

INSPECTION REPORT

**HIGH BANK FIRST SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS
UNIT**

Liversedge, Wakefield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107684

Headteacher: Michelle Lee

Reporting inspector: Peter Kerr
23583

Dates of inspection: 27th –30th March 2000

Inspection number: 190238

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School and Early Years Unit
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Eighth Avenue Windy Bank Estate Liversedge West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF15 8LD
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gill Ward
Date of previous inspection:	4 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Kerr	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art Music Physical education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Key issues for action
Clare Lorenz	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mike Mackay	Team inspector	Early years Special educational needs English Geography History Religious education	
Stanley Cooper	Team inspector	Science Information technology Design and technology	Quality and range of opportunities for learning Leadership and management

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

High Bank First School and Early Years Unit is situated in a housing estate just outside the small town of Cleckheaton. It caters for children from three to nine years of age, mostly living on the estate, all of whom are of white English extraction. They enter the Early Years Unit when they are three and remain there until the end of their reception year, transferring to the main school in Year 1. At the time of the inspection there were 123 children on roll, with 19 of nursery school age who attend half time. Forty-seven per cent of children are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. There are 32 children on the school's register of special educational needs, including 4 who have statements of educational need. Both these figures are above average for the size of the school and much higher than at the time of the last inspection. The social and economic circumstances on this estate are well below average, both nationally and within the local authority. The attainment of the children on entry to the Early Years Unit is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

High Bank is an improving school that provides a caring environment in which the children are encouraged to do their best to succeed. The children like school, behave well and enjoy good relationships. Attendance has dramatically improved and is now line with most schools. Standards are below average overall but are improving. Although behaviour is not as good as was reported at the time of the last inspection, the school is working effectively with parents and carers to improve it. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school, and is beginning to build an effective management partnership with the governors and senior staff. A good start has been made on achieving the school's ambitious targets for higher attainment. Currently, the school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Early Years Unit and in Key Stage 2.
- The headteacher provides very good educational direction for the school and manages it well through effective teamwork with the governors and staff.
- The school monitors and evaluates its performance effectively.
- The curriculum for children in the Early Years Unit is very good.
- The children are keen to learn. They behave well in class and they enjoy good relationships.
- There is good provision for the children's spiritual, moral and social development.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing are not high enough.
- The pace of teaching and learning is too slow in some lessons, especially in Key Stage 1.
- There is still some aggressive behaviour, mostly in the playground at lunchtimes.
- Marking is not used consistently enough to improve the children's work.
- There is insufficient challenge for the higher-attaining children.

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

There are several less important issues identified in the report that the governors should include in their action plan. The school has already begun addressing the issues of raising writing standards and improving marking along with assessment by including them in the current school development plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Five key issues were identified. They have all been satisfactorily addressed, although most of this work has only been done since the appointment of the current headteacher. Curriculum planning is much improved and is now good, with schemes of work in place for each core subject. There are good assessment systems in place and they are beginning to be used effectively. The school development plan is now a very useful tool, as it is based on an accurate assessment of the school's needs, and there are good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the school's work, including teaching and learning.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	D	E*	E*	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
Writing	E	E	E*	E	
Mathematics	C	E	E	D	

The school's results in the national tests for seven-year-olds in reading and writing in 1999 were in the bottom 5 per cent nationally. In mathematics they were well below average. Compared with similar schools, the results were well below average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. In the science teacher assessments, attainment was below average. In mathematics the boys' results in the 1999 tests were significantly lower than the girls' results. Over the past four years standards have fallen. However, the school has now entered a period of stability following many staff changes. There is now a sharper focus on raising standards, and they are beginning to improve. The standard of work seen in reading and mathematics during the inspection was considerably better than the 1999 test results. However standards in writing remain very low. Compared to the very low attainment on entry to the Early Years Unit, the children make satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 1 and achieve well in Key Stage 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Children enjoy coming to school and show good levels of interest in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. Usually good in classrooms. Some aggressive behaviour at lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and children collaborate effectively when required. They accept responsibility gladly and use their initiative well.
Attendance	Now average following recent moves to improve it.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The basic skills of speaking and listening and reading are taught well in English and through other subjects. The teaching of writing has not yet been effective enough to raise standards. Numeracy skills are now taught well following the very successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Overall, teaching is sound, with half the lessons seen good or better. Only three per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is consistently good in the Early Years Unit. In Key Stage 2 it is good in over 60 per cent of lessons and sometimes very good. All the teachers have good relationships with the children and generally manage them well, but in a minority of lessons, behaviour management is not firm enough to keep all the children on task. Lessons include a good variety of appropriate activities to keep the children interested and learning. Teachers also make good use of questions to challenge the children and check their understanding. However, questions and tasks are not always challenging enough for the highest-attaining children, and teachers do not use marking consistently to improve the children's work. Some lessons are taken at too slow a pace, mainly in Key Stage 1.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum has good breadth and balance. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The curriculum in the Early Years Unit is very good. The range of extracurricular activities is narrow and does not include sport.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Good provision is made for speaking and listening, but writing targets are too vague. Good inclusion in all activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Good provision for spiritual, moral and social but inadequate provision for cultural development. Children are taught to value their own and other ideas and to know right from wrong. Not enough is done to make the children aware of different cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school is very caring and promotes positive attitudes. Good assessment of progress. Good monitoring of behaviour. There are insufficient fire drills.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Very good leadership by the headteacher. Good support from the deputy-headteacher. Satisfactory management at other levels, with good co-ordination of the core subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Very supportive chair of governors and active parent governors. All legal requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. A strong feature. The management team continually evaluates provision and standards under the firm leadership of the headteacher.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses funds efficiently according to the clear educational priorities in the development plan.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • Teaching is good. The children make good progress and are expected to work hard. • The children like school and it helps them to become mature and responsible. • Parents are kept well informed and involved. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extracurricular activities. • Some parents are unhappy about behaviour.

The inspectors support most of the parents' views. They agree that parents are kept well informed, but consider that the annual reports do not contain enough information about the children's progress. They judge teaching to be good in the Early Years Unit and Key Stage 2 and sound in Key Stage 1. The inspectors share the parents' concerns about behaviour, but found that the problem mainly arises during lunch-hour playtimes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school's results in the national tests for seven-year-olds were very low in reading and writing in 1999, and well below average in mathematics compared to all schools nationally. Compared with similar schools, the results were well below average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. In the science teacher assessments, the children's attainment was below average. Boys' results in the 1999 tests were significantly lower than girls' results, but there were twice as many boys as girls in this group. In mathematics, boys underachieve significantly compared with girls, whereas nationally there is no difference.
2. Standards in reading fell from below average to very low when compared to all schools from 1997 to 1998 and stayed very low in 1999. In writing they fell from well below average to very low. In mathematics, they fell from average in 1997 to well below average in 1998 and 1999. However, this has been a turbulent period, marked by many significant changes in staffing. The school has now entered a period of stability. It has a sharper focus on raising standards, and has set targets for substantial improvement in the 2000 national tests. These are realistic in most areas, but the team judges them to be optimistic in writing in the light of current standards.
3. The inspection findings are that standards are below average in reading, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1. These judgements compare favourably with the well-below average and very low 1999 test results. Children start school with very low knowledge and skills in English and mathematics and science. They make good progress in the Early Years Unit and sound progress in Key Stage 1 so that standards are better by the end of the key stage. However, they have not made as much progress in writing as in reading, and standards in writing remain well below average.
4. The children in the Early Years Unit who have special educational needs achieve well and make good progress because teachers use early assessments to ensure that the curriculum is well adapted to meet their needs. At both key stages, the children who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Some achieve well in speaking and listening tasks because teachers provide good opportunities in most lessons for children to listen carefully and to contribute to class discussions. However, some children make insufficient progress because the targets in their individual education plans are not sufficiently specific and challenging.
5. Although still below average, standards are higher in Year 4 in relation to national expectations than they are at the end of Key Stage 1, largely due to a consistently higher standard of teaching at Key Stage 2. Although there is a group of children on course for Level 5 at the end of the key stage in English, mathematics and science, a substantial number of children have lower than average attainment. This means that the average National Curriculum points scores are likely to be below average. The school does not yet identify talented and gifted children, so no judgement can be made about their progress. Higher-attaining children make less progress than their peers relative to their prior attainment because the school does not consistently provide them with suitably challenging work.
6. In English, standards in Year 4 are still below national expectations for nine-year-olds in reading. In speaking and listening, good teaching has raised standards to the expected levels. Standards in writing, however, remain well below average, and this is a major area for development. The implementation of the Literacy Hour has contributed to the improvements in speaking and listening and reading, but has failed so far to have a substantial impact on writing. Children are good listeners and debate and discuss enthusiastically. They read a range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, and

confidently express opinions about what they have read. Their writing is of a significantly lower standard. Their spelling and punctuation are below expectations and the standard of handwriting and presentation is inconsistent. The poor quality of their writing adversely affects their performance in other subjects, notably history, geography and religious education.

