

INSPECTION REPORT

BURNSIDE FIRST SCHOOL

CRAMLINGTON

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122266

Headteacher: Mrs Jill Dove

Reporting inspector: Miss Joyce Taylor
4275

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th March 2000

Inspection number: 189447

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community School
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Durham Road Cramlington Northumberland
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Doctor Alan Dove
Date of previous inspection:	16 th – 19 th September 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Miss Joyce Taylor	Registered inspector	Religious Education Art Physical Education Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school. The school's results and pupils' achievements. The leadership and management.
Mrs Joan Cross	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. Partnership with parents and carers. Pupils' welfare, health and safety.
Mr Brian Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Music Special educational needs	
Mr Stephen Rigby	Team inspector	English Design technology Geography History	The teaching and learning.
Mrs Beryl Johnson	Team inspector	Science Children under five	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Burnside First School educates 273 boys and girls aged 4 to 9 years. It is about the same size as most primary schools. The area served by the school is of privately owned houses and rented or council owned properties. Census data shows the socio-economic circumstances of the area to be average overall. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. 8% of the children have special educational needs, including statements; this is well below average. The school includes a part-time introductory class for children who are due to begin in Reception the following term and the general level of the pupils' standards on entry into the Reception classes is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective. The standards achieved by the children are good overall and very good in the Reception and Year 1 classes. The quality of teaching is good and in 30% of the lessons seen the teaching was very good or excellent. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is very good leadership by the headteacher. The priorities for improvement are good and there is a very clear idea of how the school should move in the future.
- There is very good management by the headteacher. Key teachers are given responsibilities for some improvements; developments are checked and judged for progress.
- Governors are very effective and they have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve.
- There is a clear sense of purpose from the teachers, especially key staff who understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are experienced in taking action to improve the main development areas.
- The teaching is good, particularly in the Reception and Year 1 classes. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- The children's standards in literacy and numeracy are very good and the standards in physical education, religious education and information technology are good. The children make good progress overall and the progress in Reception and Year 1 is very good.
- The provision for moral and social development is very good. The behaviour of the children, provision for their personal development and relationships are very good. The procedures for child protection and the pupils' welfare are very good.
- The parents' view of the school is very good and the school provides excellent links with the parents.

What could be improved

There are no significant weaknesses in the school but the following less important weaknesses, which have already been identified by the school, should be improved:

- The early years provision in the introductory class needs to be broader.
- The provision in history, geography, design technology and art.
- The library provision throughout the school.
- The children's cultural development.
- The reports to parents.
- The resources in history and geography.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the school improvement plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in September 1996 the strong leadership and management have already led to many improvements. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, particularly in literacy and numeracy and is especially strong in the Reception and Year 1 classes. The leadership and management of the school are better than they were and are now very good overall. The standards in English, mathematics and science show a considerable improvement and are now well above average. The standards in information technology, religious education and physical education have improved. The provision for the children's welfare and their relationships and behaviour are all improved and are now very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
					5% highest nationally A*
Reading	C	A	A	A	well above average A
Writing	B	A	A	A	above average B
Mathematics	C	A*	A*	A*	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The school's results in national tests for the Year 2 children show significant strengths. The children's achievements are among the highest 5% nationally for mathematics and are well above average for reading and writing. All results have improved since 1997 with the strongest improvement in mathematics. The school has set targets to maintain the high standards in mathematics and to reach similar standards for reading and writing by increasing the number of children reaching above average standards. The standards achieved in the work seen during the inspection were satisfactory in the introductory class and very good in Reception, Years 1 and 2. The standards are good in Key Stage 2. The standards in information technology, religious education and physical education are good and they are sound in all the other subjects. The children use their skills in literacy and numeracy well to support their work in the foundation subjects. The provision in art, geography and history needs strengthening if the standards are to rise above the average as the children have too little time to develop their skills effectively.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The children are committed and enthusiastic. They are eager to come to school and enjoy their lessons but occasionally their attention wanders when the teaching is less effective.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The children behave very well and there were no instances of inappropriate behaviour or bullying seen.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. The children form very good relationships. They act on their own good ideas, like tidying up, and they understand how their behaviour affects others.
Attendance	Their attendance is good and almost all of the children arrive punctually for school.

There have been no exclusions for several years. The children show care when dealing with others and work very well together. The children's attendance is good overall; pupils of this age have a tendency to catch infections very easily and yet the attendance matches that for schools with a greater proportion of older pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Good' means that the teaching is better than average.

The quality of teaching is good overall. 22% is satisfactory, 48% is good and 30% is very good or excellent. There are examples of very good teaching in all year groups but this quality is particularly strong in Reception and Year 1. The teaching is particularly good in English and mathematics where the teachers have had the most training. The teaching meets the needs of all the children and those with above and below average achievement are supported well. The best teaching is lively, planned well and very accurately provides the children with challenging learning. As a result the children are eager to concentrate and enjoy their lessons. On rare occasions the children's attention wanders when the lessons are not managed so well. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection which found over 16% of the teaching to be unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Very good provision for literacy and numeracy and good or sound provision in the other subjects. The curriculum planning is good. The children in the introductory class have unsatisfactory provision overall because their curriculum is limited and some areas of learning are rarely taught. Their opportunities for learning in literacy and numeracy are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The arrangements are designed well and the children are making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. There are good opportunities for spiritual development in assemblies and in other subjects like music and religious education. Moral and social development are supported very well and the children are gaining a very good understanding. The provision for their cultural development is satisfactory but more attention needs to be given to understanding how people live in the wider world.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school monitors the pupils' attainment well and uses this information effectively to plan for further learning. The monitoring and support of the children's personal development is very good.
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The school's partnership with the parents is very good. There are excellent links between the school and the parents and the parents' views are frequently sought and acted on by the school. The parents are involved well in the children's learning. They are provided with very good information by the school although there is insufficient detail about the pupils' achievements and some subjects in some of the reports. The curriculum meets the requirements overall, it is supported by clear documents and the lessons are enjoyable. There are, however, inappropriate differences in the opportunities provided for the children who are under five years old in the Introductory class, who receive a restricted curriculum, and the children in the Reception classes who are taught all the areas of learning appropriate to pupils of this age.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership and management by the headteacher. She has a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has planned and successfully implemented ways of improving teaching and standards. She is supported well by senior staff who lead their own areas to a good or very good level.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very clear about the improvements needed in the school. They work effectively to make the school better and play a significant part in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The head and key staff observe teaching throughout the school in literacy and numeracy and advise on improvements. The children's test results are reviewed regularly and clear targets are set. The improvements are later checked and discussed.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The finance and office systems are clear and effective. The budget is used well to improve aspects of the school.

The headteacher has had a very strong impact on the school since the last inspection. Since the last inspection the targets of raising the standards of children's work and improving the quality of teaching have both been achieved successfully. The senior teachers have been very effective in raising the children's standards in literacy, numeracy and science throughout the school and are beginning to examine the work in some of the other subjects where attainment is not so high. There are sufficient teachers and support staff, the accommodation is good and the learning resources are satisfactory. When buying resources the school makes sure that the best prices are found.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school. • They make good progress. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The teaching is good. • The school is approachable when there are questions or problems. • The children are expected to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping the children become more mature and responsible. • It works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children get the wrong amount of work to do at home. • There is not enough information about how the children are getting on. • There are not enough activities after school and the range is not wide enough

