

INSPECTION REPORT

MALTBY CRAGS INFANT SCHOOL

Blyth Road

Maltby

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106870

Headteacher: Mrs. C. M. Hudson

Reporting inspector: Mrs. E. Parry
2615

Dates of inspection: 5 – 9 June, 2000

Inspection number: 190496

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Blyth Road
Maltby
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S66 7HP

Postcode:

Telephone number: 01709 812729

Fax number: 01709 798202

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. D. Evans

Date of previous inspection: December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|----------------------|--|--|
| E. Parry | Registered inspector | Special educational needs | Teaching and learning |
| | | Mathematics | The school's results and achievements |
| | | Music | How well are pupils taught? |
| | | Equal opportunities | How well is the school led and managed? |
| D. Lloyd | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development |
| | | | How well does the school care for its pupils? |
| | | | How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| S. Reynolds | Team inspector | English | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| | | Geography | |
| | | History | |
| R. Holmes | Team inspector | Science | |
| | | Information and communication technology | |
| | | Design and technology | |
| L. Goodhand | Team inspector | Under fives | |
| | | Art | |
| | | Physical education | |
| | | Religious education | |

The inspection contractor was:

Peak Education Partnership
 19, Huddersfield Road
 Barnsley
 South Yorkshire

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 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Maltby Crags is a little larger than most infant schools. There are 189 pupils currently on roll; 86 boys and 103 girls. The nursery has places for 78 pupils on a part time basis. As it does not have enough places for the numbers who want to attend, some children go to a neighbouring nursery before they come to the infant school.

The school is at the edge of the small town of Maltby in an area which has much unemployment and many social problems. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals has dropped considerably in the last four years but is still higher than in most schools.

Children come to the nursery with a wide range of skills and abilities but overall attainment is below what is usual when they start full time education at four years of age. Four pupils have statements of educational need and about a third of the children are on the school's register for special needs. This is higher than is found in most schools. Two children are from ethnic minority backgrounds and speak English as their second language.

The school is unusual in that it is on more than one site. Part of it is in a building which it shares with a separate junior school. Its nursery and reception classes are on a different site some distance away.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school which provides a caring education for its children and good value for money. The children make good progress which shows in the standards they reach in the national tests and assessments by the end of Year 2. These are above average and sometimes well above average when compared to similar schools. This is because of the importance given to good assessment and consistent expectations which guide teaching. The headteacher has very clear views on how to improve the school and is well supported by staff. Real difficulties arise from the fact that the school is on three sites but these are minimised through effective management. The new governing body have ideas on how they will work to help the school but have yet to put them into practice.

What the school does well

- Children do well in the national tests and assessments when compared to similar schools.
- Standards in art and design technology are good.
- Teachers assess children's learning well and use the information effectively to help them to plan and teach good lessons.
- The structured and caring environment encourages children to enjoy their learning and to behave well.
- Children with special needs are given good support in a number of different ways.
- The headteacher gives very clear leadership and overall management of the school is good.

What could be improved

- Some of the teaching is less than satisfactory especially when there are too many activities for the teachers to manage without support.
- Only a few parents take an active part in supporting their children's learning at school and at home.
- Attendance is poor.
- The buildings and playgrounds on the three sites have problems which need to be solved.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1996. It has sustained many of the qualities which were commended in the previous inspection and improvement is good. Teaching is generally good although there are some weaknesses as well as strengths. Standards have continued to be good compared to similar schools and in this year's tests more children have reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics than before. The two areas which the school was advised to improve have both had attention. There is a policy and scheme of work for English; the school has implemented the national literacy strategy. However, attendance which was judged unsatisfactory last time remains poor despite the good efforts that are made.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | | |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 | | |
| Reading | C | D | C | A | well above average | A |
| Writing | D | E | C | A | above average | B |
| Mathematics | C | C | D | B | average | C |
| | | | | | below average | D |
| | | | | | well below average | E |

The table shows that in the last year pupils achieved similar results in reading and writing to the national average but well above those of schools where the take up of free school meals is similar. Mathematics was below the national average but still better than what was achieved in similar schools. Results have varied too much to describe a general trend. They reflect the composition of a year in terms of the numbers of pupils with special needs and of what the children could do when they started school.

Although it is not required to do so, the school set targets for the current year and exceeded them by a good amount. The process was new and the targets were not challenging enough. The process is being tightened up for the next set of targets.

Inspection evidence shows that most children reach the expected levels in their work in reading, writing, mathematics and science in all classes. However, the percentage that do so is below what is achieved in most schools especially in work which is at higher levels. This is why standards are judged to be below average. However, teachers' records and children's books show that children make good progress from where they start. In information technology the children are doing at least as well as most children do in other schools. This is good because it is all done within Maltby Craggs Infant School. Hardly any children have computers at home on which they can learn. In art and design technology, the children do well and in other subjects attainment is satisfactory. Children who are under five make good progress as do those with special needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Those who come to the school enjoy their work and try hard to do their best. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour, both in class and around the school, is always good. Children understand what is expected of them and they accept and observe the two simple rules that govern their daily conduct. |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and their response to the school's provision for their personal development are all good. There are good relationships throughout the school. |
| Attendance | Poor. It is well below the national average despite the measures that the school has tried to bring about improvement. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Taking account of what was seen in lessons but, equally importantly, the progress that is evident in pupils' work from when they start the school to when they leave, teaching is good. It was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons with 60 per cent of these being good and some being very good. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in 8 per cent of lessons with a majority of these being in one class in Year 2. Teaching in nursery is very good because it is clearly focused especially in language and literacy and in personal and social development. Thorough planning and well established routines help children to co-operate with adults and each other. Good quality resources are used.

In the rest of the school, teaching is more variable. The thoroughness of assessment leads to well targeted planning and teaching of basic skills particularly in literacy and numeracy. This enables children to make good progress. However, progress is most consistent up to and including Year 1 and least consistent in Year 2. Where teaching is good, there are good relationships, pupils are effectively managed and they respond well to the structured learning and environment by working hard. Where there are too many activities for the teacher to control or a single activity which is not well enough adapted to meet the needs of all children, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Additional support for children with special needs results in good progress within a session and over time.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. There is a broad, relevant, well-planned curriculum throughout school. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Provision is good. Support in class and tuition in small groups or for individuals works well to help children to make good progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Overall there is good provision for personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural education but the spiritual and cultural strands could be developed further. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | This is a caring school, where staff know the children very well. There is effective assessment and good records that ensure that children's individual needs are met. |

Some parents are happy to become involved in school activities and are strongly supportive of the school's efforts and its achievements. A significant minority take little interest and play little or no part in their children's school work. Information provided by the school for parents, about pupils' progress and personal development, is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides very good leadership, managing and developing assessment and teaching effectively to promote good learning. She is well supported by staff. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. The new governing body is getting to know what it has to do and governors are keen to contribute. Governors who are new to their roles have yet to develop active participation. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. There are very effective systems in place for checking how well children are doing and for keeping an eye on all aspects of school improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources | Staff are effectively deployed. Resources are used well. There is careful management of the budget to meet priorities with sound understanding of the principles of ensuring best value for money. A major inefficiency which is out of the school's control is that accommodation is on three sites. |

The accommodation is poor and leads to inefficiencies and inequalities despite the best efforts of the staff. The fact that there are a number of buildings on three sites limits opportunities for staff to support each other. Each building has something wrong with it. Faults have been identified by external audits and a number of repairs and improvements are outstanding.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The care and attention given to their children.• That the school expects children to work hard.• The literacy and numeracy hours.• Helpful information on reports and contact when needed with teachers.• Help for children with special needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lunchtime arrangements |

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive statements. The small group of parents who attended the meeting or replied to the questionnaire were entirely supportive of the school. Several expressed concern about lunchtimes. They feel that the children are intimidated by having to walk through the junior playground to their own part of the school the inspection team agree. Whilst the juniors are not unfriendly, the fact that young children have to walk through lines of junior pupils waiting to enter the dining room and then pass through an area of playground where pupils are playing boisterous games including football, can be daunting for some.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the national tests and assessments in 1999, standards in reading and writing were average compared to the national figures but well above those for similar schools. In mathematics, standards were below the national average but still above those for similar schools. Attainment at the higher level 3 was close to the national average in reading but below in mathematics and no pupils reached the higher level in writing. In the last four years, girls' results have been higher than those of the boys in all three subjects. The boys' results have been below those of boys nationally in every year but the girls have sometimes done better than the national average for girls especially in mathematics. The inspection team found no difference in teaching or provision that would account for this but the school has begun to look for ways to improve the results achieved by boys. For example, they have recently bought in a good selection of non fiction books to encourage reading.