7. At Key Stage 1, sound progress has been made in reading and in speaking and listening, but standards are still below average. The children join in with class and group discussions confidently, and are beginning to express themselves clearly and listen to one another. They read simple stories correctly, using phonic knowledge and other clues to attempt new words. The standard of their writing is well below average because the spelling, presentation and content of their written work are all well below expectations for their age. However, they are beginning to make progress, and the standards seen during the inspection are better than those reflected in the 1999 tests. This is partly because the school is now beginning to assess the children more accurately in order to set more challenging targets for them.
8. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has brought significant improvements in the children's ability to think mathematically and apply their knowledge to practical situations. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Although the results of the national tests in 1999 were well below average for all schools, they were only below average compared to similar schools.
9. The inspection evidence confirms continuing improvements in standards. At Key Stage 1, the higher-attaining children show Level 3 attainment in number and in using their knowledge in practical situations. For example, they quickly learn to apply newly acquired skills to halve and quarter numbers when the answer has to include a fraction. In discussion, they show a very good grasp of place value, and can use this to work out answers to problems involving much bigger numbers than they usually encounter. The average-attaining children are confident with place value to one hundred and can add and subtract mentally using the patterns in the hundred-square to help them. However, a substantial proportion of children in the current Year 2 class have lower than average attainment and special educational needs, and this will have a negative impact on overall standards.
10. In Year 4, there is a very wide spread of attainment in mathematics. The few higher attaining children are on course to achieve Level 5. They can handle big numbers, decimals and fractions in their heads and see patterns quickly. Their knowledge of shape and measure is also very secure. The average attaining children understand place value to one thousand and know some of their times-tables. They use pictograms confidently to display data when one symbol represents more than one object. However, a substantial proportion of the lower attaining children in the class are still working within Level 2, and this brings the overall average standard down.
11. In science, standards at Key Stage 1 are higher now than they were in the 1999 teacher assessments, but are still below national expectations. The children are confident in the knowledge they have, but this does not cover all the National Curriculum programmes of study because of the slow pace of teaching. There has also been insufficient challenge to get the higher-attaining children to Level 3. The children make good progress in Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 4, their attainment is in line with expectations. They have a good understanding of the experimental process as well as a sound knowledge of living things, materials and forces.
12. Standards in information technology are below national expectations throughout the school. Year 2 children's experience is mainly in word processing, creating pictures and using a CD-ROM to locate information. In Year 4, the children's skills have developed to the extent that they combine imported images with more extensive text and edit their work for effect. They also use computers to display data they have collected in different ways. However, in both key stages, the children are not achieving the expected skills in other areas of the subject because of their lack of experience.

13. There has been a significant improvement in standards in religious education since the last inspection, when they were judged below expectations at both key stages. The pupils now reach satisfactory standards at both key stages. The improvement is largely due to a better curriculum and more effective teaching guidelines. Children in Key Stage 1 know some of the Bible stories and understand that they are supposed to teach us lessons about how people should treat each other. By Year 4, the children are beginning to discuss the Bible in terms of man's relationship with God and to compare it with the sacred books and story traditions from other religions. They are also aware of how religious beliefs have influenced the lives of famous people who have changed the world, such as Mother Theresa. The children's writing skills let them down, however, because they cannot communicate what they know effectively.
14. Standards in history, music and art are in line with expectations throughout the school. They are below expectations in geography and design and technology. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in physical education, but standards are in line with expectations in gymnastics at the end of Key Stage 1 and in swimming in Year 4. There have been good improvements in standards since the last inspection in music, in three-dimensional art and in the children's ability to work collaboratively in physical education. In history and geography, the children's poor writing skills prevent them from communicating what they know.

Children's attitudes, values and personal development

15. The children are enthusiastic about coming to school and eager to learn. They have good attitudes towards their work and their response to the education offered is good. Children are interested and involved in the activities laid on for them and keen to answer questions and make suggestions. The majority concentrates well, either individually, or when working in groups. When the pace of lessons slows, or teachers do not expect enough of them, a few children become restless and lose concentration.
16. The children's behaviour is satisfactory. They mix freely in the classroom and learn from each other in an atmosphere of friendliness, kindness and tolerance. In the playground, play is boisterous, but mainly happy. Members of staff usually supervise effectively and intervene to pre-empt or resolve disputes. There are occasions during lunchtime play when the boisterous behaviour of a few children is not closely enough supervised to prevent it from becoming aggressive. **However, the headteacher deals decisively with any instances of bullying that are reported.** There have been a small number of exclusions from the school for justifiable reasons.
17. Most children have an open manner and are polite to each other and to staff. They are responsive to the quiet admonishments given by teachers and understand the reasons for them. Overall, the relationships between adults and children and between children are good and it is clear that staff and the great majority of children like and wish to help each other. The children with special education needs are fully integrated into school life and, like all the children, enjoy learning and respond well to the praise and encouragement they receive. Those children with behavioural difficulties are sensitively managed. They are helped to see what effect their actions have on others and to find ways of controlling their responses to how they feel. The other children are sympathetic to their difficulties and try to ignore any attempts at disruption.
18. The children's personal development is satisfactory. When given the opportunity, they use their initiative well. For example, they run the school tuck shop efficiently and have designed the smart school badge on the new school uniform. In lessons, the children are keen to use their own imaginative ideas in subjects like art, music and gymnastics, to express their opinions in history and religious education and to offer suggestions for problem-solving and investigating in mathematics and science.

19. The level of attendance at school has risen over the last year and is now broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is in line with that found at similar schools. Registers are taken promptly and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The standard of teaching is sound overall. It was good or better in half the lessons seen and very good in about one in eight lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was good or better in four out of ten lessons. Teaching is consistently good in the Early Years Unit. In Key Stage 2, it is good in more than six in ten lessons and very good in a quarter of lessons. The very good teaching includes the input from specialist swimming and music teachers. There was only a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching – three per cent - and this too is an improvement since last time when one in ten lessons was unsatisfactory. Many areas of teaching have improved since the last inspection including the setting of clear learning objectives related to the National Curriculum, higher expectations and better management of the children. Inconsistent marking was a weakness that was identified and has not yet been fully addressed.
21. The main strengths in teaching are the management of the pupils, the effectiveness of the teachers' planning and the variety and effectiveness of the teaching methods used. The main weaknesses are the slow pace of learning, mainly in Key Stage 1 lessons, in which the amount of work the children are expected to do is too low, and a lack of challenge for the highest-attaining children. In some ineffective lessons, tasks are too difficult or the expectations unclear, and the children become inattentive and do not learn as quickly as they could.
22. In the Early Years Unit, the teachers and classroom assistants work together very effectively as a team to provide a consistently high quality of teaching and learning. They understand how young children learn, and provide them with interesting and challenging activities that are well matched to the children's abilities. They set high expectations for independent learning and the children respond very positively by engaging in purposeful play for much of the day. This enables them to make good progress from a very low base in their social and language skills, and to begin to learn at a rapid rate in all the other areas of learning. The children are remarkably independent and mature in their use of the variety of equipment and materials in their room. The teachers teach literacy and numeracy skills effectively too, keeping meticulous records of each child's understanding so that they can continue to learn at their own rate.
23. The quality of the teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers are skilful in providing challenging opportunities for their pupils to develop a wide range of speaking and listening skills, and the pupils make good progress in these areas. However, the targets in the individual education plans for other aspects of learning, and particularly for writing, are often too general to be useful to teachers in planning suitable learning tasks. As a result, lessons do not consistently offer learning tasks that have an appropriate amount of challenge, nor do they help the pupils sufficiently to recognise the progress they are making and what they must do next to sustain improvement. Teachers make insufficient use of information and communications technology to support pupils with special educational needs. The school recognises this and already has plans to improve the use of computers to meet specific learning needs.
24. The teaching of English is good overall, but with a significant weakness in the teaching of writing skills. The teachers provide many good opportunities for the children to develop their speaking and listening skills through discussion in English and in other subjects. In Year 4, for example, the children's learning about the Tudors is greatly enhanced by the quality of debate the teacher establishes about King Henry VIII's dispute with the Catholic Church. In mathematics, children are encouraged to articulate their thinking when they explain how they solve problems. In the literacy lessons, the teachers share the learning objectives with the children and encourage them to express

what they know, leading to secure learning. They use a variety of methods to make the lessons interesting and succeed in generating enthusiasm for spoken language. The teaching of writing is much less effective, both in English lessons and in other subjects. The teachers do not set consistent, clear and demanding expectations for the content and presentation of writing for each child. This leads to some lack of perseverance among the children and slow progress.

25. Teaching and learning in mathematics has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. The teachers take the introductions to lessons at a quick pace, engage the children's interest with challenging questions and get them to explain their thinking. The learning objectives are based on the teachers' assessments of the children's existing knowledge. This helps to focus the children's attention and keeps them trying to improve. In lessons that are less successful, the pace of questioning is too slow, particularly for higher-attaining children, who are not often stretched. Teachers make good use of the range of resources that have been made available to support the National Numeracy Strategy, and set tasks for each group of children that are of appropriate difficulty. They use questions well as they move around from group to group to assess the children's understanding and keep them on task. Their marking of the children's written work is not so effective. It is not used consistently as a tool for improving the children's skills and understanding. There are insufficient comments to lead the children on to further problem-solving or investigations, especially for those children who generally get things right the first time.
26. Teaching in science is satisfactory. Teachers in Key Stage 2 prepare their lessons well to cater for children of all attainment levels, but in Key Stage 1, the needs of the higher-attaining children are often not met. The pace of learning in the lessons is satisfactory overall, but is not always quick enough to cover the full programme of study at sufficient depth. What is taught is taught well, however, and the children are consequently secure in their knowledge and understanding. Experimental and investigative skills are taught well in each stage.
27. The little teaching that was seen in information technology was satisfactory overall. The teachers set work at a suitable level for the children, making the learning objectives clear so that the children can see how well they are achieving. The children are well managed so that they stay on task, but the expectations for the amount of work to be covered are not always high enough and this slows down learning.
28. There was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching throughout the school in religious education, but the teaching was satisfactory or better in the few lessons seen. The teachers gain the children's interest and enthusiasm by skilful use of discussion to develop their awareness of the value of their own and other's feelings. However, as in other subjects, the teachers do not succeed in getting the best out of the children in their written work.
29. The standard of teaching is sound in history, art, music and physical education. Too few lessons were seen in geography and design and technology to make judgements on the overall quality of teaching in these subjects. There is some very good teaching in art and history lessons in which teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and stretch the children with demanding activities and discussions. The quality of teaching in the specialist music and swimming lessons that are provided in Key Stage 2 is also very good, enabling children to make good progress in these subjects.