56% of the parents returned the questionnaire and 27 parents attended the meeting before the inspection. This is a good response. Inspection judgements support the parents' positive views and support the view that more information should be provided about how the children are getting on. The children get an appropriate amount of homework and the after-school activities are typical for schools of this type.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The children who are five years old or younger are attaining very good standards in language and literacy and mathematics and good standards in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical education. They reach satisfactory standards in creative development. The children enter the introductory class with average standards and by the time they enter Key Stage 1 their standards are well above average in literacy and numeracy and above average in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. During their time in the reception classes they make very good progress in literacy and numeracy and good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Less time is given to creative development and in this area their standards of attainment and their progress are satisfactory. The children make particularly good progress in their personal development and by the time they are five years old they are generally confident and eager to talk about their work.
2. At the end of Key Stage 1 the test results for the children aged seven give a picture of continuing high standards with results well above the national average for reading and writing and very high for mathematics. Results are just as good when compared to similar schools. In 1997 the results for reading and writing improved strongly and, with mathematics, the results improved again in 1998 and again in 1999. The results have remained well above average for similar schools since 1998 for reading, writing and very high for mathematics. In science the teachers' assessments show that the children's standards are very high when compared with the national picture and well above the average for similar schools. The inspectors' observations of the work of the Year 4 children, who are the oldest in the school, show that their standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average. The work of the present Year 2 children shows that their standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and they are likely to maintain the school's high results when they take their national tests later in the year. There is evidence that the children in other year groups are also likely to achieve high standards when they come to take the tests in the future. The school has set appropriate targets for improving the number of children who reach higher than average results in their work and national tests. This figure is already very high for mathematics but less so for aspects of English, especially writing. Over the past four years the performance of the girls has been better than the boys and the school has worked hard to raise the standards of the boys by concentrating on improving their basic skills. During the inspection the standards of boys and girls were similar.
3. The basic skills of reading and writing are taught regularly and very effectively during literacy lessons and almost all of the children throughout the school are making good and sometimes very good progress. The staff are very good at teaching these early skills and as a result there are many children who are working at higher than average levels. The pupils' strengths in reading and writing mean that, in all subjects, their performance is supported by a good understanding of written tasks and the ability to record their own information effectively. The basic

calculating skills of numeracy are being taught systematically and almost all of the children are able to recall number facts like their tables and calculate in their heads. Significant improvements in the teaching in literacy and numeracy mean that most of the children are achieving at an above average or very high level and the good progress they make in each year means that the gap between the children's standards and the standards expected nationally is gradually widening. The improvements in teaching and the children's good attitudes to learning should maintain these standards in the future. In science the standards are very high and have improved significantly since the last inspection.

4. In Year 2 and Year 4 the children's attainment in information technology is good; they have a wide range of skills and a very secure understanding. The direct teaching of computer skills in each class is raising the children's standards. The children use information technology to support other subjects and good examples of work were seen linked to English, mathematics, geography, history and religious education. In religious education and physical education the standards are good and in music, history, geography, design technology and art the standards are satisfactory.
5. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of very well managed and carefully planned provision which gives the extra help the children need. Their needs are precisely identified and the class teachers use the children's individual education plans to ensure they provide work at the correct level. The children who need extra support in Years 1 and 2 are involved in an integrated learning programme which is providing them with very appropriate work and is improving their standards. The school has no especially gifted or talented pupils but the teachers have rightly begun to identify the potentially higher attaining children and expect higher standards from them. As a result some of these children attain very high standards, particularly in mathematics, because they receive a challenging and yet supportive curriculum. This is linked to the good support all of the pupils receive and the positive atmosphere created for learning in almost all lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The pupils generally have very positive attitudes towards their work. They listen attentively to their teachers' explanations and usually remain focused on what they are doing both individually and when required to collaborate in small groups. Particularly striking is the way in which those in the reception and Year 1 classes, including the under-fives, approach the tasks set for them so maturely. For example, they waste no time whatsoever in settling down to practical activities following whole class literacy and numeracy lesson introductions and they maintain concentration very well for their age. The school's oldest pupils also work purposefully in most lessons, as seen, for example, when Year 4 were using 'The Hobbit' to investigate how writers create an imaginary world. On occasions, however, when the teaching is less lively, the pupils' attitudes are no better than satisfactory and their attention wanders. In these cases pupils sometimes lack motivation, perseverance and independence and do not get on with their work as well as they should.
7. The pupils are better behaved now than they were four years ago. Throughout the school day, whether in lessons, assembly, the dining hall or the playground, the pupils' behaviour is very good. This reflects the parents' views about the standard of behaviour in school. In the playground, pupils of all ages play happily together in friendship groups that include those with special educational needs. Equipment is

provided for those who want to skip, play football or bat and large shuttlecock games and this channels their energies effectively. Ample space remains for those who prefer more gentle play activities. The school's youngest pupils in the introductory class have their own secure area and are also very well behaved. No anti-social behaviour was seen during the inspection. There have been no exclusions from the school.

8. The pupils' personal development is very good. They are very friendly, open and outgoing. They are eager to chat to visitors about their work and have a great sense of pride in their school. They are well mannered, polite and courteous. For example, the pupils are very good at saying they are sorry when they accidentally knock into one another and at holding doors open for others to pass through. Relationships are very good between children of all ages and between the pupils and all adults. Care and concern for others is very evident in the pupils. They increasingly show initiative as they get older and enjoy organising and taking responsibility when given the opportunity to do so. The children respect one another's feelings and opinions, even when different from their own and do not mock those who give wrong answers. They are reverent during collective worship and sing the hymns and songs wholeheartedly. They handle the school's resources carefully, share and take turns sensibly, and tidy away well at the end of lessons.
9. The level of attendance is slightly above the national average for primary schools. This is good considering that the school, being a first school, has a greater proportion of younger children than most primary schools. There are no unauthorised absences and the vast majority of pupils arrive punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection all the lessons were satisfactory or better and 47% were good, with 30% being very good or excellent. Examples of good practice were seen in all year groups with some particularly strong teaching in the Reception and Year 1 classes. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when over 16% of the lessons were unsatisfactory and fewer lessons were judged to be good or very good. There are a number of factors that account for this improvement. There has been an increase in staff training and the teachers have improved their understanding of how children learn. Some new staff have been appointed and all of the staff have changed and developed their teaching styles. Other factors include the setting of the pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons and this has proved to be successful. These improvements have resulted in all pupils reaching higher standards of work in their lessons.
11. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy is very good and this is where the best teaching happens consistently. The teachers show a very good understanding of the basic skills of reading, writing and calculation and they understand how to best extend the children's learning. As a result the children learn these skills very effectively and use them successfully in other curriculum areas. This was particularly noticeable in a literacy lesson in Year 3 where the teacher skilfully used questioning to extend the children's understanding of how the characters in books are developed by authors. In a mathematics lesson in a Reception class, the teacher's very good subject knowledge and lively manner enabled the children to extend their understanding very effectively by building on their earlier learning. The teaching in these subjects has been monitored and evaluated by the headteacher

and the two subject coordinators and useful advice has been given to the teachers. Additionally the teachers have observed model lessons. This has ensured that the best practice has been shared amongst the whole staff. In the other subjects, while some of the teaching is very good, the quality is not so consistent.

12. Where the teaching is excellent or very good the teachers stimulate the children with exciting and challenging open-ended tasks. They have a very good understanding of the subject and know exactly what the children need to learn next. They ask wide ranging and probing questions to gain an understanding of how much the children have understood and to help the children judge how successful their work is. For example in a music lesson in Year 1 the when children were using the percussion instruments the teacher questioned them very effectively about how the sounds they were making could be made to reflect their feelings. Where the teaching is good, the planning is thorough and clear and the individual needs of pupils of all abilities are catered for. This enables the teachers to build well on previous learning. For example in a science lesson in Year 2 the teacher explained very clearly to the children how their work was part of a series of lessons and they would need to recall and use in the future what they were currently learning. The teachers set a rapid pace for the lessons and have a good understanding of the different subjects. For example in a physical education lesson in Year 3 the teacher demonstrated to the children the art of overarm bowling and the children were then coached individually to improve their performances. The lessons are lively and the teachers give the children interesting tasks, for example in a religious education lesson in Year 4 the children were successfully challenged when they were asked to conduct interviews based on simulations of the parables told by Jesus.
13. Where the teaching is satisfactory the teachers plan and organise the lessons effectively but without the clarity and awareness of earlier learning that was seen in the good lessons. The teachers' own knowledge of the curriculum subjects, for example in art, sometimes reveals uncertainties that result in tasks that do not stretch the children enough. All the teachers show a good level of care and concern for the children but some lessons lack good pace and time is not always used well and occasionally lessons are not organised well enough which leads to some lack of concentration by the children.
14. The children's work is marked consistently and the teachers write positive and constructive comments to extend the children's thinking. During lessons the teachers assess the children's learning and use this information well to help in setting the children's individual targets. When the children are reminded of their specific targets in lessons, they work very productively throughout the lesson in an attempt to achieve the targets set.
15. The Additional Literacy Support staff work effectively with those pupils who need extra help. The work prepared for the children with special educational needs is very clear and thorough and gives good support. The class teachers provide additional support to any children who are having difficulties and at the end of the lessons short sessions are used well to discuss any common mistakes or misunderstandings.
16. Homework is given in both key stages. The school is working closely with the parents and there are good opportunities for the parents and the teachers to discuss the work the children do at home. There are agreements about the different kinds of homework the children will receive. This includes spellings, reading and

phonics work and is a sound feature of the school. The homework supports the work in the classrooms effectively. Most of the parents are content with the homework arrangements.