2. Results have varied too much to describe a general trend. They reflect the composition of a year in terms of the numbers of pupils with special needs and of what children could do when they started the school. For example, almost one third of the current Year 2 group is on the special needs register with one quarter being in the later stages of the assessment process. Analysis of the most recent information for their tests, shows that the overall percentage in reading, writing and mathematics is lower than in 1999 but more pupils have reached the higher level including some in writing. For this cohort, the assessments that were done when the pupils started school were low and predictions from this information showed few reaching the average level or above. In fact, the pupils have done far better at every level than the predictions from the baseline suggested, particularly in mathematics. The value that has been added from a low starting point is good.

3. Although it is not required to do so, the school set targets for the current year and exceeded them by a good amount. The process was new and the targets were not challenging enough. The headteacher is already examining the targets for the next year with a view to advising the governing body to increase them in the light of their first experience.

4. Children enter the nursery with attainment which is well below what is usually found for children of their age and standards are still below those expected by the time they are five in reception. However, they make good progress particularly in the areas of language and literacy and of personal and social development. There are times when many do achieve the standards set for them in the early years curriculum, for example when they talk about books.

5. Standards in English are a little below average by the time that children leave the school although progress is good compared to baseline assessments made in reception. Throughout the school, children listen attentively in assemblies, to stories and when teachers are talking. They reply to questions confidently and talk comfortably to visitors but often use a limited range of words. By Year 2, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words. Most read with understanding and a growing use of expression and know about book features such as the author and illustrator. Higher attaining pupils can use an index and

contents page. Most pupils begin to recognise different types of books, although they are most familiar with stories and many are less confident in finding and using non-fiction texts for themselves. Throughout the school, pupils apply their writing skills in a growing range of ways including poetry and recipes. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils begin to use words for effect and to use an appropriate range of punctuation such as speech marks. Pupils write in a variety of different ways although less frequently in imaginative forms or for different purposes and audiences. Handwriting is usually neat and legible although few pupils develop a flowing style.

6. Attainment in mathematics by the end of the key stage is wide but overall below average standards. At the higher level pupils have a good knowledge of numbers and write correctly any from 0 to above 1000; they are not yet aware of negative numbers. They can identify place value and recognise simple fractions. Their skills in mental work are good although some use recall and are faster whilst others use counting strategies. Higher and average attaining pupils know at least some of the multiplication facts for the 2, 5 and 10 times tables and competently undertake addition and subtraction sums. They have an appropriate knowledge of shape, measures and graphs. A number of pupils struggle with number and are only secure with those up to 10. They add competently up to 20 but do not pay enough attention to signs so that they make errors when addition and subtraction are mixed up.

7. Standards in science for the current Year 2 group are a little below those found in schools nationally. Most pupils are achieving the expected level 2, but very few achieve above that. Pupils understand the importance of observation and investigation in science, measure accurately and present their results clearly in tables. They know that tests must be made fairly. Knowledge of scientific fact is generally sound. Field trips such as those to nearby Maltby Crags help to develop their understanding. Although children enjoy their science work and try hard in lessons, work that has been covered some time ago is sometimes not remembered for example, Year 2 pupils had forgotten a lot of what had been covered on electricity.

8. The children are doing at least as well as most children do in other schools in information technology. This represents good progress because it is all done within Maltby Crags Infant school; hardly any children have computers at home on which they can learn. In art and design technology, the children do well and in other subjects attainment is satisfactory and many pupils achieve well in view of their starting points.

9. The good range of provision for children with special needs ensures that they make good progress albeit that this can be in very small steps. Teaching which makes sure that there are questions that children with special needs can answer and tasks that they can do, in class support and attention individually and in small groups are all provided and used sensitively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Children develop a good approach to all their school activities because of the care and attention that staff give to their needs. When they arrive at school in the morning they quickly settle to productive tasks of their own choice, or are guided by the teacher. They concentrate on their work, show enthusiasm during lessons and are eager to answer questions. Most are confident when they offer opinions or suggestions in the classroom and are equally sure of themselves in large groups such as assembly but some are not so sure of themselves. Most children happily explain their work to visitors and proudly show

off their achievements. In nursery, children are learning to work independently, for example, selecting their own materials for collage work. Throughout the school they co-operate well, share and take turns fairly. Most of the time they raise their hands to answer questions and wait to be asked before they speak. Occasionally, there are examples of inattention and fidgeting in lessons, and sometimes children find it difficult to curb their natural instinct to call out answers, but this is a sign of excitement and motivation, not of poor behaviour.

11. Behaviour, both in class and around the school, is always good. Children understand what is expected of them and show how well they accept and observe the two simple rules that govern their daily conduct. When they move through the building to go to assembly or PE in the hall, when they go to the dining hall for lunch, when they move into the infant playground at breaks between lessons, they are always orderly and controlled. Sometimes play becomes boisterous, but it is never aggressive. The school has only once had to exclude a pupil on a temporary basis for extremely violent behaviour that could not be handled in any other way.

12. Relationships between children and between children and staff are good throughout the school. In the nursery, relationships are exceptionally good and the older children here co-operate with one another particularly well. In Key Stage 1 children work well together in pairs or groups, listening to the ideas of others and showing consideration for views that may differ from their own. They show proper respect for the adults who teach and help them and are polite, friendly and courteous in their dealings with adult visitors. Bullying is not an issue here. Occasional fallings-out and minor disagreements are immediately checked by staff, who ensure that children understand that unkindness and unfriendliness are unacceptable.

13. When opportunities to take responsibility are provided, children are quick to respond. Even the youngest are expected to find their own resources and to tidy up after lessons. Pupils are proud to take on jobs to help the teachers, such as holding open the doors as classes file out of assembly. Sometimes they show initiative, identifying things that need to be done and taking action without being asked, for example, in closing a classroom door to shut out intrusive noise or in picking up a fallen notice.

14. Most children enjoy coming to school. This is confirmed by those parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting. However, overall attendance figures are poor, and have not improved since the last inspection. A small number of children from an even smaller number of families account for the unauthorised absences, which are well above the national average. The poor attendance figures are made worse by the fact that a number of pupils have left the area, but remain on the school roll until their current whereabouts can be traced. The school has made extensive efforts to improve attendance with the help of the Education Welfare Officer, but has not yet succeeded in surmounting this very difficult problem.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Taking account of what was seen in lessons but, equally importantly, the progress that is evident in children's work from when they start the school to when they leave, teaching is good. It is satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons with 60 per cent of these being good and some being very good. Teaching was less than satisfactory in eight per cent of lessons(five lessons) with a majority of these being in one class in Year 2.