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

30. The planning of the curriculum has improved substantially since the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fulfils the school aims well. It contains all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and meets all legal requirements. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and only history and geography have less time allocated than most other schools. This, however, limits opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in these subjects. The school day has been extended by the new headteacher to ensure that the pupils in Key Stage 2 have the recommended time in class. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented and the school has now adopted national schemes for most subjects, so meeting a key issue identified in the previous inspection and ensuring that there is a continuity of experience that allows pupils to progressively improve their knowledge and skills.
31. The curriculum for the Early Years pupils is very good and meets all the desired learning objectives for pupils of this age and leads successfully into the National Curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, in that all the systems needed to support them pupils are in place, but individual action plans currently do not have short-term achievable goals that provide targets for the pupils and help to monitor their progress. The use of literacy, numeracy and information technology to support other subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory, but lacks direction. It happens as a matter of course, for example through pupils making their own notes in Year 4 science, but is not systematically planned. In response to a key issue from the previous inspection a new system of long, medium and short-term planning has been introduced and, on the whole, this is working well.
32. There is unsatisfactory provision for extracurricular activities since those provided are focused mainly on hobbies and indoor activities so that there are few opportunities for sport activities. There are few visits, due to the costs involved, and so the school has to rely heavily on its own resources. These are supplemented however, by occasional visits such as a puppet theatre to enhance the curriculum. People from the local community are used to enrich the provision and the local vicar makes a strong contribution to the spiritual life of the school. Friends from the local Women's Institute come in to hear readers. There are also visits from the fire and police services and the school nurse.
33. There is good provision for equal opportunities supported by a good policy. In the main this is implemented well and pupils share responsibilities round the school such as running the tuck shop. A few pupils are withdrawn from other subjects for additional reading. This service is provided by friends of the school from the local community, and so the school has no control over when it happens. As it is proving effective in giving these children the reading skills and confidence to access the whole curriculum, the school is justified in letting them miss other activities to take advantage of it. There is good provision for social and personal education and this is allocated timetable time. The programme of collective worship is used well to support the work done in this subject. There is no formal sex education beyond that included in science lessons, but staff are prepared to respond to questions as they arise. Drug education is taught well and the school nurse provides strong support for the school in this.
34. There are some good links with the community especially through the church and the Women's Institute. The school also provides a crèche for parents undertaking further training. Parent governors are encouraging parents to come into school for coffee afternoons but there are few parent helpers currently in the school. Improving links with the community is a high priority. Links with the middle school are at an early stage but there have already been some useful contacts such as a scheme, shared jointly with the middle school, for training parents in information technology using the computer suite. The schools have also agreed to use the same science syllabus to provide continuity in the pupils' work and are currently looking at the exchange of records.
35. Provision for the children's spiritual development is good. Daily assemblies are well presented, are

mainly Christian in nature and include a prayer and a moment for reflection. The input of the local vicar enhances such assemblies and he has co-operated with the school to develop a series of half-termly themes for these. A good feature of the assemblies is the way that both pupils and staff are encouraged to participate and the aspect of sharing the experience is reinforced by the staff sitting on the floor with their pupils. Awareness of our world and our place in it is developed in work in the school, such as the work done by Year 3 pupils on outer space that resulted in some thoughtful collage work of good quality.

36. The school also makes good provision for the children's moral and social development. Behaviour in the school is generally good. Pupils have a good sense of what is right and wrong. The school rules emphasise care for others and the rules are reinforced well in the classroom. Pupils display good qualities of honesty and fairness. These are reflected in their social behaviour, which is good. Pupils are encouraged to work together and often carry out group work with a minimum of supervision. They collaborate well in these circumstances and share equipment sensibly and fairly. They discuss ideas well and are prepared to listen to the ideas of others.
37. Provision for the children's cultural development is unsatisfactory. There is a good range of sculpture on display and this includes articles from Africa and Egypt but there is little emphasis on the work of famous artists. Music from different cultures is played when pupils enter and leave assemblies, but it is not made a feature of. There is some work on different religions and discussion of other religious festival such as Diwali but, on the whole, there is insufficient celebration of their own and other cultures. The school acknowledges that it needs to do more to prepare the pupils for life in a multicultural society. As a first step towards this goal, some pupils take part in a pen-pal club linked to an ethnic minority community in Dewsbury. This is a commendable and worthwhile initiative.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school provides satisfactory educational and personal support and guidance for its pupils. The teachers and other members of staff know the children well, are aware of their needs and work hard to sort out problems if they arise. The monitoring of the children's personal development is satisfactory and the school is an environment in which the great majority of children feel cared for. The staff show concern for the children's welfare and provide support to them when it is needed. Most parents are supportive of the school and believe that the values and attitudes towards learning instilled by staff benefit their children.
39. Overall, the school has established good systems for assessing children's attainment and progress and this is a marked improvement on the previous inspection when these were seen as a weakness. The staff has agreed a system based on the specific learning objectives involved in the planning of lessons. This is part of the improved planning implemented to meet another of the reported weaknesses in the previous inspection. The system is applied conscientiously in most subjects and is providing useful information on what children are achieving. However, the learning objectives are left to individual teachers and so are not consistent throughout the school. The system is also less than fully effective in meeting the needs of children with special learning difficulties. Their individual education plans lack short-term objectives against which their progress can be measured. There is no marking policy and marking does not consistently provide corrections or guidance for children on how to improve their work. The use of external testing to assess children's progress is good. There is a baseline test and apart from the statutory national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 the school is also undertaking optional tests at the end of Years 3 and 4. Reading tests are done at the end of Years 1, 3 and 4 to monitor progress in this aspect. The local authority also provides useful statistical data to the school that enables it to see how it is performing relative to other schools in the area.
40. The use of the new assessment procedures to inform planning is inconsistent across the school, although it is improving. Grades are being used to set individual targets for children and the school has agreed its targets with the local authority. Teachers are having agreement trials of selected pieces

of work that are collected to make exemplar portfolios that help them agree on the level of the children's work. Discussions are taking place with the receiving middle school on the nature and extent of the assessments needed to ensure that children can have some continuity of experience when they transfer. The results of external tests are being analysed to determine differences between boys and girls and to identify any areas of weakness. This has resulted, for example, in an additional emphasis on recording the results of scientific investigations, which has already had a marked effect on children's work.

41. The monitoring of children's behaviour is good. Children help to create class rules, which run alongside a wider set of school rules, and the majority abides by them. Children feel free to talk to teachers about any worries and are confident that problems will be resolved. Occasionally, however, the rough behaviour of some of the children in the playground is not supervised closely enough at lunchtimes to prevent it becoming too aggressive.
42. Attendance registers are checked closely and there has been a rapid rise in attendance levels recently. Prizes are awarded for high personal and class attendance levels. Parents are aware that they should bring children to school on time and most do so. Fire drills have not been carried out regularly, and this is a concern. Child protection procedures are in place and there is good access to all parts of the school for those with physical disabilities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Overall, parents are satisfied with the school. Some parents, mainly of older children, have a number of concerns about behaviour and the lack of out of school clubs. The inspection team found that behaviour is satisfactory overall. It is good in most lessons and sometimes very good, but occasionally rough in the playground, especially when the children are not closely supervised. It agrees with parents that there are insufficient opportunities to take part in activities outside school hours, especially sport.
44. Parents are invited to twice yearly open evenings and a reasonable number of them attend. The end of year reports describe the work covered during the year, but do not report clearly enough on the children's progress. The prospectus is clearly written and is informative and the headteacher's newsletters let parents know what is happening in school. Parents have signed the home school agreement and are expected to return the home record book showing work they have undertaken at home with their children. Some parents are reluctant to return these books, however. The Fast Lane reading scheme, currently aimed at pupils in years 1 and 2, requires parents to help their children read at home. Overall the parents' contribution to their children's learning, through helping them at home, is satisfactory.
45. The parent teacher association, Friends of High Bank, actively supports the school, as do the parent governors. They wrote the most recent annual report for parents and also intend holding a forum for parents to discuss curriculum issues. A group of parents is building up a useful family resource in the temporary classroom that is adjacent to the main building and now surplus to teaching requirements. They run a toddlers' toy lending library there and are developing other ways of involving parents and their younger children in learning activities. A local community organisation uses the school to run training sessions for parents on the skills needed for working in school. The school also has close links with local community workers.
46. A few parent volunteers hear reading and do other helpful work in school and the staff is trying hard to encourage more parents to support the school and its pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Leadership and management in the school are good. The headteacher is very efficient and effective in her role. In the short time she has been in the school she has introduced many improvements. She has a clear vision of where she wants the school to go and what needs to be done to achieve those goals. In introducing new schemes of work for most subjects, developing a whole-school approach to planning and instituting an agreed system of assessment and recording, she has remedied these weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. The headteacher is well supported by her deputy and there is a newly formed senior management team to extend that support. The role of the co-ordinators has been defined through staff discussion and the co-ordination of the core subjects is effective. The co-ordination of other subjects, including special educational needs, is still poorly developed but is a school priority for next year. The staff have all been involved in identifying the priority areas facing the school and this has developed both a better understanding of the needs of the school and a shared sense of purpose.
48. The support given by the governors is satisfactory and their effectiveness in providing direction is growing as those more recently appointed gain in awareness. This was a target in the school development plan and is being achieved through clear reports from the headteacher and from core subject co-ordinators, through visits to the school and by linking governors to specific subjects. The Chair of Governors is very supportive. She visits the school regularly and observes work in the classrooms in her subject area. The parent governors are very active in trying to involve other parents and the local community by holding coffee afternoons. All statutory policies are in place and the report to parents and the prospectus meet requirements. Although there is a good health and safety policy, all aspects of the policy are not fully met.
49. The management team has a clear appreciation of the strengths of the school and the problems it faces. The headteacher carries out regular reviews and these serve as a basis for her personal targets. She is assisted in this by good links with the school's contact officer from the local authority. By monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school in these ways she has responded to a key issue in the previous inspection. The whole staff discusses the priorities for the school development plan before submission to the governors. The plan itself is a very well presented and structured document and fully meets a key issue identified in the previous report. It contains relevant targets that are broken down into interim targets. Deadlines, the personnel involved and success criteria are identified for each of these. The targets are well costed. Progress towards the targets is carefully monitored and evaluated. The plan is used effectively as a working document as illustrated by the emergency purchase of computers when it became clear that targets in information technology were not being met. The plan covers eighteen months only but this is due to the headteacher's being in post for only a short time and the intention is to extend it to provide a better long-term strategic view.
50. Planning, classroom performance and the results of assessments are monitored by the headteacher and form the basis for individual and school discussions to ensure that action is taken and that objectives are reached. Co-ordinators monitor planning in the core subjects, but are not yet closely involved in monitoring the work in the classrooms. The management of some of the non-core subjects is currently unsatisfactory because the co-ordinators do not have a clear overview of their subject across the school. However this is recognised and is in the school development plan. Many of the development targets, such as the introduction of new schemes of work and a uniform system for assessment, have had a fundamental effect on the work of the school. These are playing a vital part in improving standards and in fulfilling the aims of the school.
51. The governors allocate funds to the various areas of expenditure in a way that is appropriate to the needs of the school and provides a good level of classroom support. They receive regular, clear financial statements and expenditure is monitored well. There is clear provision for development