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

17. Overall, the school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities. For the children under five, the provision is satisfactory and it is good for the pupils in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school provides a relevant and broad curriculum although there are inconsistencies in the balance of time given to a limited number of subjects, for example art. The main reason for this apparent imbalance is that the school has rightly decided to give more of its time to ensuring effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all subjects and religious education. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements.
18. The curriculum for the children of five years old and under heavily emphasises the importance that the school places on gaining good skills, knowledge and understanding in literacy and numeracy. Although the curriculum appropriately follows the nationally agreed early learning goals in the Reception classes the opportunity for the children to learn sufficiently through exploration, investigation and play is reduced in the introductory class. All the teachers and the classroom assistant work effectively to provide a wide range of opportunities based on the recommended areas of learning. The curriculum emphasises personal, social and emotional development, helping to establish a firm foundation for the very good behaviour and attitudes to learning of the older pupils. The school's provision of large play equipment in the secure outdoor area is unsatisfactory. The governors and staff have identified the weaknesses in the provision for the youngest children and designs for an extended learning area have already been drawn and costed.
19. The curriculum provision in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good and meets statutory requirements. The teachers work effectively to plan and provide a wide range of opportunities for the children to gain experience in all the subjects of the National Curriculum. The recommended literacy and numeracy lessons have been implemented and the teachers plan in year groups ensuring that all of the children in a year group cover the same areas of the curriculum. The curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection and it now includes work that will challenge the children. In Key Stage 2 the curriculum also provides the pupils with a strong foundation for the next stage of their education, when transferring to the middle school. An 'accelerated learning programme' has recently been put into place which has extended the teachers' understanding of how the children learn.
20. There is good provision for the pupils with special educational needs. The children have appropriate individual education plans, work is set to meet the targets in the plans and teachers regularly evaluate progress towards the targets. The class teachers make good provision for the pupils with special educational need by differentiating work to match abilities and monitoring their progress towards targets for learning. This ensures that the plans are implemented well. Higher achieving pupils receive good provision in subjects and they make good progress.
21. The parents are informed well about their children's progress and the provision that the school makes. They contribute to assessments and reviews of statements. The children reach good standards of attainment against the learning targets set for them in their individual education plans and their progress is good. The children in Years 1 and 2 are supported by the school's 'integrated learning programme'.

22. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The school has clubs for bird watching, drama, sports and instrumental tuition. All after school clubs are run by the teachers except for music which is taken by a qualified musician.
23. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Pupils' awareness of drugs is raised successfully through lessons on beneficial and harmful substances. Health education is mostly covered through the topic Health and Growth in Year 2 science. A particular strength is that visitors are invited in to talk to the pupils. For example, the nurse has spoken about the safe use of medicines, and parents with babies and toddlers have brought them into school to explain about child development. In line with school policy, sex education is not formally taught.
24. The school uses the community well to raise standards and add to their personal development. The environmental area, created in partnership with a local nature group and English Nature, is a significant asset for first-hand experiences in science. Theatre groups, a local professional football club, musicians and art residencies provide opportunities for the children to work with professionals. The parents, governors and others from the wider community also visit to share expertise and experiences with the pupils. Educational visits, for example, to Marlish Farm and Craster, further broaden the curriculum but these are only occasional and lack the variety typically seen for the age range.
25. Effective relationships are also established with partner institutions. The school joins with others in the neighbourhood for arts projects and for the annual Key Stage 2 sports day. Links with local schools are strong through joint projects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

26. The pupils' personal development is fostered well. There are particular strengths in social and moral development, both of which are very good, and in the heightening of the children's spiritual awareness, which is good. The cultural aspect has improved since the previous inspection to a satisfactory position but still more remains to be done.
27. The daily, broadly Christian, acts of collective worship vary in grouping, leadership and venue through the week. Sometimes they take place in class bases rather than the hall, and sometimes they include the very youngest pupils in the introductory class. This variety helps the leaders to make the worship relevant to all of the pupils' personal lives and experiences and enables some of it to be more intimate. For example assemblies are made special for the pupils by using live music, fresh flowers or photographs. The pupils are mostly given sufficient time to reflect upon the messages and occasionally they share with others the prayers that they have written themselves. The lovely inner courtyard with its garden and seating provides a quiet haven for the children where they can sit and watch for birds coming to feed. There are further strengths in provision for promoting spiritual development when pupils are given opportunities to talk about their feelings, this was seen to good effect in a Year 1 religious education lesson about the mixed emotions experienced by a child who moved to a new school. The pupils' spiritual development would be even better if more such opportunities were planned in lessons through, for example, greater appreciation of art, music and literature.

28. The school's code of conduct and its policies on promoting positive behaviour and eliminating bullying very successfully help pupils to know the difference between right and wrong behaviour. High expectations are set for the pupils and all the staff are consistent in their approach to achieving such standards, which helps the pupils to be clear about the boundaries. Pupils are actively encouraged to apologise for any wrongdoing and trustworthiness is also promoted successfully. For example, artefacts of sentimental value are left on display without fear of deliberate damage or pilfering.
29. In its excellent value statement the school rightly emphasises that all the members of a community must feel valued to develop a sense of belonging. Towards this end the school has many initiatives to make all of the pupils and their families feel special and cherished. For example, the children about to join the reception class receive letters from the Year 4 pupils to welcome them, and those pupils who move mid-session from other schools are given 'mentors' in the same class to befriend them and show them round. Much thought and effort goes into making the internal environment stimulating and out of the ordinary, for example through thought provoking displays in the main entrance.
30. The pupils are actively encouraged to relate positively to one another, and to all the adults they encounter during the school day. They are encouraged to be helpful and considerate to others, including those they may not know personally, for example, by raising money or collecting goods in response to national and international appeals. The children's use of their own initiative is now supported well, a reported weakness four years ago. For example, they have entirely organised a 'Blue Peter' sale in school and conducted a survey of Year 4's opinions about soon transferring to middle school. There could be more opportunities to take responsibility for minor duties around the school.
31. The school's provision for raising the children's awareness of cultural diversity has improved since the previous inspection, particularly with regard to the teaching of world faiths in religious education, and the greatly increased range of suitable fiction available. However, provision for cultural development as a whole is only at a satisfactory level because the range of opportunities for the pupils to appreciate their own and others' cultural traditions, particularly through first-hand experiences, is rather limited. For example, there are no planned visits to places of worship, museums or art galleries, no representatives from different faiths visiting to talk to the pupils, nor link-ups with schools of greater multi-ethnic intake. On the positive side, professional theatre groups, musicians and artists occasionally visit to run workshops and the pupils have joined with other schools in a celebration of local music and dance. Music lessons and the dance component of physical education give pupils further opportunities to appreciate their own and other countries' cultural heritage but the contribution made to this by art is weaker than typically seen.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. This aspect of the school's provision was good at the time of the previous inspection and is even better now. The staff know the pupils and their families well and are sensitive to each child's particular circumstances and needs. All are very caring and, with appropriate firmness or tenderness, do their utmost to support and guide the pupils, and assure their well-being.