16. Teaching in the nursery is very good. Planning is thorough and the staff are clear about their own tasks. Children's personal and social development is given high priority. Staff work effectively as a team to establish routines so that children quickly gain confidence and learn to co-operate with adults and each other. Care is taken to settle new children, for example, attention is given to them if needed when they are left for the first time. The organisation of the morning and afternoon sessions with the oldest children in the morning helps the staff to begin to plan more towards literacy and numeracy as the children get ready to move into reception. In both morning and afternoon sessions, there is a strong emphasis on developing children's skills in language and literacy through all activities. Examples of this occur when the children listen to stories and are learning some of the specific language related to books and in other activities such as baking where care is taken to make sure children hear and use appropriate vocabulary. Opportunities are sometimes missed to give the same quality of attention to developing mathematics concepts in other activities.

17. Throughout the school, assessment procedures and practice are thorough and information is used to change and adapt planning. Because teachers are so clear about what the pupils can do, they are able to target the teaching of skills and to continue until they are sure that the learning has been achieved.

18. In all classes, there are good relationships. Teachers have a calm but quiet approach in which routines are established and good behaviour expected. Little time is wasted, there is a good working atmosphere and pupils respond well to the structured environment by working steadily and with concentration.

19. Teaching in literacy is satisfactory overall varying from unsatisfactory to very good. The literacy hour has been successfully adopted and in most classes this contributes to raising standards. The consistent management of pupils and the tightly focused lessons are good features of teaching in literacy. Few opportunities are missed to reinforce key learning, for example in spelling words used for different subjects. As a result, pupils have frequent opportunities to practice and apply their skills.

20. Teaching in mathematics is good overall. Teachers deliver the structured form of the numeracy hour with confidence. Introductions are usually clear and there is careful step by step teaching of skills. In most cases, questions in the introductory sessions and tasks in the group work are pitched so that all can take part. Some whole class activities such as counting are suitable for all pupils but on occasion the tasks are too easy for the most able and too hard for others to cope with. Plenary sessions are more variable in effectiveness giving time for pupils to show what they have done, sometimes drawing the intended learning together but also sometimes adding little to what has gone before. Numeracy skills are effectively reinforced by activities in other subjects, for instance by tallying traffic in geography, collecting data in science and using the computer to draw graphs.

21. Science is generally well taught. Planning is detailed and in the best lessons teachers are successful in capturing pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers use questioning effectively, checking that pupils understand what has been covered and also challenging them to think more deeply about the work. Correct vocabulary is used by teachers and support staff, and pupils enjoy hearing and using the new words.

22. Although teachers have different levels of personal confidence and skills in information technology, all plan carefully and provide a range of experiences. Teaching is

sound overall with some lively and interesting activities such as using a Roamer Robot. Pupils respond well and enjoy their work whether it is individually or in groups.

23. Good use is made of resources and first hand experiences to promote learning in geography. Teachers use questions well to check the information remembered and to get pupils to think more deeply about the subject and pupils are encouraged to construct their own questions. Although the teaching is good overall, a weakness is that in some classes, work is not well organised in pupils' files and the marking does not help pupils to see the progress they are making. Skills are not sufficiently developed from Year 1 to Year 2. In other lesson teaching is at least satisfactory but too little was seen to make reliable judgements about individual subjects.

24. Lessons are less than satisfactory when there are too many activities and too few adults for effective teaching and learning to take place. This was a weakness in the previous inspection and still remains. In these situations, teachers spend time on making sure that children have tasks rather than on teaching and sometimes, activities such as music and religious education, do not have sufficient time spent on them to improve children's skills.

25. Pupils with special needs are supported effectively when there is an extra adult in the class or when they work in small groups. Learning through games, for instance of phonic skills or number recognition, keeps them interested in tasks which might otherwise become dull because they need to be repeated so many times. The Reading Recovery programme is well delivered to help the small number of children who are identified through its assessment procedures. The focus on precise assessment and very clear teaching of skills enables those children to make good progress.

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

26. The curriculum is broadly based and very well supported by clear policies and planning procedures. The nursery and reception curriculum is firmly rooted in the recommended areas of learning. In Key Stage 1 the national curriculum and religious education are supplemented by timetabled lessons covering relevant aspects of social and health education. A good start has been made in adjusting the curriculum in the light of experience and new government guidelines. Statutory requirements are met.

27. Curriculum balance is satisfactory. Prominence is given to English throughout the school, with appropriate emphasis on personal and social development in the nursery and mathematics in Key Stage 1. In spite of developing links between subjects, the time available for some foundation subjects, such as history and information technology, is barely sufficient to provide a rounded programme of study. Time allocations are not clear in planning, restricting the school's capacity to evaluate or adjust curriculum balance effectively.

28. The curriculum is substantially enriched by the use of first hand experience, including visits and visitors that bring relevance and interest to the work. For example, the building of a new supermarket was used as a starting point for geography and a visit to a real coffee shop by nursery children added to their knowledge and understanding of the world and enhanced their imaginative play. A small number of voluntary lunchtime activities such as art and music are provided for infant pupils, often in preparation for special events or performances.

29. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified accurately and programmes of support, including the very effective Reading Recovery scheme, are put into place in line with their individual education plans. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. In some lessons the needs of talented and gifted pupils are identified well, as reflected in the growing number of pupils achieving above average levels in the Year 2 tests. Thus, in English and mathematics, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the weakness identified in the previous inspection. However, in the other subjects medium and short term planning is often insufficiently clear about meeting the needs of the brightest pupils.

30. The introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies in all classes, including the literacy work started very effectively in the nursery, is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. The Key Issue identified in the previous inspection that more guidance was needed to ensure progression in English, has been successfully addressed through the adoption of the literacy framework. The school now needs to focus on raising the quality of teaching in the literacy and numeracy sessions throughout the school to match the provision already being made in the best lessons.

31. The school is strongly committed to social inclusion and equality of opportunity. Most staff are careful not to stereotype the needs of pupils on the basis of their differing social circumstances. The sensitive provision both in class, and in withdrawal support for pupils with special needs, enables these pupils to participate well in lessons and to make good progress. The school recognises that boys do not perform quite as well as girls in tests and the head teacher is determined to critically examine the school's curriculum to ensure that everything possible is done to raise the achievement of boys.

32. Issues of health education are covered sensibly within topic work, for example when learning about the human body in science. The governors have a sex education policy to provide factual information, for instance through the exciting work in reception looking at the birth and care of chickens. Local police are involved in drugs' education and opportunities are made in lessons to reinforce safety messages, such as how to cross the road safely. Teachers include aspects of citizenship and personal and social development in their timetables.

33. Very good links have been forged with the community. The school takes an active interest in regeneration projects, such as the collection of litter. The curriculum benefits from links with local churches and other essential services and from using community facilities. Satisfactory curriculum arrangements are made with other schools; staff visit other pre-school institutions and a very good range of pupil information is passed on to the partner junior school which shares a building with the older infants. Some resources are shared and the possibility of a joint-use computer suite is being considered. Subject links are more limited, although there has been some joint training involving infant and junior staff.

34. The school makes good provision for personal development; including spiritual, moral, social and cultural education; sustaining the position in the last inspection. The daily act of collective worship has a strongly Christian basis and meets statutory requirements. Local churches contribute, although there are very few opportunities to learn about spiritual beliefs and traditions from other faiths. Staff work hard in the annexe to create a suitable assembly space for reception pupils, as there is no large area available. Assemblies provide some time for pupils to consider moral and spiritual issues, although more could be done, at times, to create a special atmosphere, distinct from the classroom routines. Other

subjects, including religious education, offer some opportunities for spiritual development, for example enjoying the paintings of different artists or responding to the vulnerability of new-born chicks, but generally these are not extensive or planned.

35. Provision for moral development is very good. The school has a very clear code of behaviour that pupils understand, without the need for a heavy system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils from the youngest age in the nursery behave well because they know what is expected and feel secure. The head teacher provides a very consistent lead in teaching pupils the difference between right and wrong and opportunities are taken in circle times for pupils to discuss the reasons for behaving in certain ways.