through the school development plan and specific grants are spent correctly. Financial systems in the school are good and the very competent school bursar controls finances very efficiently. The school actively seeks to get good value for money but pays due regard to the quality as well as the price of goods and services. The school looks critically at what it does through regular reviews and seeks an evaluation of its performance through parent questionnaires. The governors look at the services provided by others to evaluate their cost effectiveness and, through these actions the governors are applying 'best value' principles soundly.

52. The school is well staffed in terms of both teaching and support staff. All the teachers are suitably qualified and there is a good balance of experience on the staff. The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special needs co-ordinator are all recent appointments and this has caused a big change in the school management team. The new staff members have settled in well and have been quickly assimilated into a effective and cohesive team. All the members of staff feel valued, and support each other well. Support staff are well integrated into the work of the school and, for most of the time, are used very effectively. The accommodation is good. Rooms are adequate in size, well serviced and contain a variety of useful spaces such as reading areas. The good quality displays of pupils' work around the school help to provide an attractive environment for learning. The caretaker and his staff keep the school spotlessly clean and the pupils respond by taking good care of it. The Early Years Unit is spacious and well equipped. The playing field is large but the external environment of the school is uninteresting as is the play provision on the playground. The school is aware of this and is trying to develop a pond and environmental area through funding provided by local businesses. Resources are adequate generally although there are still some shortages, despite a high allocation of funds to resources last year. There are sufficient up-to date computers and printers and their use is enhanced by a networked computer suite. The number and quality of books are also good and their use is encouraged in a well set out and attractive library.
53. Although the unit costs of the school are high and standards are still below those found nationally, the school is well led, provides a good quality of education and has made good improvements since the last inspection. Given the context of the school, it provides sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to raise standards further and ensure that all the children achieve to their potential the school should:
- a. Improve standards in writing throughout the school, both in English lessons and across the curriculum. (Paragraphs 3, 6, 13, 14, 21, 24, 28, 30, 66, 67, 68, 71, 14, 105, 108, 109, 110, 111, 127)
 - b. Improve the pace of teaching and learning, especially in Key Stage 1. (Paragraphs 21, 26, 27, 86, 87, 91, 98, 104, 113, 119, 123)
 - c. Continue to strengthen the existing behaviour management strategies in order to eliminate, as far as possible, aggressive behaviour and bullying. (Paragraphs 16, 41, 43)
 - d. **Develop** the use of marking to improve the children's work (Paragraphs 20, 25, 39, 74, 80)
 - e. Ensure that higher attaining children are provided with suitably challenging work. (Paragraphs 5, 21, 26, 80, 84)

In addition to these key issues, the following less important issues were identified. The governors should consider including them in their action plan.

- The co-ordination of other subjects of the National Curriculum is not of the same high standard now established in the core subjects. (Paragraphs 50, 96, 100, 120, 124, 130)
- The targets in the individual education plans for children with special educational needs are not specific enough. (Paragraphs 4, 31, 39, 72)
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not planned systematically. (Paragraph 31)
- The range of extracurricular activities is narrow and does not include sport. (Paragraphs 32, 124)
- The information given to parents in the end of year reports do not contain clear information about what the children have achieved in each subject and what the next learning targets are. (Paragraph 44)
- All objectives of the health and safety policy are not fully met, including the maintenance of regular fire-drill procedures. (Paragraph 51, 57)
- Information technology is not used sufficiently to support learning across the curriculum. (Paragraphs 12, 23, 116)
- The provision for developing the children's appreciation of their own and other cultures is unsatisfactory. (Paragraph 37)

The inspection team acknowledges that key **issues a, c, and d** and the development of information technology across the curriculum are already included in the school's action plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	37	47	3	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– Year 4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	10	123
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	53

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	32

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.1
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	18	7	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	11	13
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	13	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	52	64	72
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	12	8
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	14	17	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56	68	52
	National	82	86	87

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	93
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	3	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– Year 4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9
Average class size	23

Education support staff: Y R – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	0.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	301 774
Total expenditure	290 189
Expenditure per pupil	1 948
Balance brought forward from previous year	10 968
Balance carried forward to next year	22 553

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	132
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	26	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	22	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	21	21	8	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	35	9	9	4
The teaching is good.	87	13	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	30	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	96	4	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	68	27	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	35	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	22	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	27	36	5	9

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents at the parents' meeting were unhappy with the way the school dealt with misbehaviour, especially bullying and the way the school deals with complaints.

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 school has improved on the sound provision it made for children under five at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum is now very good and teaching and learning are good. The school's assessments indicate that, at the time the children enter the nursery, nearly all of them are attaining well below what is expected for their age. The children's social skills and language development are so poor that many are ill-prepared for early years education. Nevertheless, because the teaching is good, most of the children make good progress. About half of them make very good progress. Some of these children are on target to achieve the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five, but the proportion is much lower than average.
56. Most of the children do not attain the national expectations for language and literacy by the end of the reception year but they achieve well in relation to their earlier levels of attainment. They are beginning to use a simple and limited vocabulary to talk about their work and their experiences at home. They ask sensible questions and enjoy investigating spoken language. For example, they quickly learn a number of simple nursery rhymes and songs which they enjoy sharing. They are beginning to acquire a useful vocabulary related to the work they do when, for example, they learn how to describe the different parts of the zoo that teachers and children have created in the classroom. The children develop very good listening skills when they hear the teacher's skilful re-telling of stories. They are good at listening to instructions. They quickly become absorbed in the learning tasks and eagerly participate in group discussions about what they are working on. The children concentrate hard and ask questions to get a clearer understanding of what they must do. They listen to each other when participating in group discussions and when working collaboratively on creative tasks and in role-play activities. For example, in role-play tasks, the children use the telephone to convey simple messages about the zoo they have created.
57. The children enjoy books. They share books regularly at home and at school. They know that print conveys meaning and many of them recognise their own names in print and some of the most common words. They use other aids to reading, including pictures and the initial letters of words. The children quickly use their knowledge of reading to practise writing skills. Most of them form the letters of the alphabet accurately when they 'write' signs and instructions using a mixture of conventional letters and invented signs for the class zoo. Many of the pupils write their names, but few of them can accurately spell regular single syllable words when they are writing without the aid of the teacher. They have a growing understanding of the different purposes of writing when, for example, they make lists, annotate pictures and write signs. Their writing is strongly featured in the classroom displays. This helps the children to understand the importance of writing and that most writing is for a purpose. In both reading and writing the children achieve well, given their level of attainment on entry to the school.
58. Most of the children do not attain the desirable learning outcomes for mathematics but make good progress from the very low level of attainment they have when they enter the school. They have a growing vocabulary of mathematical terms to describe shape, size and quantity. For example, the children know the names of the most common plain shapes. The children are beginning to recognise and create simple patterns. They use everyday objects to help them complete tasks that require them to compare, sort, match, and sequence. They recognise and use numbers beyond ten, but few know how to record simple addition and subtraction problems. Nearly all of the children accurately record numbers to ten, and some write larger numbers.

