build on previous work. To an extent, the concentration on raising standards in literacy and numeracy has resulted in history being marginalized,. The school plans to rectify this situation from September.
98. Teaching in the school is good overall, with some examples of very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. In these lessons teachers encourage pupils to look at evidence, for example, Roman costumes. Pupils are asked to make their observations and make deductions from the evidence, for example, about the way of life of the wearer. Teachers are then very effective in challenging pupils to reconsider their own opinions and refine them in the light of further supplementary information. This dynamic approach makes the subject more relevant to pupils and results in a very good quality of learning. The use of sound effects in Years 2 and 3, as well as first hand accounts from a volunteer helper, also help to provide a good quality of learning. The subject is less successfully taught when teachers have unrealistic expectations of what pupils already know and can do. When this happens, pupils are confused about what is expected of them and the quality of learning suffers.
99. Management of pupils is generally effective, especially by those teachers who actively engage the pupils in discussion about the subject. At these times pupils also learn the social skills of good manners and listening to others' points of view. Teachers organise and resource their lessons well, but sometimes recording of work is undemanding. Pupils enjoy the subject and their participation in the practical aspects, when examining evidence, captures their imagination.

100. The subject has the benefit of two co-ordinators. Both are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and have produced an action plan to address the issues. The introduction of the nationally produced guidelines is a good innovation and, if implemented successfully, will ensure further effective development. The co-ordinators have carried out an audit of resources and have begun to supplement them where necessary. These will be further developed in line with the requirements of the new guidelines.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

101. Standards in information technology are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages. By Year 2 pupils are able to load and save programs without the help of a teacher and can set up the printer to produce their own work. They have a good working knowledge of other machines and how technology helps them in their lives. This includes the younger pupils working tape recorders and operating and programming a floor robot. One class in Year 2 were seen controlling their robot through a set track and some of the more able pupils were beginning to write down the commands in a recognised format. By the end of Year 6 this knowledge has improved. Pupils design their own pages using pictures they have drawn on the computer. They can add text and are able to choose the type of script that they want to use to enhance the design. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not make the same sort of gains in knowledge when using control technology such as by making machines move using computers.
102. The subject has improved well since the last inspection. Each class has regular sessions in a newly constructed computer suite for at least an hour per week. This ensures that all pupils have sufficient time. Teaching is good. The sessions are well organised, the pupils work very hard, concentrate well and consequently their progress in learning through both key stages is good. Careful overall subject planning using the new national scheme of work has resulted in rapid improvement in each lesson. The teachers' own understanding has increased in the last year and further professional training will be provided through the New Opportunities Fund available to all schools.
103. Discussions with pupils indicate how much they enjoy their lessons. They are able to talk in detail about work they have done and its relevance to work in other subjects such as history, English and religious education. The school is presently displaying the story of Jesus. Pictures were created on the computer and these have been merged with text to make posters. In another class the pupils have drawn the designs for a design and technology project. The plans have had text added to explain the materials that are to be used. Teachers are beginning to ensure that IT lessons also increase specific skills in the subject. A project on the Vikings is a good example. The teacher has put together a commercial picture of a Viking ship. This has had label boxes added. The pupils are finding out the name of each caption and adding this to the box. Hence, they are developing historical knowledge as well as learning how to use the cursor, drag and type into boxes and correcting mistakes.
104. The subject has been given a much higher profile within the school. A particular strength of this improvement is the co-ordination of the subject. His expertise is supplemented by the work of a conscientious classroom assistant who works with the classteacher during the lessons in the computer suite. Her expertise enables these teachers, especially those who are less confident, to be trained in the use of the equipment and the programs within each lesson. This is ensuring that all children now receive their full entitlement. As yet, there is much less improvement in the use of computers within the classroom. They are not used well to link

with work in other subjects on a daily basis. This is recognised by the school as an area that needs to be developed. There are plans already underway for all teachers to undergo a stringent programme of training to increase their curriculum understanding. This will be completed by the end of next year. The subject is rapidly improving through the many initiatives that have been started and this is having an impact and progress in learning both in information technology and other subjects.