36. Social development is good. Pupils willingly take responsibility for jobs in class, such as cleaning the tables after their morning drinks or taking register numbers to the office. Staff are careful to involve all pupils in these activities, including those who may need help such as a child with Down's Syndrome.

37. Although not widespread, some encouragement is given for pupils to show initiative, for instance in holding the door open for others. Opportunities are created in lessons, such as science and physical education, for pupils to work in pairs and small groups. Pupils respond well and make progress in understanding about taking turns and in accepting different roles within a group.

38. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. As in the previous inspection, opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture through museum and theatre visits, studying different artists such as Lowry and through the school's traditional ethos are good. Books chosen for the literacy hour include some stories from different cultures and displays in the hall include a range of clothing from different countries. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on pupils gaining experience of the cultural range within society. This is a weakness reported in the previous inspection that has not been fully addressed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. This is a caring school, where staff know the children very well. Children's personal development is routinely monitored, both informally and through a system of record keeping that ensures that their individual needs are met. Staff take every opportunity to teach children how to look after themselves, so that, for example, road safety is covered in a geography lesson about transport and safe practices are emphasised in PE. Children are well supervised at all times and there are good arrangements for dealing with minor medical issues, first aid and child protection. Measures to promote good behaviour rely on the establishment of routines around the school and good organisation within lessons, rather than an extensive system of rewards and sanctions. This is an extremely effective approach, which ensures that children understand the school's expectations and respond by behaving well.

40. There is a good range of procedures for monitoring attendance and the education welfare officer commits weekly time to support the school in its endeavours to improve matters. Most parents understand the need for punctuality and good attendance and provide the school with reasons for absence but the few families who do not make enough effort to comply, coupled with lack of information when pupils leave the area, badly affect attendance figures.

41. Although the school takes health and safety very seriously, as is evident from its daily practice, there are some issues relating to the premises that give rise to concern. These include repairs to the building and grounds which have not yet been undertaken, although they have been identified as hazards in two separate official audits. These issues have been discussed with the headteacher, who, together with the school's governing body, is making every effort to see that the problems are remedied.

42. The school has a good assessment procedure for children of all ages. The system in the nursery provides a detailed picture of each child's development and what they have learnt. It is used successfully to plan what they should be covering next and also provides an early indication of any problems in learning so that extra support can be provided. This information, together with the local authority's base line assessment is used as the starting point for Key Stage 1. Assessment covers all subjects adequately and concentrates appropriately on each child's progress in English and mathematics. This information is used to place children in the appropriate learning groups and also to set individual targets for their development.

43. The assessment procedures are used successfully to identify individuals who need extra support such as the Reading Recovery programme, or who should be entered on the register for special educational needs. The unusually broad knowledge of the pupils that teachers have because they taught for so long in the school and know the families so well is a great help in this process,

44. Information from pupils' performance in the assessments at the end of Year 2 are analysed to see if there are any areas which need extra attention, staff meet to discuss the levels they award to ensure that they are consistent and teacher assessments are accurate. Pupils' work is marked but the procedure set out in the school's marking policy are not always followed. Opportunities are missed to let pupils know what they should do to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall and maintains a similar picture of strengths and weaknesses to those reported in the previous inspection. Parents' attitudes to the school are mixed. Those who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned the questionnaire really appreciate the school's efforts and achievements and many are happy to become involved in school activities. They feel that children are making good progress, are expected to work hard and are beginning to develop mature and responsible attitudes. They think that teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Most strongly agree that the school is approachable. However, even where they have a good opinion of the school, some parents make little effort to be actively involved in their children's school work.

46. Information for parents that is provided by the school is of good quality. The prospectus and newsletters cover both practical and curricular issues and are written in a friendly style that is easy to understand. There are many opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with class teachers, both formally, at parents' meetings and informally on a daily basis, although this daily contact has been made more difficult by the school's necessary introduction of security arrangements. Written reports about pupils' progress are detailed and informative. They give a good overview of what individual children know, understand and can do, but do not always set targets for improvement.

47. The school makes every effort to accommodate parents' needs by arranging review meetings at varied times throughout the day and even by providing a crèche. However, a significant number of parents show little interest in what the school has to offer and do not willingly attend parents' meetings or the other events arranged by the school to help them. For example, meetings held to explain the teaching of literacy and numeracy were attended by a very small number of parents and even parents of children with special educational needs do not always come to review meetings. Although some parents regularly give valuable assistance in classrooms and support their children's learning at home by, for example, listening to them read and helping them to learn tables, many parents are not actively involved in their children's education. A recent survey undertaken by the school showed a surprising number of parents who had no wish to know more about what was taught or to visit the school in the daytime. Previous efforts to set up a parents' association have been unsuccessful and both the school and the children have been disappointed when parents have failed to come to special events or to see work that has been put on display for them.

48. The school is aware that its partnership with parents is an area for development and is very anxious to build on the good relationships that already exist with those who are committed to an involvement in their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher has clear ideas of how to improve the standards that pupils achieve and the quality of their education. She provides very good leadership and is supported well by staff and appreciated by parents and the governing body. There are effective systems in place for reviewing the work of the school through analysis of assessment information and by keeping an eye on the progress of the school development plan. Teaching has been monitored closely by the headteacher with feedback given at least through discussion but also through written notes. Time has been given to some co-ordinators to monitor their subjects in the classroom although the emphasis has been on literacy and numeracy.

50. The pupils make good progress during their time in the school and standards in the national tests and assessment are good compared to similar schools. Subject and nursery co-ordinators have taken on more responsibility in leading developments and there are changes planned to take account of the creation of the foundation stage of learning and of changes in staffing.

51. The governing body has only been in existence a short time as the infant and junior school formerly shared the same people. As a result, there is a mixture of experienced and new governors who are getting to grips with the new arrangements. Some governors, are just learning the role and are keen to contribute but have yet to make an impact. The chair of governors is well informed and knowledgeable about school performance and management. Overall, governors' contributions to the management of the school are satisfactory. Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

52. Governors place importance in meeting the special needs of pupils. The process is well managed and current provision is good. A combination of in-class support, Reading Recovery and tuition in small groups works well to help children to make good progress.

53. Financial management and day to day administration are very secure. The school development plan is carefully costed and closely linked to the school's priorities which

include government educational initiatives such as the literacy and numeracy hours. The new governing body has a finance committee led by the chair of governors who has a clear view of the school's financial situation and a good grasp of best value principles. Some consultation with parents has taken place but, as reported in the previous section, did not produce much information of value in terms of what they would like the school to develop.

54. Staffing is adequate for the numbers of pupils. Teaching and support staff are well deployed to their strengths. Support staff and nursery nurses work throughout the school, helping individual pupils and groups as needed and directed by teachers. The school secretary is efficient and well organised, with a clear grasp of financial systems. She is warm and welcoming to people visiting the office or telephoning.

55. Accommodation in this school is poor and is worse than in the great majority of schools. It is housed in four separate buildings on two sites which are a considerable distance apart. This makes it difficult for subject co-ordinators to provide the level of informal advice and guidance which is usual when staff are working together in the same building. There are problems for parents who have to collect children from different sites. It is inefficient in terms of costs and the headteacher's time

56. All of the buildings are kept extremely clean and displays make them interesting to be in. However, each building has inadequacies and each inadequacy is different. The nursery presents a poor appearance from the outside and hard play surfaces outside are not in good condition. The new reception building has no hall. Physical education lessons have to take place outside and cannot take place when the weather is bad. Arrangements for lunchtimes here are unsatisfactory despite good management. Meals are served in the entrance area and children eat in their classrooms. These have to be cleared and re-arranged before collective worship and lunchtime. This often has an impact on the previous lesson and restricts the potential for any permanent arrangements of furniture. Toilets are too tall for children and by the end of the day the toilet area smells probably because children keep missing the toilets.