59. The children attain a satisfactory standard of knowledge and understanding of the world. They talk and 'write' about where they live, their environment, their families and past and present events in their own lives. They are beginning to show an awareness of the purposes of some of the features in the area in which they live. In outdoor play, for example, they learn about the local supermarkets and about local bus services. They make good progress in understanding less familiar places when, for example, they learn about zoos and the animals found in them. This is because the teaching skilfully supports the children's learning through the use of a wide range of well thought out activities. They successfully explore and recognise living things, objects and events in the natural and man-made world, and they investigate similarities, differences and patterns, and change in them. For example, they observe and discuss similarities and differences in the creatures inhabiting the class's model sea-life aquarium and they learn about how many different creatures, on land and in water, use camouflage to hide from predators. They use construction kits to build animal enclosures. They explore and select materials for their different textures and properties when they make the different parts of the model zoo. The children are becoming more confident in their use of computers. For example, they know how to use the mouse to 'drag and drop' images and to control what happens on the screen. They use a simple paint program to create and print attractive patterns.
60. The children acquire a satisfactory range of creative skills. For example, they quickly learn how to handle paintbrushes and mix colours when they paint backgrounds to show how animals use colours for camouflage. They successfully explore pattern and colour in a range of activities. For example, in one activity, the children dipped folded tissues into a range of inks and opened them up to reveal attractive symmetrical patterns. Some of the children were able to identify new colours in their patterns that were not there in the inks provided, but not all of them understood how the new colours had been created. They are beginning to use their imagination well when engaged in role-play. For example, they act out visiting and working in supermarkets, zoos and in the home. In lessons, the children explore percussion instruments and experiment with sounds to represent the different zoo animals they have been learning about. They are beginning to understand rhythm. Many succeed in simple clapping activities.
61. The children's physical development is satisfactory. The children have opportunities to use large outdoor equipment such as climbing frames and large outdoor toys such as bicycles. They have a satisfactory awareness of space and of the presence of other children. They develop satisfactory skills in handling small equipment such as construction kits, scissors and glue sticks, as well as the balancing and directional skills when using large apparatus.
62. The children's personal and social development is good. The children play well together and establish good relationships with their peers and with the adults who teach them. They work successfully as part of a group and independently when required. They are keen to learn. They persevere with tasks, concentrate hard and seek help when they need it. The children work on simple or routine tasks without the need for close supervision and they show a good degree of independence in selecting resources and in dressing themselves. They are sensitive to the needs of others, offering support and encouragement to those who find tasks difficult. They take turns when working at the computer and when sharing resources. They express their feelings appropriately and behave very well. The children have a growing sense of right and wrong and show a good degree of care for each other and for the equipment they use. During acts of worship, they show a range of appropriate responses. In one act of worship, in which the teacher read a story about a family who did not observe the countryside code, the children showed concern for wild animals and plants. They contributed much to the exploration of what it means to be helpful towards each other and to be caring towards plants and animals.

63. The quality of teaching is good overall and some aspects of it are very good. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of how children learn are good. They inform the detailed and useful planning of lessons. The teachers have high expectations of what the children should know, understand and be able to do from term to term. The learning activities are very interesting and challenging. The quality of the teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons, for example, is particularly good. It ensures that the children quickly acquire the basic skills of speaking and listening so that they become confident and motivated learners. The teachers employ a wide range of effective methods to make the children's learning interesting as well as challenging. The children and their activities are very well organised and managed. For example, in a lesson on learning how to read, the work was carefully matched to the needs of all the children.
64. A strong feature of the teaching, is the high level of collaboration among the teachers, the nursery nurse and the teaching support staff. This ensures that the children are well cared for and that the learning is well paced. Children with special educational needs receive good support with their individual learning programmes and make sound progress. Another strength of the teaching is the effective way the children's knowledge and understanding is assessed and monitored. The teachers' careful analysis of baseline tests and the good records they keep on each child's progress are well used to inform the teaching. The teachers make good use of the outcomes of monitoring and assessment when they plan further work. They are particularly successful in establishing very good standards of behaviour and independence among the children. This has a positive impact upon the quality of the learning because the teachers are not having to spend time dealing with disruptions to the lessons or guiding children through daily routines. There are no significant weaknesses in the teaching.
65. The management of provision for the under fives is very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and very carefully constructed to ensure that the children continually build on their knowledge, understanding and skills from term to term. Because those who work in the Early Years Unit are very competent and collaborate effectively in the planning and teaching of the curriculum, the children enjoy a good education and become happy and effective learners. The Early Years Unit would provide suitable experience for those who wish to train as nursery nurses and early years' teachers.

ENGLISH

66. The children in Year 4, the final year group at the school, attain overall standards that are below those expected nationally of children aged nine. Nevertheless, they achieve well in reading and in listening and speaking in relation to what they attained in these areas at the end of Key Stage 1. In speaking and listening, the children make good progress and attain a standard close to that expected of nine-year-olds. This is because the teaching is better at Key Stage 2 and because the school's success in implementing the literacy hour is beginning to raise standards. The children's attainment in writing, however, is well below average and they have shown less marked improvement.
67. In the 1999 tests, standards at Key Stage 1 were very low in reading and writing (in the bottom five per cent of all schools). They were well below average compared to schools with a similar intake. Over the last four years, standards have remained well below the national average in reading and writing for both boys and girls. However standards in reading were average in 1996 and 1997 before falling to very low in 1998 and 1999. Standards in writing have remained very low over the whole period.
68. The inspection evidence indicates some improvement in standards at the end of Key Stage 1. The standards the children are achieving are now only slightly below the national expectations for seven-year-olds in reading. However, standards in writing remain well below average, although the present Year 2 children are well placed to attain better test results than last year's Year 2 children.

Standards in speaking and listening are also improving, but remain below national expectations. The children have attained higher standards this year largely because they have benefited from two years of effective literacy teaching.

69. By the end of Key Stage 1 the children speak with growing confidence about the books they read. They are beginning to express their opinions about the events and characters in stories. They contribute successfully to class discussions about what they learn in literacy lessons when, for example, they share what they have learned about compound words. They support each other well in small groups and in paired work when they need to talk about the tasks on which they are working. The children are good listeners. They listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. They ask sensible questions and listen courteously when other children are contributing to class discussions. By the end of Year 4, the children engage enthusiastically in class discussions and debates. They share opinions and ask questions in order to clarify and deepen their understanding of what is being taught. They concentrate well on the teachers' instructions and they pay attention to each other during class discussions.
70. The children attain close to expected standards in reading by the age of seven and nine. By the end of Key Stage 1, the children read simple story texts confidently. They clearly express their opinions about the characters and events in the books they read. Most of the children use more than one method to read unfamiliar words. For example, they sound out letters, use picture cues and their knowledge of the characters and events to make sense of what they read. By the age of nine, most of the children read a good range of texts including non-fiction. They use the school and the local public library regularly. Most children make effective use of the reference charts to help them quickly locate books in the school library. They know how non-fiction books are structured and they make effective use of the contents and index pages. Fewer children know what a glossary is or how to use it. The standard of reading is better now that it was at the time of the most recent national tests. Then, the percentage of children reaching Level 2B, the expected standard at age seven, was very low in comparison to national averages and when compared to similar schools. School initiatives such as the Fast Lane reading group and Reading Friends are beginning to improve the children's reading skills. The reading component of literacy hour lessons is also being used effectively throughout the school to help raise standards.
71. The main weakness in the children's attainment is the standards they attain in writing. At Key Stage 1, the children write for a wide range of reasons and use different forms. For example, they write stories, letters, postcards, lists and short book reviews. But these are rarely well written because the children's attainment in spelling and handwriting is well below average. Nevertheless, standards are better than those attained in the most recent national tests. In the 1999 national tests, the percentage of children attaining Level 2B or above was well below that found nationally and in similar schools. The school's recently implemented procedures for tracking the children's progress in writing indicates that the percentage of children attaining national standards are set to rise in the forthcoming tests. Whilst the inspection evidence supports this, it does not indicate a rise in standards as great as that projected by the school. By the age of nine, most of the children have developed a satisfactory style of joint script, but they do not consistently produce neat work. Their standards of spelling, punctuation and organisation, too, are still unsatisfactory.
72. The children with special educational needs, particularly those with statements of educational need make satisfactory progress because the school makes effective use of the available classroom support. However, the learning targets in their individual education plans are not usually specific enough to be useful to teachers when planning work that will match their needs. This prevents the children from monitoring their own progress towards clear, short-term achievable goals.

73. Teaching is good overall. It is good in the Early Years Unit and at Key Stage 2 and is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. The main strength in the teaching is the skilful way the teachers encourage the children to develop speaking and listening skills. They manage class discussions well at the beginning and end of literacy lessons. They encourage the children to think carefully about each lesson's learning objectives and they help them to develop their understanding by providing many opportunities for them to express clearly what they know. The teachers are successful, too, at ensuring that the children use these skills effectively in other subjects. In a Year 4 history lesson, for example, the children closely questioned the teacher about the motives of Henry VIII in seeking so many wives, and they engaged in a lively and fruitful debate about the appropriateness of his marriage to Ann of Cleves. The teachers are good at managing their children. They have high expectations of their children's behaviour. They achieve well-ordered lessons not only because they have clearly established rules but also because they use a good range of methods to make the learning interesting.
74. The main weakness in the teaching is the lack of effective ways to promote the children's writing development, in other subjects as well as in English. One result of this is that many of the children lack perseverance in writing tasks, often not completing them before the end of lessons. The lessons do not pay enough attention to the strengths and weaknesses in the writing of individual children. Teachers do not use their marking of children's work to consistently identify how the spelling, presentation, punctuation and content of the writing might be improved. In a recent initiative, some teachers are beginning to identify learning objectives for individual children. This has the potential to be a useful way of meeting their individual needs as writers, but the learning objectives are often not specific enough to be measurable. They do not, therefore, provide the teachers or the children with sufficient evidence of progress in ways that the children could understand or that would provide them with the motivation to improve.
75. The school has recently appointed a new co-ordinator, who has the management skills and the teaching skills to enable her to provide effective support to colleagues. The management of the subject is now more clearly directed towards monitoring, evaluating and improving performance. This is demonstrated, for example, in the way the school has recently begun to track the children's performance in order to help it set more ambitious targets for raising standards. The management of the subject has also succeeded in securing sufficient learning resources to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. The leadership and management of the subject are, therefore, beginning to have a positive impact upon the standards the children achieve.