33. Health and safety guidance and training for the staff on safety issues are very good and there is a useful leaflet on safety for volunteers who help in school. The mid-day staff have received extensive training on their important role. This is a major factor in securing the consistently good behaviour and continuity of care seen throughout the school day. All staff are trained to be alert to signs of abuse or neglect. Child protection procedures for the local area are followed. All staff take responsibility for letting the teachers know about any concerns they have.
34. Positive behaviour is very successfully promoted and monitored through consistent implementation of the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies. These policies are shared succinctly with the whole school community in the leaflet 'Making Burnside Better'. This leaflet shows that the school is not complacent about the previously reported good behaviour of the pupils by beginning with the premise that 'you don't have to be bad to get better.' Suitable records are kept of incidents and parents involved when appropriate.
35. Good procedures are in place for promoting regular and punctual attendance. The parents are told how vital these are for the children to do well at school. The parents are required to notify the school before morning break should their child be absent so that all are clear as to the children's whereabouts, an important safety measure. The parents are good at doing this and the school makes enquiries if they neglect to do so. As a result there are no unauthorised absences. The headteacher is watchful for latecomers and makes known to the parents the disruptive effect of persistent lateness.
36. Arrangements for the assessment of the pupils' knowledge and skills are generally good. There is an overall policy document that identifies the range and purposes of the assessment strategies used by the school. Indications of overall expectations for each year group are analysed thoroughly and comprehensively based on the baseline assessments of the Reception children, the Key Stage 1 national test results for reading, writing and mathematics and the results of optional tests taken by the children in Years 3 and 4. Information gained when these assessments take place is not yet analysed to identify the National Curriculum levels attained by individual children so there is no means of recording or speeding the children's individual rates of progress. There are however strategies for the identification of the children's personal strengths and weaknesses and to set specific targets for improvement.
37. Targets for literacy and numeracy are set for each of the children. These are proving useful and are identifying what the children should learn next. In all subjects there are useful assessment check-lists based on the National Curriculum programmes of study which are filled in to ensure that all of the children cover the expected curriculum. These also help to show the teachers what should be taught next.
38. The pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly, and their targets are linked with their individual education plans. These documents are used to inform planning and are scrutinised carefully and effectively to identify progress and future targets. The assessment coordinator has a good understanding of what needs to be developed further and has prepared a new and clear policy document.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school's links with the parents have improved over the years and are now excellent. A wealth of information is shared with them about the school's policies and procedures, how and what the children are taught, and the progress they make. The parents' views of the school are very positive and there is little that significantly dissatisfies them apart from the range of activities provided outside lessons. Inspectors agree with this perspective because, although there is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs, fewer educational visits are organised than is typical.
40. The school shares much more information with the parents than is commonly the case in primary schools. Some of this is through attractive, clearly written leaflets and other documents but much is by word of mouth at meetings, as this is well liked by the parents. For example, the school hall was recently packed with families for a demonstration numeracy lesson. A strengthening of relationships between parents and teachers results from the greater understanding the information brings. Curriculum newsletters and topic information sheets are issued to parents that include ways in which they might help their children. The prospectus includes an outline of what is taught to each year group in every subject of the National Curriculum and religious education, including the areas of learning for pupils under the age of five. Such attention to detail is rarely found in school brochures.
41. Information is not only given to the parents but also sought from them through regular surveys and the findings have resulted in some changes of practice. For example, the parents indicated that they would like more information about their children's progress and the school responded by providing termly written reports and termly consultations. Whilst the Autumn and Spring term written reports are perfectly acceptable, the full annual progress report in the summer, using an extended version of the same format, does not enable the school to report clearly and consistently on information communication technology. The full report should also be clearer about what the children can do and whether this is typical for their age, rather than what they have covered in the various subjects. However, the termly consultations with the parents, at which almost all of the pupils are represented, are used very successfully to review attainment and progress as well as each child's individual targets for improvement. The parents of the few children who are not represented are given this information at a later time. The school, through its survey, has asked the parents whether they like this system and has received a positive response.
42. The parents are informed if their child is found to have special educational needs. Appropriate written comments are included in the termly reports on progress towards the targets set for the children through individual education plans, and discussed at the termly formal consultations with parents. This approach is effective and purposeful.
43. The results of national tests and assessments are closely analysed against the national picture and clearly reported to parents in a way that enables them to tell at a glance how well the school is doing and the relative performance of boys and girls.
44. Parents support their children's learning well through hearing them read, by ensuring that homework is completed. A number of parents and governors help on a voluntary basis in school, some of whom have trained as classroom assistants. All the helpers are well deployed for the benefit of the pupils. The parent and teacher

association works hard to raise valuable funds for additional resources such as books and information technology equipment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The quality of the leadership and management given by the headteacher are strengths of the school. They are both very good. The leadership and management of the school have improved significantly since the last inspection. This is because the headteacher has identified the need to improve the standards of attainment and the quality of teaching and has set in motion the necessary action to make this happen. She has accurately analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the school and created a very clear vision for its future direction. She has a measured but ambitious approach to change and is realistic in the steps she takes to bring this about. Since the recent resignation of the deputy head, the headteacher is building a senior management team that can provide her with appropriate support and give guidance to the teachers. This recent development is already having an impact in the key areas of staff development and raising standards. The school has decided not to make a new appointment of a deputy but to use the skills of the senior teachers instead.
46. The governing body also makes a very good contribution to the leadership of the school. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and offer the headteacher very good support in her drive for school improvement. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and is knowledgeable about the school's priorities thanks to the very high quality information that is received from the headteacher. Her reports to governors rightly emphasise aspects of the school's performance so that the governing body is increasingly well-placed to influence the future direction of the school
47. Communications are also very good within the school. The headteacher's bulletins and the structure of staff and year-group meetings help to build a committed team of staff who work well together towards a shared goal of improved standards. The aims of the school are quite clear in its daily life.
48. A key issue in the last inspection report noted the need for the governors to identify priorities for development and agree how they would recognise the successful outcomes of any action taken to meet the priorities. There has been considerable improvement in the school's identification of priorities and in the monitoring and evaluation of its work since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher very swiftly assessed the needs of the school in this area and made very good use of the strengths within the staff and the governing body to carry out immediate monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and standards. The outcomes of this have been very well implemented and have had a remarkable impact on practice in the school. As a result the quality of teaching is now higher than often found in school inspections, whereas at the time of the last inspection 16% of it was unsatisfactory. In the meantime the headteacher has developed and strengthened the role of the curriculum co-ordinators so that they now feel confident and effective in leading their subjects. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have already had the opportunity to monitor their subjects and have made valuable improvements to them. The headteacher skilfully delegates responsibility and is building a strong layer of middle management in the school.

49. The school development plan is good because it focuses firmly on the school's essential priorities of attainment, teaching and behaviour and is being closely followed to bring about step-by-step development and systematic improvement. The format of the plan is suitable for staff to use readily as an everyday working document. The headteacher has successfully involved the staff and governors in writing and implementing the plan.
50. Financial management in the school is good. The school's budget is managed well and expenditure is carefully targeted in line with the priorities identified in the school's development plan. Additional grants to the school for specific reasons are used appropriately for their intended purposes. There were many recommendations in the last local authority audit, but all these have been implemented. Now that the school does not need to find the salary for a deputy there is, for the first time in several years, a sufficient budget to fund the targets. The school pays good attention to the principles of best value for example by frequently checking the views of the parents when developments, like a review of the homework policy, are planned.
51. The school is well staffed to meet the needs of all pupils and to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and the areas of learning for the youngest children. There is a good blend of appropriately qualified young and more experienced teachers. Mentoring of the newly qualified teacher is working well. All of the teaching staff have been involved in staff development interviews which have effectively clarified their strengths and identified areas for further improvement. They have written job descriptions which reflect their roles and identify for them the responsibilities they must carry out. Appropriate members of staff have attended national strategy training in literacy and numeracy and the provision for in-service training within the school has been of high quality. Since the previous inspection there has been a purposeful development of staff expertise and the teamwork approach of the staff continues to have a positive effect on the quality of education and raising standards.
52. The accommodation is good, it is reasonably spacious, well maintained and cleaned to a high standard. The extensive grounds that include hard surfaced and grassed areas for sports and pond, log pile, meadow and copse for environmental work are a significant asset. A major weakness, however, stems from the lack of a suitably central room for housing a school library. This reduces equality of access to the books and prevents the pupils from becoming familiar with the cataloguing systems they may encounter when they move on to other schools and in public libraries. The attractive, colourful and fascinating displays that adorn the public areas and classrooms successfully stimulate the children both visually and mentally.
53. The school's resources are adequate in quality and quantity to support most areas of the curriculum. In English and physical education they have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The stock of books is much greater now and appropriate attention has been paid to improving the range of fiction representing cultural diversity. The deficiencies reported in history resources four years ago remain and the same now applies to geography. Provision for the children under the age of five in the introductory class and Reception classes is inconsistent, with limited resources available for the youngest children, but the school has already identified this as a weakness and made plans for improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. There are no significant weaknesses in the school and so there are no key issues for action. The following weaknesses, although not of key significance should be considered by the headteacher, the governors and staff for inclusion in the school improvement plan.
- Implement the plans to improve the early years provision in the introductory class. (paragraphs 18, 53, 55,)
 - Improve the provision in history, geography, design technology and art as a means of raising the children's standards in these subjects. (paragraphs 1, 66, 93, 97, 102)

- Improve the library provision throughout the school by presenting the books more attractively and using them to improve the teaching of information retrieval. (paragraphs 52, 70)
- Broaden the children's cultural development by extending links with the local ethnic minority centres of worship and providing a wider view of peoples' lives in other countries. (paragraph 31)
- Ensure that the reports to parents give sufficient information about the children's standards and include reference to information technology in all the reports. (paragraph 41)
- Improve the resources in history and geography. (paragraphs 53, 102)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	26	48	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	273
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	28	25	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	27
	Girls	22	23	23
	Total	47	48	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	91	94
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	27	28
	Girls	23	24	25
	Total	48	51	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91	96	100
	National	82	86	87