57. The Key Stage 1 building has adequate classrooms although these vary in size and two are in a separate building in the yard. A useful feature of the accommodation is the community room which is used regularly for parents and for the wider community. Outside, the surface of the playground is poor and there is no immediate access to a grassed area. The lack of grass is alleviated by the open access that the school has to the community grounds near by. The infants share the building with juniors. Dinners are taken in a separate building in the junior playground. Parents raised their concerns about lunchtimes because quite a few felt that their children are intimidated by the older pupils. The inspection team's view is that they are right. There is congestion at the entrance to the dining room as the last infants leave and the first juniors arrive. The children have then to pass through the junior yard amongst groups of pupils who are quite legitimately playing ball games or running around. Lunchtime supervisors try to ensure that the infants leave in groups but it is overwhelming to small children.

58. The school has sufficient resources for all areas of the curriculum and these are of good quality. The small library in the shared building is in a corridor area. It is an inviting space where books, displays of pupils' work and a focus such as the current one on the work of LS Lowry combine to create interest.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve the standards that pupils reach, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, and the quality of education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should:-

1. Improve the quality of teaching by:-
 - observing colleagues in school and in other schools teaching the literacy hour;
 - ensuring that all lessons have a clear focus which is shared with and understood by pupils;
 - ensuring that marking regularly identifies for both teachers and pupils what is successful and what needs to be improved;
 - ensuring that the number of activities presented is manageable
 - continuing to set clear targets for improvement and to monitor the work of teachers.
Paragraphs 24; 90; 92; 133; 136; 145

2. Work with parents and governors to improve the level of active participation which parents have in their children's education at home and at school by:-
 - considering making a member of staff responsible for the development of this area;
 - featuring this aspect consistently in the school development plan.
Paragraphs 45-48

3. Continuing to work with all agencies to improve attendance
Paragraphs 14

4. Improving accommodation by seeking solutions to the range of problems identified.

paragraphs 55-57

Other minor issues which the governors might wish to address can be found in paragraphs 38; 51; 68; 78; 88; 91/2; 108; 113; 123/4

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 62 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 24 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 14 | 45 | 32 | 8 | 2 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y2 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 37 | 189 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 0 | 93 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y2 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 6 | 57 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 8 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 11 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.7 |
| National comparative data | 5.3 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.1 |
| 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 | 40 | 32 | 72 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 31 | 32 | 32 |
| | Girls | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| | Total | 62 | 63 | 63 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 86 | 88 | 88 |
| | National | 82 | 83 | 87 |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 30 | 30 | 35 |
| | Girls | 29 | 31 | 31 |
| | Total | 59 | 61 | 66 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 82 | 85 | 92 |
| | National | 82 | 85 | 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 | 2 |
| White | 224 |
| 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 | 1 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21 |
| Average class size | 27 |

Education support staff: YR – Y2

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 74 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 37 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 65 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 12 |
|--------------------------------|----|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Financial year | 98/99 |
|----------------|-------|

| | £ |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 442018 |
| Total expenditure | 442995 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1731 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 20976 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 19999 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 226 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 35 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 80 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 80 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 60 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 40 | 31 | 9 | 0 | 20 |
| The teaching is good. | 86 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 66 | 29 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 89 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 71 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 66 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 80 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 77 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 49 | 31 | 3 | 0 | 17 |

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

60. At the time of the inspection all the children who were in the nursery and 17 children in the reception class were under five. The nursery is currently organised into the morning session being for the four year olds and the afternoon session for the three year olds. Evidence from the inspection suggests that this has a positive effect on the children's learning whilst they are in the nursery and helps prepare them for some of the experiences they will have in school, for example, the literacy hour.

61. Children enter the nursery with attainment which is well below what is usually found for children of their age. However, they make good progress in the nursery, including those with special needs. This is particularly true in the areas of language and literacy and of personal and social development. Despite this, standards remain below what is expected on entry into reception, with very few children likely to reach the targets for five year olds.

Personal and social education

62. In this area children make very good progress in the nursery. Both the three and the four year olds are clear about what is expected of them. They have good attitudes to learning and respond well to the carefully planned programmes of work provided for them. They quickly learn to relate well to other children and to adults. The consistent and good quality teaching of routines has a major impact here. On occasions in the reception class, where too many activities are provided at the same time and the teacher is trying to individually assess children, opportunities are missed to engage the children in profitable learning rather than sampling activities.

63. In both the nursery and the reception class well thought out role play areas encourage the children to play effectively together, for example serving customers in the coffee shop and deciding on roles for each other in Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Visits also have a positive impact on the pupils' personal and social development.

64. Pupils develop a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and learn to co-operate well with each other, for example, taking turns when playing games. They treat their environment with care and respect and are very good at helping to clear away after their activities. They demonstrate independence in the area of personal hygiene, for example four year olds in the nursery knew exactly what to do after using the toilet.

Language and literacy

65. Attainment when the children start in the nursery at three years old is particularly low in this area and is a reason why few of the children are likely to reach the standards expected for five year olds. Many have a very limited range of vocabulary; speech is sometimes unclear and some children often do not want to reply when questioned. Children often do not know words for example of numbers, shapes, days of the week and names of everyday objects. Many children enter the nursery unable to recognise their own name. Progress children make though in the nursery is good. By the time they are four many of them are writing their first name, with some children writing both names. The signing in procedure at the start of the session provides a good opportunity for recognising and writing their name with a member of staff always available to help them learn initial letters and sounds. Children know how to hold books correctly and know that the pictures

and words tell a story. Some of the four year olds in their literacy time were able to identify full stop, capital letters, question marks and show the teacher where to start reading. They are becoming familiar with a good range of well known texts including fiction and non fiction and many of them know the term author. Some of the three year olds as a group join in with reading and with some support are able to build up a sentence using flashcards. In reception many opportunities are provided for children to build upon their knowledge and understanding acquired in the nursery. Children are actively encouraged to read and write within structured play situations and as part of choosing activities.

66. Teaching overall in this area is good with some elements of very good teaching in the nursery. In order to raise standards the school has taken steps in reorganising the nursery timetable into separate sessions for the three and four year olds. This has had a good effect on teaching and learning in this area and has prepared children well for moving into school. A well planned phonics teaching programme with good lively teaching ideas from staff has had a positive effect on pupils' learning. Where clear routines are established children learn well. The older children talk confidently but their language skills once in reception are still limited, for example chicks were described as having "new petals" rather than feathers and their chirping was described as "barking". In the nursery a particularly effective activity in terms of developing language skills was the fishing for insects in the tray. Here three year olds were beginning to learn names such as dragonfly, spider and cricket.

67. Planning is detailed and thorough with informative assessment arrangements. Staff both in the nursery and the reception class have a very good knowledge about what stage the children are at and where they need to go next in order to progress.

Mathematical development

68. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. There is a good mix of group and whole class work and good emphasis on learning through play. Pupils respond well in singing familiar number rhymes and songs. Children in the nursery are given good opportunities to develop a range of mathematical skills, sorting, matching, ordering and counting. Activities for the three year olds include opportunities to count and use "big" and "small" for example in the baking activity. However, some opportunities were lost here in terms of developing mathematical skills even further for example by counting and simple problem solving as children put cake mixture into baking cases.

69. Most of the four year olds can count to 10 including 0 but lower attaining children count to 5. Pupils have more difficulty recognising written numbers although there are plenty of examples around the nursery for them to see. In reception, many children have good recognition of numbers and are starting to write them. Lower attaining children can count to five but don't always recognise the written number.