MUSIC

105. Apart from whole key stage singing sessions, only two music lessons were seen during the inspection. The standard of singing is satisfactory, although the quality has deteriorated at the end of Key Stage 2, in comparison with the previous report. The school has recognised this and intends to employ an accompanist in the near future. Unfortunately, the cessation of the school choir also has an adverse effect on standards. There is a satisfactory development of the exploration of sounds at both key stages. The school acknowledges an underdevelopment of composing, performing and evaluating and awaits the introduction of national guidelines in September in order to address this weakness. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are adversely affected by the impact of practice for national tests in Year 6. This results in poor provision in the subject.
106. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed is good. Lessons are well planned, which leads to an appropriate structure. A good link is made with literacy in Year 1, so that pupils relate their sounds to the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. In this lesson, pupils choose instruments to reflect characters in the story and they know the names of instruments. Sometimes this work becomes over directed by the teacher, so that pupils do not get enough opportunity to explore and experiment. In Year 3, visual stimuli are used well to encourage pupils to consider the use of sounds to reflect mood and occasion. In this lesson the teacher questions well to challenge pupils' ideas and to promote further consideration. Hence, pupils learn that the method of playing can determine an instrument's suitability to express a mood. Pupils also develop the ability to express their feelings in response to music. In whole key stage singing sessions the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils demonstrate a satisfactory repertoire, but teachers do not take the opportunity to refine and improve performance. Pupils enjoy the subject and respond well to the opportunities given.
107. Planned coverage of the subject has improved, but this has not been in place for long enough to have a sustained impact. Continuity and progression, therefore, are not firmly established. Staff and pupils describe the impact of school concerts, which play an important part in the life of the school. It is essential that the everyday curriculum is taught systematically in order to provide a good musical education and an enriched experience for all pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

108. Pupils make suitable progress in learning through Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Although the school has rightly targeted the improvement in literacy and numeracy much thought and care has been given to ensuring that pupils still have sufficient opportunities to have regular sessions of physical education. These include a wide range of activities including gymnastics, games, dance and swimming and outdoor adventurous activities during Key Stage 2.

109. Younger pupils are able to complete short sequences of work to show that they can balance and travel in different directions. Their skills at this are variable although all work hard and are interested. They try very hard to do what is asked of them and this is noticeable through the quiet concentration when they are working. Few lessons were seen but from observations in the playground pupils show that they are able to work well in small groups. During Key Stage 2 pupils are encouraged to take on more complicated tasks. Teachers explain and plan their lessons to develop particular skills such as throwing, catching and the development in the use of space. This helps them understand the rules and strategies of team games. All pupils are able to go swimming during this key stage and a good number fulfil the requirement of swimming unaided for 25 metres. The school takes pupils away on residential trips and this enables more adventurous activities such as orienteering.
110. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their physical education lessons. They can recall various games that they have played and can explain how they have improved over a number of years. A number of those asked were proud of their achievements in competitions and these are also celebrated by displaying press photos and during assemblies. The school has a good range of equipment, a suitable hall for dance and gymnastics and a large playground area and field. The latter is used for sports days and large team games. The profile of the subject remains high and has continued to improve.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

111. The judgements about RE have been made on the basis of very limited evidence. Only one lesson was observed and there was only a small selection of class work available for scrutiny. Discussions with older pupils and evidence from teachers' planning indicates that there has been some limited improvement in this subject since the last inspection. Nevertheless, standards being achieved by pupils in Year 6 are still slightly below those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus because teachers do not allocate enough time to the subject in their planning.
112. Because only one lesson was seen, it was not possible to make a clear judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. In the one lesson observed in Year 5, the teaching was exemplary. The teacher used the life of Martin Luther King to further pupils' insight into the concept of Christian commitment. He did this through skilful questioning, lively presentation and opportunities for role play. Pupils responded with high levels of interest, enthusiasm and participation. By the end of the lesson the pupils had a much clearer understanding of how Martin Luther King's Christian beliefs motivated and informed his crusade.
113. Discussions with pupils indicated that RE has been studied in each class, but that some teachers give more time to it than others. Work on Judaism in Year 3 is of a good standard. Pupils have studied aspects of Jewish beliefs and religious customs and have written about the importance the synagogue and the Sabbath to Jewish believers. Their writing on places and times that are special to them is sensitive and thoughtful. Other work on display demonstrates a developing understanding of the importance of symbol in religious belief and is evidence of systematic, detailed study over the term. In other classes there was only a small amount of written work in pupils' books, some of which bore little relation to the teacher's long term plan.
114. A strength on the school's provision for the subject lies in the contribution made by the weekly and class assemblies. These are well planned to cover a broad range of topics which have a religious or moral theme. Teachers ensure that they contain opportunities for pupils to reflect on and respond to the story by relating it to their own experiences. In a Year 2 class assembly on the Prodigal Son, pupils could remember what they had learnt the previous week and knew

that the Prodigal's friends were 'false friends'. Through skilful questioning and role play, the teacher led them to an understanding of how the Prodigal must have felt as he returned home to his father, and the emotions that the father and son must have experienced. These assemblies are used effectively as a means of celebrating customs and festivals from other faiths as well as those from the Christian tradition. Often they are presented in a lively way, sometimes by visiting speakers, and pupils respond with interest and enjoyment. Assemblies are less effective when they are used as a substitute for an RE lesson, particularly when delivered to a wide age range, because they do not allow skills and knowledge to be taught systematically from year to year.

115. The scheme of work for RE is currently being reviewed and a new scheme is planned for September. The subject co-ordinators are aware of the present shortcomings and have appropriate plans in place to address them. These include improving the range of RE resources to match the requirements of the new syllabus.