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	9
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	196
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23:1
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998
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	£
Total income	355413
Total expenditure	357715
Expenditure per pupil	1414
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1863
Balance carried forward to next year	-4165

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	267
Number of questionnaires returned	150

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	39	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	44	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	45	11	0	1
The teaching is good.	68	30	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	41	10	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	25	1	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	53	35	8	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	63	35	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	37	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	38	17	7	13

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. The provision for children under five is satisfactory overall with strong provision in the Reception classes. The majority of the children will achieve the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five and many will exceed them. The children enter school in the term after their fourth birthday and spend one term in an introductory class where the curriculum is limited to literacy and numeracy. The children then move into one of two Reception classes where the curriculum broadens. The good induction arrangements include a visit to the school by the children prior to entry and a meeting for parents to explain the organisation of the school, the curriculum and how the children can be given help at home with their learning. This enables the children to settle quickly into the school. The parents are highly involved in children's learning through helping in lessons and by giving support at home with reading homework and they find this helpful and useful. The school improvement plan identifies the early years provision as an area for urgent development as there is a need to broaden the curriculum for the youngest children to take account of all the areas of learning identified in the desirable outcomes. A budget has been agreed with the local authority for building improvements and a school budget has been identified to supplement the resources.
56. Within two weeks of entry into the Reception classes baseline assessment is carried out and the results are used well to inform future planning for the children. This continues until the early learning goals are achieved. The children are assessed again at the end of Reception, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Earliest assessment shows that on entry to the school the majority of children are of broadly average attainment. By the age of five, accurate records kept by the early years co-ordinator show that children make good and sometimes very good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
57. In the introductory class, the curriculum is limited to literacy and numeracy and organised to the national literacy and numeracy framework. This heavily emphasises the importance the school places on children gaining good skills, knowledge and understanding in these areas. However, the children are not gaining knowledge and skills in some other important areas such as investigating and learning through play, and having access to a variety of materials like sand, water and construction toys. In the Reception classes the morning session is divided between literacy and numeracy using the national strategies. During the afternoon session the children work on the other areas of learning. Curriculum planning is good. Medium term planning is effectively monitored in all classes and daily planning is comprehensive and the teachers' objectives for learning are clear. The children skilfully manipulate a range of small tools and equipment. Furthermore the children follow an accelerated learning programme, which is part of an initiative shared by several local schools. At the end of Reception, records accurately show that the children have made very good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
58. By the age of five, the personal and social development of the children is well above average and virtually all of them achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes before they are five. They are encouraged to develop very good relationships with each

other, have a very positive attitude to learning and are confident with school routines. The children's interest and involvement in their work are very good and no incidents of bullying or intolerance were seen. However, the children are not always encouraged to be independent as they have insufficient opportunities to learn through exploration and discovery. The children are directed by their teachers for most of their learning and when moving into groups for activities, are told what is expected and how they are to complete work. They are eager to learn and they listen well to their teachers and each other. The introductory class teacher is also very sensitive in the way she handles the children and this is reflected in the way they treat each other. The early years staff all place a strong emphasis on developing self-confidence and have a very warm, reassuring manner towards both children and parents, which effectively instils confidence. The children welcome new learning and become excited when it takes place, for example when feeling and describing hidden objects. They enjoyed learning new words such as squeezey, fluffy and jagged. All the children are independent in going to the toilet and changing for physical education lessons.

59. The teaching of personal and social education is good. The teachers speak clearly in lessons and children understand the tasks they are asked to carry out. They manage the children's behaviour well such as not running in class, taking turns to speak and not shouting out in oral work. Those children who are reluctant to join in discussion are encouraged to take part and the teachers support the children who need to improve. At times the children are expected to sit still for long periods particularly at the start of lessons but nevertheless they are well behaved and concentrate.
60. In language and literacy, the majority of the children reach standards well above average by the time they are five. A good proportion of the children are working appropriately at the earliest level of the national curriculum. This is due to the heavy emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy from their entry into the school. By the end of the first term the children know all the letters of the alphabet by name and sound and can chant the alphabet to music. Many of the children can use their knowledge to build simple three letter words. Their progress is satisfactory in speaking and listening and they eagerly join in discussions. The children enjoy books and can discuss the contents. They can say what they like and dislike and the higher attaining children are beginning to read. They can talk about the books they have at home such as 'Peter Rabbit', 'Little Miss Naughty' and Mr. Men books.
61. Writing is taught well. In the introductory class the children are copying over or under the teacher's writing and the higher attaining children attempt successfully to write their own name. In Reception, the children make very good progress with their reading and writing and are taught to write systematically each week. The teachers use good questioning skills to enhance the children's learning and from the time they enter school in the introductory class, grammar is stressed when reading big books. The children know a full stop and capital letter, and the higher attaining children know the question mark and can describe the difference between a statement and a question. The early years co-ordinator has made several high quality big books for the children covering areas of their own immediate experience such as 'Doris the Dinner Lady' for teaching the sound 'd', full stops, and capital letters.
62. By the time they are five years old the children's standards in mathematics are very good and almost all of them are reaching or exceeding the early learning goals. In

the introductory class they look at a 'big book' and pick out a variety of shapes in the pictures. They can match a number to a number symbol and can say what is one more than, and one less than a given number. They can cut out shapes and stick them in the correct area of a worksheet. In the reception classes, the majority of children are working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum and a minority is at Level 2. Most of the children know the names of tens and units, and the higher attainers, hundreds, tens and units. No opportunities for the children to use or extend their mathematical ideas through playing with a variety of materials like bricks or water were seen.

63. In the introductory class, the teaching of numeracy is good. It is taught for half the morning session. The children are taught the meaning of the word numeral, can count to ten and back and can count along a line. The teacher makes sure all children have a chance to answer questions. When working on shape the teacher gave a good description of square, triangle, oblong and circle and the children had clearly learned and could say how many sides and corners each had. In the Reception classes the teaching of numeracy is also good. In one lesson it was excellent because of lively teaching and a very clear understanding by the teacher of what the children needed to learn next. Lessons are planned well with clear objectives. The children concentrate well and enthusiastically join in with activities. As a result they make very good progress. Extension work is available for the higher attaining children. In the first part of one of the lessons the teacher used a computer monitor to generate numbers for splitting in tens and units without checking if children were close enough to see this clearly and some of them were unable to participate fully in the lesson.
64. By the time they are five, children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good and they make good progress. In the introductory class the children understand the passage of time when talking about what they do during the school day. They are aware of the changing seasons and can say that it is spring because the daffodils have bloomed. They name a range of animals and say whether they live in our country or where it is hot. In the Reception classes a high proportion of the teaching is done through topics, such as exploring the five senses. Teachers extend the pupils' knowledge of smell, touch and hearing for example using the feely box. They learn about materials and their properties and extend their descriptive vocabulary. The children's physical development is good and they are achieving the recommended standards. They are able to use tools competently, for example when writing and cutting out. They are active and poised in physical education lessons and at playtimes.
65. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is good overall. Teachers provide a wide range of challenging activities such as how things taste and feel or how to make a collage and explore texture. There is ample opportunity for children to develop their understanding and skill of information technology. There are sufficient computers and interesting and appropriate programmes. By the age of five, the children make satisfactory progress. Physical education lessons in the hall challenge the children appropriately and they are expected to develop skills such as throwing and catching balls. No outdoor work was seen during the inspection. Due to a lack of outdoor equipment the children are restricted in the development of climbing and balancing skills.
66. Creative development is unsatisfactory in the introductory class because there is very limited creative work. The children occasionally have an opportunity to paint,

but not to use moulding materials. There are no constructional toys for building or role play area for extending the imagination and resources are poor. In the Reception classes the children's creative development is satisfactory. Activities such as observational drawing, cutting and sticking and some design, modelling and painting of dwellings can be seen. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is very limited in the introductory class and confined to directed topic work in Reception but the teachers have a good understanding of how to extend the children's skills. Children are using paints and other media for observational drawing and can produce good work.