70. Special time in the nursery provides good opportunities for children to practice their number skills with a good range of interesting resources. During the session for the four year olds, many of the activities involved numbers from 0-5 but some children could have taken this further, for example, in the washing line activity. Children in reception are building upon their experiences in the nursery and are able to spot mistakes on the number line 1-10.

71. Overall, children make good progress in this area but could be challenged further by extending their opportunities both within lessons with a clear mathematical focus and on an incidental level within other areas of learning. This would help to bring their attainment

closer to the targets for five year olds. At present whilst some children are likely to reach these, others are not and attainment overall is likely to be below that found in most schools by the age of five.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Planning and work around the nursery show that all the strands of knowledge and understanding are given sufficient emphasis although not all strands were seen during the inspection. Teaching overall is good with some elements of very good teaching in the reception class where children were involved in a science activity. In this activity the teacher used first hand experience- looking closely at the chicks, in order to get the children to observe and note changes in their development.

73. In the nursery children have made plans and maps of their visits to the coffee shop and have recorded their observations en route through designing a large frieze noting the particular features. The four year olds are able to talk about events in their own lives, a good example of this was in the postcard activity where children were sharing holiday experiences. One child was able to relate particular features of the seaside.

74. A baking activity for the 3 year olds in the nursery was effective in terms of scientific development with good use of questioning by the nursery nurse in order to get these young children to observe and talk about changes in the mixture. Well prepared resources and a clear focus for the lesson meant that the children listened well and were able to achieve the desired outcomes.

75. Information technology skills are being developed in both classes. In the nursery children are able to use the mouse effectively and alter the shading from light to dark. In the reception class pupils are building on those skills. When they start work on computers, it is often the first time they have used one and children have little or no specific vocabulary to describe what they are doing but they are making good progress in this area of learning.

Creative development

76. When children start in the nursery at three years old, very few of them have had experience of using pencils, crayons and paint. By the time they are four, children in the nursery are starting to mix their own colours and handle equipment well. They are able to select their own resources and clear up after themselves. Clear routines and organisation has had a positive impact here. In less focussed sessions in the reception class children lack direction and learning opportunities are missed. However progress over time is good and there are good examples of children in this class producing some detailed art work. In both areas children receive excellent opportunities for developing their imagination. For example, in the reception class children with the house of the three bears and in the coffee shop in the nursery children successfully pretended to be different characters

77. In musical development, four year olds in the nursery are making good progress. They are able to name a number of simple musical instruments and explain how they might be played. Some children are able to use a pattern in order to recreate a tune and then compose their own. Use of rhythm, when tapping a tambourine in time to a tune was good. The younger and less able children are able to join in with familiar nursery rhymes and songs. Overall the standards of teaching in this area are good with the children making good progress.

Physical development

78. In both nursery and reception there is good development in the safe and controlled handling of tools and materials, for example in collage work and in painting. Children are able to work well with smaller construction materials. The nursery outdoor area provides

opportunities for children to balance, use space effectively and develop control. Links between the nursery and reception class in terms of shared outdoor facilities are yet to be developed and would be of particular benefit because the accommodation limits the provision for physical activities in the reception class. There is no hall space and if the weather is bad PE is affected. Overall though children are making good progress in this area and teaching is good with any weakness being due to accommodation issues. Children reach standards which are typical for their age in play with large and small equipment but fewer do so when this involves finely controlled movements for example of drawing, painting and writing.

Teaching

79. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching in the nursery is good with some very good teaching seen in literacy. Nursery planning and documentation is very detailed and informative. The staff work together very well each knowing what they are responsible for but still able to adapt. For example, when a new child needs individual attention that takes most of one adult's time, the other staff carry on with routines. The nursery development plan acts as a useful tool for identification of priorities and self evaluation work. Both the nursery and the reception class provide good quality and a good range of resources.

80. Areas of learning are well planned and organised ensuring pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Sound assessment procedures are in place and are used effectively to inform planning for both individual and groups of children. The use of baseline assessments both at the start and during their time in nursery and reception enable pupils achievement to be tracked and predictions of future attainment levels made. Reporting to nursery parents about their child's progress is generally done verbally through termly meetings or conversations with parents as they bring their children to the nursery.

81. As in the previous inspection the school benefits from a well organised 40 place nursery unit and adjacent reception unit. These buildings are situated some distance from the main school. However potential problems are minimised by the quality of overall management and commitment of the staff. Both units continue to provide a welcoming and secure environment in line with the school's ethos. The organisation of admission into the nursery and into the reception class is very well managed with a good programme of induction and useful booklets for parents. Education in the nursery remains a strength of the school.

ENGLISH

82. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with language and literacy skills behind those found in most schools. They make good progress in the infant department and in 1999 the school's test results for seven year olds in reading and writing were around the national average and well above the results found in similar schools. Slightly more pupils reached the expected level than nationally. A quarter achieved the higher level 3 in reading, although none reached this level in writing. Results vary from year to year but show a steady improvement since the previous inspection. Results for boys and girls show some evidence, recognised by the school, that boys could do better overall. Teacher assessments for speaking and listening in 1999 were a little above the national average with 90% of seven year olds achieving the expected level, a third of whom reached the higher level 3.

83. Unconfirmed results for this year indicate a fall in the numbers reaching the expected level in reading and writing. Inspection findings confirm that standards are a little below average, although they continue to be better than schools with a similar free school meal entitlement, particularly in reading. The results are notably better than predicted by the baseline assessments when pupils started in reception. Almost one third of the current Year 2 group is on the special needs register. The numbers reaching Level 3 in writing have increased as a result of more targeted teaching. Results for speaking and listening are similar to last year. Overall, pupils achieve well in English, making good progress through the school. This is a direct consequence of the importance placed on the subject, a clear curriculum, good assessment and consistent expectations.

84. Throughout the school pupils listen carefully to their teacher and other adults, for example in assemblies. They show an increasing ability to listen to each other both in small groups and when the teacher has organised class discussions, as in the literacy hour or in circle times. By the age of seven, most pupils are gaining confidence as speakers, although generally using a relatively limited vocabulary. In some lessons, they are encouraged to formulate their own questions, for instance in a successful geography lesson where Year 2 pupils devised questions about the Farne Islands which they then put to a staff member who had personal knowledge of the islands. Planning for speaking and listening is less systematic than for other aspects of English. Many pupils find it difficult to communicate ideas by adapting their speech for different listeners and if standards are to be raised further, a more explicit programme of work needs to be agreed and covered in each year group. There is a solid foundation for this in some classes where teachers are skilled in seizing every opportunity to develop speaking skills through the school day.

85. Standards in reading are slightly below those found nationally, maintaining the position at the previous inspection. Younger pupils make a good start in learning the alphabet and the sounds of letters, developing an impressive phonic knowledge as they move through the school. By the age of seven almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can use their knowledge of sounds and blends to read unfamiliar words. Because they are introduced to new reading skills in a systematic way, pupils make good progress. By Year 2 most can read with understanding and a growing use of expression. They know about book features such as the author and illustrator and higher attaining pupils can use an index and contents page. With the introduction of literacy in the nursery, some of these skills are now being taught at a younger age and the school will need to avoid repeating the work. Most pupils begin to recognise different types of books, although they are most familiar with stories and many are less confident in finding and using non-fiction texts for themselves.

86. Pupils with special needs receive additional, well-organised help with their reading. They make good progress, such as in the Reading Recovery lesson observed, where a pupil increased confidence in reading and writing high frequency words from memory. Higher attaining pupils make sound progress through the scheme, enjoy their books and can describe the main events and characters accurately. In some cases they have insufficient opportunity to select from a range of more challenging texts, beginning to express opinions about different authors or genres. Many seven year olds read aloud to the class well, although some are reticent and teachers sometimes take over too quickly.