MATHEMATICS

76. The school's results in the national tests for seven-year-olds were in line with all schools in 1997. They fell to well below average in 1998 and despite a slight rise were still well below average in 1999 compared to all schools. Compared to similar schools, the 1999 results were below average. The low proportion of children attaining Level 3 was an important factor in this low result. The school has forecast an improvement in 2000. The greater proportion of children showing Level 2 and Level 3 attainment in the current Year 2 class confirm that standards are rising. However, there is still a substantial proportion of children with below average attainment, including a high number with statements of special educational needs. Using and applying mathematics was the weakest area in the tests as the proportion of children achieving Level 2 or above was very low compared to well below average in all the other areas. The inspection found a marked improvement in this aspect of the subject. The trend has been for girls to fare better than boys in the national tests, whereas nationally they achieve roughly the same results, and the school is aware of this problem.

77. The inspection evidence indicates that standards are now below average at Key Stage 1 rather than well below. Average-attaining children have a good understanding of place value to one hundred and can use their knowledge to solve simple problems, for example working out change when shopping. They have a secure knowledge of halves and quarters, and apply this to shapes and numbers. Their knowledge of shapes is average. They can name simple shapes correctly and describe their properties in terms of sides and corners. Higher-attaining children can handle bigger numbers confidently in their heads, for example working out one half of three hundred. These capabilities represent a marked improvement since the last inspection.
78. In Year 4, there is also a very broad spread of attainment and, overall, standards are below average, again because of the numbers of low-attaining children. The higher attaining children in the class have a very good understanding of the number system and use their knowledge to multiply numbers by ten or one hundred. They have the confidence to apply their knowledge to new problems, for example multiplying and dividing decimals by ten or one hundred, showing secure Level 4 understanding in this area. Average attaining children describe the properties of flat and solid shapes using correct vocabulary and have a basic understanding of angular measure. Their knowledge of the metric system of measurement is sound and they represent and interpret data to the expected level. Some of the lower attaining children are still working within Level 2, however, which is well below average for their age.
79. The judgements on standards are broadly the same as in the last inspection, both at Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. However, the children have a greater knowledge and understanding of number and shape than was reported then, and a better ability to use their knowledge in practical situations. This reflects improved teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is good overall, with good or better teaching in over 70 per cent of lessons, whereas it was satisfactory at the last inspection. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is always good and is sometimes very good. The teaching is also good in the Early Years Unit, where the Reception children get off to a flying start in making up lost ground in their understanding of the mathematical aspects of everyday life. For example, they learn to order the days of the week through well-organised group teaching and learn about numbers, shape and position through their guided play. In Key Stage 1, teaching and learning is sound, with some good lessons, but with a slower pace of learning than in the rest of the school.
80. The last inspection report found that there was insufficient oral work with the whole class. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has brought great improvements in this aspect throughout the school. The teachers use the introductions to their lessons well to stimulate the children's interest in solving mental problems and learning key facts. They take this part of the lesson at a good pace, aiming specific questions at children of different attainment levels to make them think. Planning guidelines, provided by the co-ordinator as a result of having identified weaknesses in this area, have been very useful. The children's learning in this section of the lessons is good, and they have developed very positive attitudes. They are keen to answer questions and suggest ideas for solving problems, and they listen attentively to the teacher and each other. They are making good progress in explaining their thinking and in trying out different ways of tackling problems. In some lessons that are satisfactory rather than good, the pace of questioning is too slow to challenge the highest attainers. Teachers' marking of the children's work is inconsistent. The best examples include helpful comments, but much of it is ticks and praise, which confirms the child's success, but does not offer guidance for improvement or suggestions for further challenge or investigations.
81. A feature of the most effective lessons in both key stages is the high expectations the teachers set for independent working. The children respond very positively to this. They organise their work and get on well together, helping each other out when they are stuck and sharing equipment and materials happily most of the time. Teachers prepare the tasks well, and make sure that each group has work that is pitched at about the right level of difficulty. They supervise this part of the lesson well, using

questions effectively to assess the children's understanding. The children's learning is supported with a good range of resources that the teachers use effectively in all parts of the lessons.

They make good use of the large hundred squares, for example, to teach addition, subtraction and place value through the patterns that the children can see, and provide them with their own smaller versions to work from. Good examples were seen of teachers preparing interesting materials to teach the whole class how to represent information by making a pictogram. By engaging the children's interest in this way, the teachers secure good understanding, and through interesting practical follow-up work, they enable the children to develop and apply their skills. Behaviour is generally good in the lessons because the teachers set high expectations and keep the children interested and challenged. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because the teachers set appropriately simplified tasks for them and arrange adequate support.

82. The co-ordinator leads the subject very effectively and has introduced many helpful initiatives that are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching, learning and standards. The school piloted the National Numeracy Strategy, enabling the children to benefit early from this venture. The children's progress is closely monitored so that the teachers are aware of their attainment, including the differences between girls' and boys' results and how the children perform in different aspects of the subject. Useful outcomes of this analysis include the emphasis placed on using mathematics in practical situations and working independently, reflected in the improved performance of the children in these areas. The co-ordinator monitors teaching effectively and gives good support to colleagues. This includes feeding back on the useful in-service training that has been attended and planning individual lessons with teachers. There are plans in hand to produce a termly letter for parents informing them of what is being taught. This will address one of the concerns expressed by parents in their responses to the questionnaire.

SCIENCE

83. The percentage of children reaching Level 2 (the expected level for seven-year-olds) in the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was very low in all the science attainment targets. The percentage of children assessed as reaching the higher Level 3 was also below national expectation, except in the study of living things where the percentage reaching this level was well below the national average. The results were well below those of other schools with a similar intake at Level 2, but were in line with those achieved in those schools at Level 3.
84. Although the standards seen during the inspection at the end of Key Stage 1 were an improvement on the 1999 results, they are still below those expected nationally of children of this age. There are two main reasons why the standards are not higher. Although the work seen is up to the expected standard, the pace at which work is being done is not always fast enough to cover the full programme of study in sufficient depth. There was also very little work done at higher than expected levels and higher-attaining children are not being sufficiently challenged. Children in Year 2 know about life cycles and healthy living. They know that heart rate and body temperature rise during exercise. They also know that forces can be pushes or pulls and that some materials can conduct electricity. Children in Year 1 know that sound diminishes with distance. Key Stage 1 children can carry out investigations well and can predict and record their results. They are not yet using these results to explain what is happening.
85. The standards seen in Key Stage 2 were in line with those expected nationally for children of this age and many children are achieving standards above that expected nationally in some aspects. For example, children in Year 4 know the major bones in the skeleton and can describe their functions. They know that some changes are reversible and they have a good knowledge of solids and liquids and what happens when solids dissolve. These children carry out investigations well and recognise the need for the tests to be fair. Higher-attaining children are beginning to link cause and effect in the results of their experiments. Children in Year 3 know the laws of magnetism and can test which

magnet is the strongest. They predict confidently but are still often misled by extraneous factors. For example, they think that the biggest magnet is the strongest, instead of concentrating on magnetic properties.

86. Teaching in science is satisfactory. Lessons are generally well prepared but expectations as to the amount of work that can be covered are sometimes too modest, especially in Key Stage 1. The work is generally planned to match the abilities of the children in the class. Although the challenges posed by the work in Key Stage 1 are appropriate for the majority of children, who make sound progress, they are too low for the higher-attaining children who could achieve more. The levels of challenge set in Key Stage 2 lessons are often high and so all children are making good progress. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages as the planning is designed to match their needs and they are often supported well by classroom assistants. Lessons are generally well managed and children are encouraged to work in groups independently of the teacher.
87. The children's attitudes to the work are sound. They carry out investigations well and generally handle and share equipment sensibly and fairly. Most are prepared to discuss their ideas and listen to the ideas of others in the group. The majority sustains interest in the work and enjoys the subject. However, the pace at which many children work is steady rather than brisk.
88. The previous inspection found that the standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below those expected nationally at this age and this is still the case. The report also found that the standards in Key Stage 2 were below those expected nationally of that age group. This is no longer the case and there has been a marked improvement in standards for these children. There was no scheme of work for science at that time but now the school has adopted a national scheme that ensures a continuity of experience that allows children to develop their knowledge and skills progressively as they move up the school. The report also noted that there was insufficient monitoring of the work being done in the classrooms. The school has adopted a standard system of assessment that measures each pupil's progress against specific learning objectives. This enables progress to be monitored more accurately and both classroom practice and planning are now monitored as well.
89. The subject is well led by the headteacher, who has been set clear objectives for improvement. An analysis of results showed a weakness in recording observations made during investigations and this has been addressed well and shows considerable improvement. The scheme of work has been linked to that of the receiving middle school to ensure a smooth transition and allow for improved exchange of information about each pupil. The level of resources is adequate but there are still some deficiencies. The equipment is used well to support the work in the classroom and children are confident in its use.

ART

90. The children make good progress overall and reach standards in line with expectations for their age at both key stages. This is an improvement at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection when standards were judged below expectations. The quality of teaching and learning has also improved markedly in Key Stage 2 from unsatisfactory to good, and has been maintained at a satisfactory level in Key Stage 1.
91. A range of different media is used to create both two and three-dimensional works of art, which is also an improvement since the last inspection when there was insufficient three-dimensional work. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the children were making models of eggs for Easter from clay or from balloons, paper and paste. They learned to appreciate the importance of putting lots of little strips of paper together for strength rather than a few large pieces, and the care and control needed when using clay-modelling tools. The children's skills are in line with expectations for seven-year-olds in both these areas. They relate very well together in sharing resources and ideas and working independently in response to the teacher's high expectations of them. However, the children are sometimes allowed to work for too long without the teacher's guidance. When this happens, they practice unsuccessful

techniques rather than learning better ways of modelling.