ENGLISH

67. The pupils' attainment in English on entry into Reception is average but by the time they leave their standards are very good. Standards are very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of the pupils have made good progress and the highest attaining children have made very good progress. The national tests for 1999 show that the pupils achieve well above the national average in reading and writing. The results are also well above the average for schools of a similar type. Boys did less well than girls in reading and writing and this reflects the national picture. The school's targets, based on the teachers' assessments for Key Stage 1 in 2000, suggest that this has been resolved and achievement for boys and girls is as expected. By the end of Year 4 the children's attainment remains good with the lower achieving pupils reaching the national average in the optional tests the school uses and the higher achieving pupils reaching standards expected of average pupils two years older. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection throughout the subject. Each year the standards have improved and they continue to rise. The children's progress is constantly above average with each year group steadily building on the pupils' previous attainment. This steady, good progress is a strength of the school and is reflected in the schools assessment results.

Speaking and Listening.

68. The children's speaking and listening skills are very good. They listen attentively within the class lessons to both the teacher and to other pupils. In all classes the pupils are sufficiently confident to be involved in classroom discussion and they participate fully in question and answer sessions. In all classes the children are given the opportunity and time to express their opinions. Clear and expressive speech are encouraged by the teachers in shared reading and the children respond accordingly, reading with feeling and bringing the characters to life, using their voices to good effect.

Reading.

69. The pupils' progress in reading over both key stages is good. Most make rapid improvement in fluency, accuracy and understanding in Key Stage 1. They master the skills of building words from the sounds of the letters and using the pictures and the sentences they are reading to enable them to understand increasingly complex texts as they move through Key Stage 2. The children have a range of graded reading schemes available including a collection of big books to support the literacy lessons. Reading is taught effectively within the literacy hour, in shared and group reading sessions and when the whole class reads together. In addition books are shared at home with the families. A careful record of comments and progress is

made by staff and parents. The school has a much lower number of children attaining in reading at below the nationally expected levels than is typical and these children maintain their enthusiasm and confidence and make steady progress. The literacy support staff work with the pupils of lower attainment and help them make sufficiently good progress to achieve the national averages by the end of Year 4.

70. The older children read enthusiastically and with confidence and most of them read at an independent level. The reading scheme books challenge them correctly and all of the pupils have a high level of comprehension of their texts. They are particularly adept at working out new words by using all the clues available to them, particularly those based on the meaning of the sentences they are reading. The majority of the children have a love of reading and many of them discuss their books at home and confirm that they also enjoy reading for pleasure. However only a minority of pupils visit the public library and few express any particular preference of a story or author. The school does not have a central library. Class libraries are organised within each year group, which allows two classes to use the books provided. The book provision is good with good quality and range of texts but the quality of organisation within these class libraries varies. The libraries are rarely arranged attractively, books are stacked on top of one another and not organised so that the children can develop the appropriate library skills. The children use their reading skills to help them in other subjects of the curriculum. They read textbooks and instructions with growing confidence. The school is planning to extend the use of literacy skills more broadly across the curriculum.

Writing.

71. The standards of the children's writing are very good in both key stages. By the end of each key stage, many pupils reach well above average with only a small proportion at the levels expected for their age. By the time the lower attaining children reach Year 4 most of them have achieved the average standard. All of the pupils have good spelling, punctuation and grammatical skills by this age. In the literacy lessons, the children develop a good knowledge of the technical vocabulary that enables them to discuss how writing is organised and many are very interested in this knowledge. Part of the literacy lessons is used to promote the children's writing skills and work of good quality is often the result. The highest achieving pupils receive work that appropriately challenges them. This is partly a result of the school's setting policy which enables the teachers to work with a narrower ability range and also due to the good understanding of the teachers who give different work to the different groups of children in each set. The written work produced by the pupils in the literacy lessons is of a good standard and the children are able to write longer pieces of work that require concentration and allow them to effectively use the writing skills they have been taught. While the pupils' creative writing is of high quality, writing in the other subjects is sometimes less effective, being mostly short pieces in which the argument or the plot is not well enough developed. For example, some of the history in Key Stage 2 relies too heavily on simplistic worksheets when the children are capable of sustaining argument, description and analysis.
72. Handwriting is of a high standard throughout the school. On entry into the school the children are taught from a carefully selected scheme which requires the children to learn joined-up writing from the very beginning. Practice from the scheme is regular and the results are excellent, with the quality of presentation greatly enhancing the work produced. The higher attaining pupils' handwriting is at an

above average level for Year 6 by the time they are in Year 4. The teachers set a good example by consistently providing the children with good models of their own cursive handwriting based on the scheme.

73. Written homework is set regularly and it is marked well. Spellings are regularly taught and practised and often the children take them home before being tested. The homework is also used to support previously taught class work. Most of the homework is completed and it is marked and returned to the pupils with constructive and supportive comments. In addition reading books are taken home on a regular basis.

Other factors affecting achievement

74. In the literacy lessons the pupils are attentive and enthusiastic. Their conduct is of a high standard and little time is lost due to inappropriate behaviour. The lessons move on at a good pace and the children's interest is always maintained.
75. Since the last inspection there has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching. The staff have undertaken further training into how children learn and they are now expert teachers of English. For example they encourage the children to revise and proof read their work and to use word webs and take notes. In addition to these changes in teaching methods the year groups are now streamed. The results have been very good, particularly in Reception and Year 1 classes, with standards improving substantially. Day to day assessments by the teachers are good and they have a firm understanding of the progress individual children make. The teachers marking of the children's work is consistently good and this is helpful in identifying the pupils' next steps. The quality of recording is good and a regular sampling of the children's work occurs to check the standards. There is a comprehensive school policy statement that effectively supports the work of the staff and there is a collection of work which shows the standards to be achieved. This is up-dated regularly.
76. The coordinator for English has only been in post for a short time. She is however proving to be a valuable help to colleagues who are keen to ask her opinions. She has been able to monitor and evaluate her colleagues' teaching and monitors all planning on a regular basis. From her monitoring and observations she has been able to write an accurate action plan that outlines the further needs of the subject.

MATHEMATICS

77. At the time of the last inspection the school's performance was below the level expected nationally. In 1998 there was a significant improvement and for the past two years the school's performance has been very high in comparison. In the most recent national tests for pupils aged seven, the proportion of pupils achieving the level expected was above the national average and the proportion achieving the higher level was very high when compared nationally. The school's results were among the highest 5% both nationally and when compared to similar schools. Work seen during the inspection indicates that the standards currently being achieved are very high for pupils aged seven and that the number of children who are on course to achieve a higher level (Level 3) is likely to be slightly higher than previous years. In Key Stage 2 the standards currently being achieved are very high. The previous inspection reported that attainment in mathematics was below the national average. Standards in mathematics have clearly shown great improvement since that time.

78. In Key Stage 1, the pupils demonstrate very good skills in numeracy. They have developed a range of strategies involving a very good knowledge of number facts which enable them to carry out calculations in their heads. Most have a good understanding of place value and recognise and use numbers up to 1000. They can recognise odd and even numbers and can count in sequences of 2, 5 and 10 both forwards and backwards. The pupils in Year 2 can multiply a two-digit number by 3 and 4 and can add and subtract two digit numbers. They work confidently with standard units of measurement and solve simple money problems that involve giving change. In the area of shape they can name two-dimensional shapes of up to six sides and know the names of some solid shapes, such as cube, cuboid, sphere and cylinder. The vast majority can recognise o'clock, half past, quarter past and quarter to the hour. The higher attaining children know times in between and know about the relationship between analogue and digital time. They show a good understanding of the days of the week and months of the year and can put them in order.
79. In Key Stage 2, the pupils work confidently with fractions but do not yet know the relationship between these fractions and their equivalent percentage or decimal. They can read timetables and can do calculations involving the use of a calendar. They understand perimeter and that the area of a rectangle can be calculated from knowing its length and breadth. They measure angles and know what supplementary and complementary angles are. Their work is presented neatly and they use tables of data, diagrams and graphs to communicate their mathematical ideas effectively.
80. Throughout the school the pupils with special educational needs are supported well by their class teachers and, as a result, they make good progress with basic skills in relation to their ability. Individual education plans are acted upon and the teachers refer to these in their planning, which helps to build up the pupils' understanding and confidence.
81. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good overall within a range from satisfactory to excellent. One in five of the lessons was excellent; almost half were judged to be good or very good and the rest were satisfactory. The best teaching was seen in Reception, Year 1 and Year 3. A strength of the teaching is the very effective planning to cater for all levels of ability in the class and the excellent subject knowledge of the teachers. As a result the children settle quickly at the beginning of the lesson and listen carefully to their teachers. They respond well to the mental activities and are eager to improve.
82. In all of the lessons observed the teachers asked open-ended and challenging questions to bring out the children's previous knowledge and help to develop their learning. In a Year 1 class the children were adding and subtracting 11 from given numbers and, through careful questioning, were able to explain their strategies for doing this. In Reception there was always excellent pace to the lessons and children were set targets to finish work. In the more ordinary lessons in Year 2 this pace was lacking. For example in one lesson the children had to stop and join in the summary session before they had finished their written tasks because too much time was lost explaining the tasks. In most lessons, challenging tasks were set and the teachers' expected the children to be successful. For example in a Year 3 class the children were calculating number sequences using two consecutive numbers to find the step up or down and working with negative numbers. The good quality teaching

encourages the children to concentrate well on the tasks throughout the lessons and seek help when necessary.