87. Standards in writing are below average, although pupils make sound progress through the school, with good progress being seen in reception and Year 1. Many of the current Year 1 pupils have learned to write independently in simple sentences, often with full stops and capital letters. Their books show marked improvement over the year in the length, confidence and interest of the writing. They form their letters neatly and accurately

and spelling throughout the school is good. In Year 2, pupils apply their writing skills in a growing range of ways, including poetry and instructions for making a pancake. Higher attaining pupils begin to use words for effect and to use an appropriate range of punctuation such as speech marks.

88. Reading and writing skills are used in other subjects such as geography and information technology although too often opportunities are missed for pupils to read information for themselves. Generally there are insufficient opportunities in Year 2 for imaginative writing and for pupils to extend their writing for different purposes and audiences. Higher attaining pupils sometimes undertake exercises, such as alphabetical order, that repeat known skills unnecessarily. Handwriting is neat and legible and is taught mainly through practising letter shapes. Few pupils develop a flowing style and need more practice in making patterns to help begin joining their writing.

89. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and in the best lessons outstanding. They listen attentively to stories and other texts, offering opinions and suggestions when asked. They work hard on their own and in groups and in most classes show good independence when adults are busy, for example practising their spellings or solving a problem by asking their friends. Most pupils try to write neatly and are generally keen to read their work to a visitor or the rest of the class. In one very good Year 1 lesson, pupils concentrated fully throughout the literacy hour and a lower attaining group completed a relevant cut-and-stick task sensibly and safely without needing adult intervention.

90. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons observed varied from unsatisfactory to very good, similar to the previous inspection. The literacy hour has been adopted throughout the school and in most classes is successfully raising standards. Teachers also include other English teaching in their timetables such as story time and additional phonic and spelling lessons. Two key strengths of the teaching are the consistent management of pupils and the tightly focused lessons. Teachers know their pupils well and have established clear routines and expectations, building a secure context for pupils to work hard and behave well. This leads to little time being wasted on discipline or disruption and a good working atmosphere. Teaching objectives are soundly based on the literacy strategy blended with the school's own phonic approach. Few opportunities are missed to reinforce key learning, for example in spelling words used for different subjects. As a result, pupils have frequent opportunities to practice and apply their skills.

91. Teachers have a sound subject knowledge, although some have had limited opportunity for detailed discussion about the working of the strategy or to see other teachers at work on the literacy hour. This has reduced the impact of the strategy in a minority of classes, particularly in the provision made for balanced group and whole-class teaching including the plenary session, which is sometimes too rushed and lacking in focus. Teaching objectives are rarely shared with pupils, reducing their ability to think about their own learning. In the best lessons, whole-class teaching is well-paced and stimulating, supported by challenging questioning skills. Independent work is differentiated effectively to match pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils enjoy the lesson and the increasing mastery of reading and writing skills that they experience. Unsatisfactory teaching is typified by unclear planning so that some pupils are confused about what they should do or what they are learning. The teaching of pupils with special needs is good.

92. A further strength in the subject is the detailed assessment of progress, increasingly based on national curriculum objectives, and the targeting of lessons to meet a manageable range of termly goals. Assessment data is being used effectively to predict results and adjust the curriculum or teaching accordingly. Teachers mark the work

regularly, but rarely add comments to help them or their pupils by highlighting specific strengths and weaknesses. A voluntary scheme for taking books home promotes reading for pleasure amongst the pupils who participate. However, home-school links in English are under-developed.

93. Subject management is sound. An appropriate policy and planning process – including good collaboration within year groups – is in place, monitored by the well-informed co-ordinator. Classroom observations have been undertaken and feedback provided to individual teachers. The subject has received consistent priority in the school's development plan, although some planned external support has been unavoidably restricted so that the school has not been able to share practice sufficiently with other schools.

MATHEMATICS

94. Standards in the national tests in 1999 were below the national average but above those of schools in similar circumstances. Results are below the national average because relatively few pupils reached the higher levels of 2A and 3. In the last three years, boys' results have been consistently below the national average and girls' above. Information from this year's test results shows a similar picture except that the percentage of level 3 results is slightly higher. This represents a commendable achievement when considering that the baseline for 2000 was much lower than for 1999. In the reception class, assessments predicted that only 57 per cent of pupils would reach level 2 or above. In fact, 89 per cent reached level 2 with 11 per cent of these being at the higher level 3. At each of the levels, including those within level 2, attainment exceeded prediction.

95. Inspection evidence confirms a wide range of attainment in Year 2. Those who have already achieved level 3 in the tests showed a good knowledge of numbers being able to write correctly any from 0 to above 1000 and identify the place value. Surprisingly for pupils with such secure knowledge, they were not aware of negative numbers and were adamant that 0 " is the last number". They can read and write simple fractions. Skills in mental work are good. Higher and average attaining pupils use recall to solve problems and others use counting strategies. They know at least some of the multiplication facts for the 2, 5 and 10 times tables and competently undertake addition and subtraction sums. At the other end of the scale there are still a small number of pupils who struggle with number and are only secure with those up to 10. They add competently up to 20 but do not pay enough attention to signs so that they make errors when addition and subtraction are mixed up.

96. A lesson on shape showed that the pupils know basic two and three dimensional shapes. Good questioning made the children think about identifying a three dimensional shape when only part is revealed. When one pupil suggested that the emerging shape might be a hexagon, another said it couldn't be because it had a right angle and hexagons don't have right angles. Work on time was well differentiated with some pupils changing analogue to digital time, some solving problems and some recording the hour. All were working at a suitable level and did so steadily and with concentration. In the parallel class, the tasks and questioning were not so carefully prepared or differentiated so that although many pupils coped well with work involving mathematical vocabulary such as twice and half, the lowest attainers struggled because they have difficulty firstly reading the word and secondly deciding what it means. The practical task on capacity also lacked differentiation. It was tackled mostly through demonstration at the front rather than by the pupils at their desks making it difficult for some to see the scales on the jugs. Until it was removed, a

wine bottle caused some confusion in the ordering of quantities because it was in centilitres when others were in millilitres. Nevertheless, despite weaknesses in the lesson, most of the pupils completed a simple task involving scales and those who were less clear about what to do were supported to complete the work.

97. Although there is a very wide range of attainment in older reception classes overall it is generally below what is usually found. For example, in number, pupils can count forwards and backward to 10 but most are not confident in going beyond 30. When working with money, they can recognise coins up to 10 pence. The highest attainers have some ideas of the concept of giving change but cannot apply it. In group activities they work well together, discussing and taking turns fairly in the shop and on the computer.

98. By Year1 pupils are working more closely to the levels expected for their age. In one lesson they were applying their learning to double numbers. Teaching is patient and meticulous rather than exciting but is effective in making sure that pupils understand. In another lesson, good use was made of teaching support to provide time for less able pupils to recognise coins and build up amounts of money through games. The pupils enjoy this approach and it keeps their attention. However, their responses show that they are still at early stages of learning because they build up amounts of money using one pence coins rather than from the highest value. By contrast, higher attaining pupils handle money with confidence and can calculate change within a pound.

99. Teaching is good overall being either good or satisfactory in the lessons seen. Teachers are getting to grips with the national numeracy strategy and present lessons which are well planned. Opportunities are used to reinforce skills in other subjects. A good example was seen in a geography lesson in Year 1 where pupils kept a tally of traffic passing the school in preparation for entering it into a data base. Mental and oral work is given a high priority with, in the best lessons, questions which are careful to include those with special needs as well as the more able. In a reception class lesson, for example, very good use of varied questions pitched at different attainment levels encouraged pupils to think and increased their confidence in answering. Throughout the school, pupils are asked to explain how they work answers out and occasionally their written work shows that they 'jot' and experiment before recording. Group work is mostly planned so that pupils are working at a suitable level although on occasion the whole class was given the same task which does not help the least able. Plenaries are the least effective parts of the lessons often adding little to the good learning that has taken place. A strength of the teaching is that pupils' learning is carefully assessed and information is used to plan what is needed to help them to improve. Attainment is not recorded until teachers are absolutely sure that it is secure.