92. In Year 4, the children take modelling skills further in their use of a variety of materials, including wood, soap, wire and clay. By this stage they are beginning to appreciate the significant differences between two and three-dimensional work. The teacher has good subject knowledge and moves from group to group giving very skilled guidance, keeping the pupils closely focused on their work. This very good teaching enables the children to learn very quickly. In discussion, the children say that they enjoy art, and in particular the modelling work, reflecting the challenging and rewarding experiences they have been given.
93. The standard of teaching seen was good overall and there was some good or very good teaching in Key Stage 2. The teachers have good relationships with the children and manage them well in lessons. They prepare the materials for their lessons very efficiently so that the minimum time is spent organising the activities and the maximum time allowed for practical learning and achievement. The teachers secure better learning when they move from group to group giving advice and support rather than staying for too long with one group. In all the lessons seen, the teachers had a good knowledge of each child's abilities and were able to judge the progress they were making.
94. By giving the children lots of opportunities for working independently, the teachers encourage personal responsibility and the children respond very positively. The lessons are characterised by a purposeful buzz of conversation and a relaxed atmosphere. Behaviour is very good and the children get on very well with one another while engaged in their practical activities. Often they become completely absorbed in what they are doing. Children with special educational needs are appropriately supported. They sometimes miss lessons to read with the voluntary helpers. This denies them some of their art time in the short-term, but this is balanced by the benefit they gain in many other areas through their improved reading skills.
95. Strong links with other subjects enliven much of the children's work. For example, very attractive collage and weaving pictures of planets accompany poems about space and information gathered from a variety of sources including computers. Music is linked in very effectively when Year 3 children listen to a recording of 'The Planets' by Gustav Holst while weaving planet patterns using photographic sources for ideas. The children are encouraged to draw what they see, and this develops their sense of shape, space and perspective. They use a range of media to create pictures and patterns, including paints, pastels and collage, and the way their work is displayed encourages them to greater effort and achievement.
96. The good work that is being done in many lessons is not currently co-ordinated across the school. Recent staffing changes have brought new ideas into the school, and the co-ordinator is sensibly planning to draw these together to begin formulating a new policy and scheme of work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. Due to the timetable structure no lessons in design technology were observed during the inspection and so no judgements can be made about the quality of teaching. Through a scrutiny of work, study of artefacts and discussions with staff and children, the standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 were judged to be below those expected nationally, reflecting unsatisfactory progress. Design technology was not time-tabled in the school last year and the subject has had to be re-introduced this year.
98. Children in Year 2 have made cotton reel 'tanks', vehicles from cardboard boxes, and musical instruments such as drums and shakers. The level of challenge in these tasks is insufficient to develop appropriate levels of skill. In Year 1, children have made cards with moving parts and shown some ingenuity in their design. They have also made finger puppets from templates and their skills are

being developed at an appropriate level. Children in Year 3 have designed three-dimensional shapes from card to support a picture. They have tested sandwiches for taste, smell and appearance and explored how air pressure can be used to operate devices. Again this level of challenge is too low for this age. Year 4 children are undertaking a long-term project to design and make a purse. They have investigated several aspects such as choice of material, fastenings and waterproofing and have produced a fabric template to help in cutting the material. The making skills shown by these children are below those expected at this age but the level of research and design is appropriate.

99. The children enjoy the work and are interested in making things but, as yet, there is little pride taken in the finished appearance of their work. Many have made things seen on television programmes. A group of Year 2 children spoke enthusiastically about a go-kart they had built from a construction kit that could carry a person and move! This was something that they had done for themselves in a wet playtime. The older children have sustained their interest in the project over several weeks and are enjoying what they are doing. There is currently no assessment of the children's work to guide future planning.
100. The co-ordinator, who is not a subject specialist, has only recently been appointed to the school and has had little time yet to devote to this subject. However, the subject is now time-tabled and the school has adopted a national scheme of work to provide good support and guidance for the staff. In the previous inspection the subject was judged to have shortcomings and this remains the case today. However, the subject is priority for development next year and is in a sound position to improve.

GEOGRAPHY

101. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Further evidence to support the judgements about standards was gathered in an analysis of samples of children's work from across both key stages and from discussions with children at the end of Key Stage 1 and in their final year at the school.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1, the children's standards are below those expected of children who are seven. This is mainly because the children do not have sufficient basic skills in writing to enable them to organise and express what they know effectively. There is also some unsatisfactory teaching. The children know the basic facts about the most important physical features of the local area. Some successfully orientate a map of the British Isles and indicate one or more of the countries that make up the United Kingdom. Most of the children, however, show little awareness of places beyond their own locality, and do not have an understanding of how to compare places in terms of their geographical features.
103. Discussions with Year 4 children indicate that they have a satisfactory understanding of some of the geography they have studied over the past two years. For example, the children successfully describe differences in climate around the world. They explain that countries such as South Africa and Australia have warmer climates than Britain and that some regions of the world such as the North and South Poles have very cold climates. They demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the need to care for the environment and are able to illustrate this with references to lessons on litter, on conserving wild flowers and on projects to improve the school grounds. Most of the children understand that the quality of the environment in an area has important effects on the quality of life of those who live in it.
104. Too few lessons, and too little work, were seen to make overall judgements about the quality of the teaching. In the Key Stage 1 lesson, however, the children made unsatisfactory progress because the teaching was unsatisfactory. The work was based on insufficient subject knowledge and was not well planned. It did not take sufficiently into account what the children already knew, understood and could do. As a result, the work was too hard for them and the tasks inappropriate. The children, therefore, did not make sufficient progress and did not achieve the lesson's objectives.

105. Although the school now devotes more time to the subject than it did, it does not use the time well to help the children develop the skills they need to communicate effectively what they learn. The small amount of written work, for example, was not well organised and presented. There is currently insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in the subject to ensure that standards are high enough throughout the school.

HISTORY

106. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 and only two lessons were observed at Key Stage 2. The inspection judgements are therefore based on an analysis of the work in children's books and discussions with children and teachers.
107. The children at both key stages attain standards that are broadly in line with what is expected for their age and make satisfactory progress. The levels of attainment have improved since the last inspection mainly because the school devotes more time to the subject and has improved the curriculum by basing it upon the guidelines produce by the Qualifications and Curriculum Council.
108. By the age of seven the children know, through an exploration of toys from the past, that artefacts from long ago were made from a smaller range of materials that included more natural substances such as china, wood and wool, and fewer manufactured ones. They know, for example, that children from long ago did not have plastic toys or toys driven by batteries. The children acquire, through their study of the Great Fire of London, an appropriate awareness of cause and effect in historical events. For example, they know what caused the fire to spread so quickly and what prevented it from spreading to the whole of London. They know that, as a result of the fire, city planners changed building practices to help prevent similar disasters. They also know how the fire services in Stuart London differed from those of today. Many of the children know that information about the past comes from surviving eye-witness accounts such as those given by Samuel Pepys in his diary. Most use secondary sources such as pictures depicting aspects of the past and simple information books to learn more about the periods they study. The main weakness in the children's attainment is the difficulty many children have in writing about what they have learned. This strongly contrasts with the confidence and eagerness with which the children discuss what they know when talking to each other and to adults.
109. By the time they are nine, nearly all of the children have a satisfactory grasp of the main characteristic and events in the periods they study. They know, for example, about the Roman and Viking invasions and settlements of Britain. They say why the invaders came and why their periods of influence ended. They know, too, something about the arms, equipment and organisation of the invaders and how these contributed to their successful conquests. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the children investigated the qualities of the Viking longship and learned how its shallow draft and sturdy construction allowed the Vikings to navigate rivers as well as cross seas. In a Year 4 lesson, the children demonstrated a good understanding of Henry VIII's problems in securing an male heir to the throne. They talked confidently, for example, about positive and negative aspects of his marriage to Ann of Cleves. They understand the terms 'alliance' and 'mis-match' and are able to use them in the context of Henry's search for a wife who would bear him sons. They explain why Henry came into conflict with the Pope and what he did to ensure that the church in England was not able to thwart his plans. The comparisons of oral skills with writing skills among the children in Key Stage 2 is similar to that of the younger ones. For example, although most talk confidently about historical events, people and processes, few succeed in expressing in writing what they have learned.
110. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1, but it is good overall in Key Stage 2, with examples of very good teaching. The main strength in the teaching lies the skilful use of a range of methods to help the children understand complex ideas. The

quality of questioning is generally very good and teacher's expectation of what children might understand is high. The quality of learning in the Year 4 lesson was very good. The children achieved well because the teacher inspired them to work hard and provided them with very good opportunities to learn a great deal in a short time. The main weakness of the teaching across the school is the lack of effective strategies to help the children develop the skills they need to successfully express their ideas in writing tasks. Much of the writing at both key stages is below what is expected of children in relation to their ages.