83. Except for information technology there is little evidence to show that other subjects are contributing to the pupils' development in numeracy.
84. Although the coordinator has only been in post a short time she provides good leadership and is having a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching and raising the standards in mathematics. She monitors the planning and demonstrates mathematics lessons for colleagues. Teaching has been monitored by the headteacher and assessments completed at the end of each half-term. Two of the teachers in the school have been appointed as leading teachers of mathematics by the local authority. Other teachers from across the authority have observed lessons taught by these two teachers.

SCIENCE

85. The teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that the pupils' results were well above the national average with all of them achieving at least the expected Level 2 and 40% reaching the higher Level 3. These standards are among the highest 5% when compared with schools nationally and are well above the average for similar schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the school did not reach the national averages. By the end of Year 4, the majority of pupils leave the school achieving the expected Level 3 of the National Curriculum, with a minority of the higher attaining children achieving the higher Level 4. Their progress is good throughout the school.
86. During the inspection the standards of work seen were good in all classes. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of the pupils can classify materials effectively; for example through a study of their properties such as hard or soft, rough or smooth. They can recognise readily the type of materials used to make everyday objects like scissors, pencils, spoons and straws and understand that some materials are natural, but shaped by people. The pupils are clear about the characteristics of living and non-living things and the ways in which they are different; most particularly that living things need food, air and water. This leads naturally to their good understanding of the human body and the importance of, for example, smell, hearing and touch. The children develop their investigative skills through the study of the school's environmental areas of woodland, hedgerow, log pile and pond. They can compare the area with a previous visit made to a local environmental area. Furthermore, they are picking up the vocabulary that is useful in scientific and everyday usage; for example predict and habitats.
87. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 they have further developed their investigative skills and have become competent and rightly inquisitive. They can discuss what is meant by a fair test when, for example, testing porous rocks. They understand that they need to be precise as to how many drops of water they are going to use on each sample of rock. They extend their scientific vocabulary, understanding terms like permeable and they hypothesise about what might happen. The higher attaining pupils understand conduction and transference of heat when they observe that the bottom of a candle melts when stood in a metal tray. The children are able to develop good techniques for writing-up experiments and follow a style that relies on their literacy skills of method, findings, and conclusion. However in many cases there is a heavy reliance on worksheets to record results,

which means they have too few opportunities to develop their own methods of recording their findings. Good progress can be seen in their use of tables and charts to illustrate their findings.

88. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. The majority of lessons observed during the inspection were good with one very good and one satisfactory lesson. Teachers plan effectively with clear objectives for their lessons. The planning is appropriate for the age of the pupils and uses previous attainment to set targets for individual pupils. For example in Year 2 the pupils know about the life cycle of the frog and use observational skills to enhance their learning. They use their new knowledge to order pictures of the frogs development in the correct sequence. Only one of the children already knew all of the aspects of metamorphosis and they were all very interested in learning the whole process. The teachers use a good range of methods; for example in Reception the pupils enjoy and respond well to opportunities they get to investigate in the 'feely box', predicting by the sense of touch what an object is. Introductions to lessons are detailed and objectives explained clearly to the pupils. The pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn, the activities are planned well and discussions at the end of lessons are good. The teachers check the pupils' learning, show examples of work and extend thinking skills, through good questioning. The pupils enjoy their science and show a very good interest in their work. They behave well which reflects the good management by teachers. Lessons have a good pace and promote a good response from the children.
89. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly when there is effective collaboration with the support staff. This enables these pupils to progress satisfactorily using the same work as other pupils but learning at an appropriate rate. There is a bird watching club in Years 2 and 3 which effectively extends the pupils' knowledge.

ART

90. The standards are typical for children of this age and their learning develops at a satisfactory pace. They are able to use the media effectively and in the lessons seen they were beginning to develop an appreciation of their own work and that of others. The standards match those seen during the previous inspection.
91. The children's work is effectively displayed around the school and in the classrooms. It enhances the public areas of the school and helps to make the school welcoming and interesting to visitors. In Year 1 there are good quality patterns made from cut paper using several shades of one colour and using black paper on bright colours. In Year 2 daffodils have been painted using water colours and these show a good level of observational skills. The children's paintings using ranges of red are less precise and careful. In Year 3 the children have painted large and colourful ancient Egyptian mummies using appropriate detail and considerable care. They have also made good quality models as part of the design technology curriculum that use their art skill well. In Year 4 there are good detailed drawings of Aztec warriors but painting work using shades of blue is less careful and thoughtful.
92. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. They increase the range of art resources they use and gain greater awareness of how their work is seen by others. Their progress in drawing is good. They increase their overall awareness of colour and

gain an understanding of its importance in creating impact. Satisfactory progress is made in their knowledge of famous artists and styles and in producing their own work in the style of these artists.

93. The pupils' finished work indicates that the teaching is usually sound and the teaching in lessons observed during the inspection was also satisfactory. The teachers provide an effective balance of clear support for the children while expecting them to try hard and work well and the work is interesting and challenging. Generally the teachers explain to the children what they are looking for and there are few opportunities for the children to develop individual ideas. This prevents the pupils from making better progress. The teachers have secure knowledge of how to develop the pupils' skills using a range of media but the subject knowledge, while satisfactory overall is not good enough to raise the children's standards above the ordinary. Art lessons are organised well, with resources prepared in advance. Activities in individual lessons are chosen carefully for their purpose and the learning objectives are clear in the planning.
94. The examples of completed work throughout the school show little individuality within each class and indicate that the children are not expected to bring appropriately creative responses to their work. The co-ordinator is a newly qualified teacher and she will assume full responsibility for art in September 2000. Already she is preparing for the role with enthusiasm. She receives teachers' planning, but is not yet involved in the direct monitoring or evaluation of the teaching of art and currently has little effect on the standards achieved by the children throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. The standards are typical for children of this age. This has not changed since the time of the last inspection.
96. There is evidence of textile work in Year 4 with pupils, as part of their humanities work, drawing designs for a money container and using simple stitching techniques to make it. Displays of this work include appropriate technical vocabulary. Attractive designs and junk models of monsters with pneumatic moving parts are on display in Year 3. In Year 2 there is photographic evidence of food technology where the children, supported by parents, designed a sandwich. The displays show the sequences of the task and again uses appropriate terminology. In Year 1 the construction of houses using card and appropriate joining techniques was integrated into the humanities work in the class. This range of work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
97. The range of tools and provision of a range of materials are satisfactory though thin and some of the resources are not stored well. For example, the soft fabric equipment is inappropriately stored with available textiles. The school has a range of useful construction kits available in both key stages. An audit of resources and tools has taken place but is now in need of updating as there are too few hard materials and some of the equipment is not sufficiently accessible.
98. There is a useful policy statement that follows the National Curriculum and is supported by recently published optional guidelines. The role of the coordinator is clearly defined along with the aims for the subject. The coordinator monitors the subject through scrutiny of the teachers' planning every half term. The school has

identified the policy statement, audit of resources and role of the coordinator as areas of review for September 2000.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

99. The standards are typical for pupils of this age and the pupils make satisfactory progress. Since the last inspection the standards in geography have remained typical whilst there has been an improvement in the standards in history which were below average.
100. By the end of Key Stage 1 most of the pupils are able to place themselves on a local map of the British Isles. They can also identify the different types of local housing such as semi detached, terraced and bungalow and they recognise the different characteristics of the buildings. They are unable to draw any comparisons between buildings of different ages. In Year 2 most of the children are able to use maps to find places of interest but are unable to identify major geographical features on a map or globe such as continents and oceans. In Year 4 most of the children understand the points of a compass and are able to locate certain features such as continents on a globe. In history the children are able to identify features of the Aztec, ancient Greek and ancient Egyptian civilisations and are familiar with the respective religions and social structures. They have some knowledge of chronology through their work on the Tudor period and its relationship to events in recent history. The pupils are however unaware of the famous people who have lived and events which have taken place within their own area, for example, George Stephenson and the development of the railways.
101. The teaching that was observed was good or better. The children responded positively and were well motivated by the questioning and the lively pace of the lessons. The work of the highest attaining children showed that the teachers expected them to reach high standards, especially in their longer pieces of writing. The special needs pupils were also set appropriate targets that were supported well by giving more spoken and written instructions, and more pictures to help them. The school has developed a humanities policy statement that clearly defines the relationship between geography and history. The school has adopted the optional schemes of work provided nationally and uses these alongside new topics for Key Stage 1. This has been effective and has supported the teachers in their planning. For example, visits to the local sea life centre and coastal area have enhanced the curriculum and enabled the children to improve their understanding of their local environment. Liaison with the local middle school has also ensured improved coverage in some aspects of the Key Stage 2 curriculum.
102. The coordinator currently keeps a check on the curriculum coverage through looking at long and medium term planning within both key stages. As yet there is little formal evaluative feedback given to the teachers to help them improve their work. Assessment sheets linked to the National Curriculum levels have recently been introduced and these help the teachers to see what has been covered. There is a helpful file showing samples of the children's work. The developing role of information technology in the school has enhanced the humanities curriculum with the Key Stage 1 pupils developing a database of places they have visited. In addition the increasing use of a C.D. ROM resource in Key Stage 2 makes a positive contribution. The resources for the subjects are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient globes and atlases and too few collections of replica artefacts, books and posters to support the history curriculum.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

103. The standards for the oldest pupils in the school are above those expected nationally and all of the children make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
104. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have gained confidence in keyboard skills and can select items from a screen menu. Reception children use the mouse effectively to perform a variety of tasks, such as manipulating images and selecting icons. These basic skills are built upon throughout Years 1 and 2. Keyboard skills develop steadily throughout the key stage with the pupils showing a growing awareness of the options that are open to them. For example some of the Year 2 pupils were observed changing the size and style of their lettering. By the end of the key stage the children have had experience of an appropriate range of computer programs which they use effectively. In Key Stage 2 the pupils know how to access various files and look at the file names. They know how to locate errors using the cursor direction keys and how to delete by both backspacing and by highlighting and pressing delete.
105. In the lessons observed the teaching was good overall with a little satisfactory or very good teaching observed. The teachers manage the children well and the children enjoy the lessons and behave sensibly and responsibly when using the computers. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and the lessons are successful because they focus upon teaching specific skills such as creating spreadsheets or understanding how to enter data into a graph program. The younger pupils are familiar with the everyday uses of technology. They understand that many of the household appliances operate and are controlled by technology.
106. The coordinator leads the subject well. She offers advice and support to colleagues on the use of the hardware and software. Since the last inspection a new scheme has been introduced and new resources have been purchased. The school has commenced the New Opportunity Fund training for teachers and this will add further impetus to the rate of progress in providing an effective information technology curriculum for the pupils. Further development is planned in line with the receipt of funding from national resources.
107. Information technology is used well in most subjects of the curriculum. The staff have worked effectively to teach the children how to use their skills in an appropriate range of situations, for example in recording mathematical findings in grids and charts.

MUSIC

108. In the lessons which were observed the standards were higher than those found in most schools. The standards during the last inspection were found to be satisfactory but not enough music was seen during the present inspection to make an overall judgement.
109. The standards of singing are satisfactory and the children sing melodies of hymns and songs with reasonable accuracy. The pupils throughout the school are able to sing with a good sense of pitch and rhythm. They can follow a melody closely and show good control of their voices to produce a pleasing sound. The younger

children can keep a simple beat and join in the action songs with great enjoyment. In the lessons seen the children's attitudes towards the subject were usually very good. They enjoy the lessons, behave well and respond to the teacher's instructions.

110. The teaching in the lessons seen was always good. Lessons are planned effectively and have a good balance between the children participating and listening. In the best lesson, in Year 1, the children understood that music can create different moods and effects. They were able to name and play different percussion instruments and perform a song with an awareness of the other children.
111. The teachers follow a detailed scheme which gives them confidence to teach the subject. This ensures that skills are taught in a systematic way. The resources are of good quality and are accessible to all the pupils. The coordinator leads the subject well and helps other teachers improve their work. Planning is monitored and children are given opportunities to perform for wider audiences.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. The standards achieved in physical education exceed those that are typical for children of these ages. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the standards were found to be average. Throughout the school the children make good progress and their achievements in acquiring skills and understanding are developed well.
113. During the inspection much of the work focused on games and the children were seen to be able to send and receive balls well. In Year 1 they throw and catch carefully with a partner and are beginning to learn to throw from a variety of positions including kneeling, sitting and standing. In Year 2 the children's accuracy and power in throwing is good overall and in Year 3 the precision and distance in throwing is developing well. In Year 4 the children worked at gymnastics and show an appropriate range of satisfactory movements and poise.
114. The teaching is generally good and all of the teachers expect a lot of the children. The lessons are planned well and are interesting and as a result the children concentrate and try very hard to improve their performance. Good strategies are used to help the children become fit and healthy like following in a line to jog around the playground. This is enjoyed by the children and many of them can see that their teacher is fitter than they are. The teachers demonstrate new skills like bowling and coach the children in groups and individually. The lessons are lively and the children respond with enthusiasm.
115. The coordinator has very recently taken responsibility for the subject. She is very interested in physical education and has good understanding of the subject. She works closely with the previous coordinator who supported her colleagues well and has developed their confidence and subject knowledge to a good level. There is a good range of clubs linked to physical education which improve the children's standards in the subject

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. The standards of work of the oldest children exceed those indicated in the Agreed Syllabus and all of the children make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection which reported that attainment was in line with the Agreed Syllabus throughout the school and that the children's progress was satisfactory.
117. In Key Stage 1 the children encounter a selection of Old and New Testament stories and stories from other major world faiths. They are familiar with Christian and other festivals and are beginning to appreciate that events of importance to a belief underpin the celebration. They have begun to investigate artefacts and symbols belonging to different faiths and are beginning to understand the value and meaning of religious objects. For example a Year 2 class was acquainted with a selection of artefacts representing aspects of Judaism and the daily lives of Jewish people. Knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and other faiths are introduced well and the pupils have the opportunity to relate their studies to their daily lives. They are introduced to moral and social aspects of behaviour linked to religion and can relate important events and feelings of their own. This is contributing well to the development of the pupils' ability to reflect upon their own and others' experiences.

118. The children's good progress in Key Stage 1 is sustained throughout Years 3 and 4 and the teachers build effectively on previous knowledge. Through their own writing the pupils are beginning to recognise that religion has a language of its own. For example a Year 4 class which was discussing the parables of Jesus was able to write brief scripts for role-play using some of the original words. By the end of Year 4 the pupils have a deeper understanding of the Christian religion, Sikhism, Islam and other faiths. They are developing an awareness of the significance of symbols to faiths, beliefs and ways of living. A well organised display of baptism clothes and artefacts in Year 4 provided the children with examples of how their faith influences their lives. Discussion is developed well through both key stages.
119. The teaching of the lessons seen was good. Knowledge of the Christian religion and the other major world faiths is taught well. The curriculum coverage is good because the lessons closely follow the agreed syllabus. The teachers' planning is detailed and clearly identifies the knowledge and skills to be taught with clear objectives. This leads to skilful questioning where the pupils' ideas and understanding are probed in discussion. They contribute readily and sensitively discuss issues of values and beliefs and express their own thoughts confidently. The lessons are focused well on the intended learning and the teachers build well on what has been learned before. The good relationships that exist between the staff and the children enable them to respond with reflection and sensitivity to the teachers' questions and the opinions of others. The children have a very positive attitude to the subject.
120. The subject is soundly led. The coordinator knows a lot about the subject and is very willing to support her colleagues. The scheme of work is effective and helpful, and promotes continuity and coverage. The coordinator has developed a sound collection of artefacts and posters to support the subject and the teachers use these well. The school uses its connection with the clergy well but does not make visits to the local church or other places of worship as a means of extending the children's understanding. Few visitors come to school to give the pupils experience of faith in people's lives and this is a weakness. The coordinator has developed an assessment document which usefully enables the teachers to monitor the children's coverage of the subject.