111. The leadership and management of the subject have been effective in implementing improvements to the curriculum that have contributed to higher standards in the children's understanding of historical periods and methods of enquiry. Monitoring and evaluation are unsatisfactory because they have not been effective in identifying how standards in the children's written work can be improved.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards in information technology are below those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. Most of the work in Year 2 is limited to word processing and using 'paint' programs. The children are able to word process their work and use a CD ROM to search for information. They have little experience in other aspects of the programme of study for this subject. Year 1 children display appropriate skills in using 'paint' programs to develop striking patterns and they can combine imported images with well-produced text. Children in Year 4 can combine imported images with more extensive text and can change font size and use 'paint' programs for effect. Although their keyboard skills are not well developed they can copy and paste work competently. They are able to use the results from their own questionnaires to input and amend data on a database and display their results in a variety of ways. Children in Year 3 know about records, files and fields. They can generate sound using a keyboard and can use font and colour for effect in their word processing. They can save and retrieve files competently. All the Key Stage 2 children have limited experience outside these areas and are not attaining at an appropriate level over an appropriate range of aspects in the subject.
113. Only a limited amount of teaching was seen but that which was seen was always competent and sometimes good. The level of work set is suitable for the ability of the children, given their limited experience, but expectations of the amount of work to be covered is too low. Teachers have good relationships with the children and support them well, ensuring that all children make sound progress. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives and these are shared with the children at the start of the lesson. Teachers give the children specific targets, enabling them to feel a sense of achievement when the targets are reached. Lessons are well managed and children are quickly on task.
114. The children enjoy this work. They apply themselves well to the tasks in hand and support each other with help and advice. Many take a great pride in the finished appearance of their work and most pieces of typed work are well presented.
115. Attainment was judged below national expectations in both key stages in the previous report when they had too few opportunities to develop their word processing and data handling skills. Although standards are still below expectations the children now have more time on machines to develop those skills. There was also insufficient coverage of aspects of the subject and this is still the case. Assessment arrangements were seen as poor at that time but these have improved considerably. However, the children themselves are not yet involved in recording their own achievements. Part of the problem at the time of the last inspection was the limited range of hardware and software and this is now much better.
116. The subject is well led by the headteacher and there is a clear appreciation of what is needed to improve standards and a determination to see that they improve. The school has recently purchased

additional machines and now the overall provision is good. The new computers are housed in a networked suite that is time-tabled for specific information technology lessons. This provision is being used to advantage for training parents of children in this school and the middle school in computing techniques. The school has adopted a national scheme for the subject and in-service training has been provided for the staff. The co-ordinator provides good support for other members of staff, both in the planning and delivery of lessons. Although the number of machines is now good there are deficiencies in equipment if the school is to incorporate the communication element of the new course and the computers in the classrooms are dated. Currently, information technology is not being used sufficiently to support other subjects. Given the improvements that have been implemented in the subject and the will to raise standards, the school is now in a good position to move forward.

MUSIC

117. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements to the subject, especially in Key Stage 2. All aspects of the National Curriculum are now taught through a published scheme. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 has also improved, largely due to the very good teaching of the visiting specialist teacher. The increased interest and enjoyment that the children show and their improving standards in Year 4 reflect this teacher's subject knowledge and ability to engage the children in a variety of interesting and stimulating activities. In lessons that do not benefit from this direct input, the pace of teaching and learning is slower.
118. The standards that the children reach are broadly in line with expectations for their age at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, they sing a range of songs in tune, keep reasonable time to the music and identify qualities that make pieces of music similar and different. The ability of children in Year 1 to describe the qualities of different sounds and relate them to their experiences is at least in line with expectations for their age. Some children show an above average ability to communicate ideas in this way. For example, they described a piece of music as 'relaxing, like a boat floating off in the water'. They suggest ways of using instruments to create the effect of water in different situations, such as a rain shower, with confidence. In Year 4, the children have developed a good ear for a tune and can write and read simple scores that show how the notes of a tune go up, down or stay the same. They keep time well by this stage, and recognise and tap out a range of rhythms. They sing with enthusiasm, and attention to phrasing and mood.
119. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but teachers generally lack the confidence to go beyond the prescribed lessons of the scheme, which are not always suitable. For example, the lessons may require the children to sit still for too long concentrating on one idea, or may contain tasks that too complicated. This results in lessons proceeding at rather a pedestrian pace, for example when all the children have to repeatedly attempt the same rhythm task in turn. Equally, they become restless when they are asked to undertake tasks for which they are not yet ready for, such as comparing four pieces of music from memory. The teachers generally have good control over the children, and keep them on task, but when they do not manage to do this, the poor behaviour of the few disrupts the learning of the whole class. When the lesson includes opportunities for the children to use instruments, they respond well by playing them sensibly and listening carefully to the sounds they make. In most of the lessons seen, too few opportunities were provided for the children to do this. The children have positive attitudes. They are keen to learn, and even when the lessons is too slow, they generally make an effort to concentrate and improve their performance. They relate well to each other and show that they are capable of working collaboratively when given the chance.
120. The decision to use the expertise of the visiting specialist to improve teaching across the curriculum rather than to lead singing for the whole school was a successful one for the classes directly involved. However, the impact of this input is limited so far to the one lesson per fortnight that she teaches in each Key Stage 2 class. The school has not yet found a way of spreading the great benefits of this available expertise throughout the school. Currently, the teachers do not have the confidence to

implement the new scheme of work effectively and there has been no recent in-service training. The co-ordinator is new to the post, and is currently engaged in leading a review of the new scheme, so the leadership and management of the subject is in the very early stages of development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in Year 2 because only part of one lesson was seen. The work done by Year 3 children, however, however, indicates that they had reached standards in line with expectations for their age by the end of Key Stage 1 in gymnastics. They warm up with good attention to the space around them and the range of muscles in need of stretching. They have good skills in working collaboratively with a partner to produce movements and balances. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when they found this hard to do.
122. The only lesson seen in Year 4 was swimming. Here the children demonstrate expected achievements for their age. Half the class can already swim ten metres and most of the others are well on their way. Two of the children can swim 25 metres and most are on course to achieve this minimum standard by the time they are eleven. The standard of teaching provided by the pool instructors and the class teacher is very good, and the children make good gains in their water-confidence and swimming ability in each lesson. Lessons are planned for three attainment groups, and the children are kept working at appropriately challenging tasks the whole lesson. They thoroughly enjoy the session and work really hard. Their behaviour on the bus and in the pool is very good in response.
123. The standard of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in Key Stage 2. In the good lessons, the children are kept on task by firm management, and are set high expectations for collaboration and performance, which they meet. In a good lesson in Year 3, for example, the children work in pairs to produce symmetrical balances. They work together very effectively and use their imagination and initiative well to produce some elegant shapes. When the learning objectives and expectations are not clear, and the management of the class not so effective, the behaviour of some children deteriorates and learning is slowed down for everybody. This problem was highlighted at the last inspection and has not yet been fully overcome.
124. The co-ordinator, who is new to the post, has only just begun giving direction for whole-school planning. A curriculum map is in place to ensure that each class covers the appropriate areas of the National Curriculum. The next stage is to produce a scheme of work that will ensure continuous development of skills as the children move through the school. There is currently no extracurricular provision to extend the children's involvement in competitive sport and other physical activities, and this was commented on by some parents.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. The inspectors saw only one lesson at each key stage. Judgements about standards are based on evidence from discussions with groups of children from Years 2 and 4 and from analyses of samples of work by children across both key stages.
126. The children reach satisfactory standards at both key stages. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection report in which the standards achieved were judged to be below those expected for children aged seven and nine. Since then, the school has provided a more effective curriculum and better guidance to teachers on how to teach it.
127. By the end of Key Stage 1, the children talk animatedly about some of the Bible stories they have heard. They know, for example, about Adam and Eve and about Noah and the Flood. They give simple accounts of Moses in the bulrushes and Daniel in the lions' den. They know the nativity story and recount some of Jesus' miracles, such as his walking on water. The children understand that the Bible teaches about God and that it gives guidance to people on how they should behave towards one another. They know, for example, that the Ten Commandments are rules on how to live. They know that God considers all people to be special and that baptisms are about becoming part of the Church. The children show a satisfactory awareness that people from other faiths use prayer and meet in special buildings. They know that Christians worship in churches and that Jews worship in synagogues. They learn to value other people's feelings through discussing stories such as Henrietta Goose. In this lesson the children expressed empathy with the principal character and said how they would react in similar circumstances to those in the story. The main weakness in the children's work lies in the difficulty they have in demonstrating, in written form, the knowledge and understanding they attain in lessons through discussion and reading.
128. By the age of nine, the children talk confidently about some aspects of the Old and New Testaments. They know, for example, that God had a special relationship with the Hebrew people. They know about the Hebrews' captivity in Egypt and about the plagues that nation suffered. They understand that Jesus is God's son and that he had disciples to help him in his ministry. They retell some of the miracles of Jesus such as the turning of water into wine and the feeding of the five thousand. The children are aware that Christians, and people of other faiths such as Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus, use stories to teach about how people should live and treat each other. In a lesson on the judgement of Solomon, the children engaged in animated discussion about the fairness of the judgement and how it was important to be fair in their dealings with others. The children know that some people act out their faith in ways that affect others. For example, they talk about the work of Mother Teresa and see the connection between her work and the teaching of Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Although the children talk with a reasonable degree of confidence about what they know and understand, they are not able to express themselves well in writing. The unsatisfactory quality of some of the written work masks a secure knowledge and understanding of what the children have been taught.
129. The inspectors saw too few lessons to enable them to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching throughout the school. However, in the two lessons that were seen the teaching was at least satisfactory. The main strength in the teaching in these lessons was the skilful way the teachers used discussion and well-targeted questions to involve all children and to develop in them an awareness of the value of their own feelings and the feelings of others. The children, therefore, showed a strong interest in what was being taught and quickly learned to express orally their understanding of religious ideas and information in the lessons. This level of participation by the children, and the teachers' sound subject knowledge, helps to ensure that the children make satisfactory progress in most aspects of the subject. The analysis of the children's written work, however, indicates that, across the year

groups, the teaching does not successfully provide the children with the skills they need to express themselves confidently in writing.

130. Since the last inspection, the management of the subject has been successfully directed towards creating a more coherent curriculum based upon the locally agreed syllabus. This has helped to raise standards because the content of the lessons is richer and the teachers have a clearer idea of what the children must learn. There are aspects of management, however, that are unsatisfactory. For example, the school does not have an action plan that will build upon what has been achieved in order to raise standards of learning and teaching further.