100. Some pupils receive extra help in small groups when the well targeted tasks are presented through games which keep their interest in practising what might otherwise be dull and repetitive.

101. The numeracy strategy has been fully implemented and the co-ordinator has given good support through advice, demonstration lessons, monitoring planning and pupils' work. Because she is based in the reception block, there is little opportunity for informal support and most has to be planned.

SCIENCE

102. Assessments made at the end of Year 2 in 1999 were above the national average. Standards in science for the current Year 2 group are a little below those found in schools nationally. Most pupils are achieving the expected level 2, but very few are going on to the higher level 3. This is much better than at the time of the last inspection and is also above the results achieved by schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals

103. Pupils understand the importance of observation and investigation in science. By Year 2 they are taking measurements accurately and presenting their results clearly in tables. They are very clear that tests must be made fairly, for example pupils investigating how toy cars would run along the floor were very careful to start them from the same point each time. They measured the distance in centimetres, again being careful to start the measurement from the foot at the ramp, and they repeated the test several times to find an average value.

104. Pupils' knowledge of scientific fact is generally sound for their age. Younger pupils know that living things need special conditions to stay alive and can name a reasonable range of different materials, sometimes linking their uses to their properties. Pupils in Year 2 know that plants need water and light in order to thrive and know the role that different parts play, for example roots anchoring the plant and taking water out of the soil. Their understanding of these aspects of science has been helped by field trips such as to nearby Maltby Craggs. They understand the effect of forces and vividly remember the attraction and repulsion of magnets. Unfortunately some hold the common misconception that magnets attract all metals. Work that has been covered some time ago is sometimes not remembered, for example pupils appreciate that electricity can be dangerous, and recall what they have been taught about electric shock, but they are less clear about how to make a bulb light from a battery.

105. Science is generally well taught. Lessons are planned carefully, partly as a result of support from the science scheme of work and from guidelines from national documentation. Teachers are successful in making the subject interesting and pupils respond with enthusiasm in most lessons. They want to find out and work with concentration. Teachers use questioning effectively, checking that pupils understand what has been covered and also challenging them to think more deeply about the work. Pupils answer thoughtfully, for example in reception they linked the work they were doing on a chicken hatching from an egg and growing into a hen to the way they would grow up themselves. Correct vocabulary is used by teachers and support staff. Pupils enjoy the new words and use them enthusiastically.

106. The curriculum is well planned, with good progression from year to year. The subject is well co-ordinated so that all staff know what should be covered at each stage and there are well planned, stimulating activities to help pupils learn. Assessment is accurate and detailed, giving useful information of pupils' progress. The school is beginning to use the information to set targets for improvement and to review the success of different pieces of work. The co-ordinator monitors the subject by reviewing planning and looking at the outcomes that pupils produce. She has a good understanding of the subject's development.

ART

107. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons in art. These together with evidence from pupils' books, work on display and documentation indicates

that the standards overall are good. Attainment has improved since the last inspection from satisfactory to good.

108. Where pupils make good progress in their learning they are provided with a wide range of stimuli and good quality resources for the task. They are introduced to ,and are able to develop, a satisfactory range of skills and techniques as a consequence of working with a wide variety of media. For example, clay, fabric work and collage are all well represented within the school. Children behave and concentrate well in activities and make valuable and appropriate suggestions. However, in painting there were missed opportunities in terms of colour mixing where pupils were provided with a set of colours which didn't allow them to mix the colour they required. For example one child wanted to mix grey and didn't have any black paint. This also meant that some children were avoiding mixing colours at all because colours such as brown and green were provided. The quality of teaching though in the lessons seen was satisfactory, characterised by clear introductions and a good balance of direction and experimentation. Good use was made of teacher demonstration, which meant children could learn new techniques or skills.

109. Pupils across the school use sketch books well to record observations in detail and try out new ideas. They begin to develop a sense of line and tone. Across the school there are strong links between this and other subjects. For example, pupils use the computer to design coats for Joseph in RE and to illustrate work about "ourselves" in reception. Good examples can be seen as part of literacy work and linking to a history visit to Cusworth Hall in Year 1.

110. Work of other artists, currently the work of Macke, Monet and Lowry, is providing excellent stimulus for artwork in the school. Children not only try out different techniques but also are able to list facts about style, information about the artist and develop questions relating to appreciation of the work. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in this subject. An example of this is where some lower ability pupils have worked during lunchtime sessions to produce some excellent paintings in the style of Lowry. Many pupils are able to talk about the Lowry work and some of its features.

111. A brief policy is in place providing effective guidelines for staff. These ensure coverage and progression across the year groups.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Pupils are achieving good standards in design and technology. They understand the need for planning and the articles they produce are well made and carefully finished.

113. The subject is carefully planned so that pupils meet a wide range of different materials during their time in the school. In their work with food they have learnt the importance of hygiene and used simple surveys to investigate which flavours and combinations of fruits are most popular. Most of this work involves assembling cold ingredients and it would be worth considering an extension to build on the cooking that pupils do in the nursery.

114. Pupils investigate a variety of ways of joining cloth in their work on textiles as part of their project on puppets. This supports their planning effectively and is also a useful link to investigate work in science. The puppets they have produced are lively, imaginative and well made.

115. Work with resistant materials is based largely on cardboard and wood. Pupils in Year 2 have designed and made a good range of wheeled vehicles. They have thought hard about what to make and then drawn detailed plans showing how they will proceed, with useful notes about particular features, following simple investigations they have chosen to use different ways of fastening wheels and axles to their models and they have taken care to align them accurately, so that the vehicles run well. The quality of finish is particularly good; the shapes are symmetrical, neatly joined and attractively decorated.

116. Teachers are successful in helping pupils to understand the importance of designing what they are going to make as well as in teaching the correct techniques for using simple tools. At the moment these are somewhat restricted and do not enable children to develop skills such as sawing and drilling wood. Teachers use the correct technical vocabulary carefully and, as a result, most pupils talk confidently about frameworks, pivots, and understand how a triangle gives rigidity to a structure.

117. Pupils respond well to the subject, particularly at the making stage. They work hard and carefully, often collaborating in small groups. They enjoy the subject and take a justifiable pride in their achievements.

118. The subject is successfully co-ordinated, with plans being based on the national guidelines. Resources are generally adequate and available in classrooms.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

119. Three geography lessons and no history lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence from examining pupils' work, including that on display, talking with pupils and looking at teachers' planning indicates that standards in both subjects are similar to those found in other schools and in the previous inspection. Good use is made of first hand experience so that pupils learn to observe carefully and to ask relevant questions about different places and time periods.

120. In history, younger pupils can talk about their own lifetime since being a baby and some of the changes, such as learning to walk and talk, that they have experienced. In Year 1 pupils gain a good understanding of life in Victorian times, partly through looking very carefully at artefacts such as washing and ironing equipment, which they draw skilfully and begin to compare with their modern equivalents and through a well-planned visit to a local museum. In Year 2 they learn about important people in history, including Grace Darling, although most pupils can only remember parts of the story. A feature of the topic work is the good links made with other subjects, so that pupils gain a sound understanding of where Grace Darling lived as well as features of her time period such as clothing and transport. Most pupils show a limited understanding of chronology and the sequence of past events, mainly because the subject is taught too sporadically for topics to build a picture of change over time.

121. As in the previous inspection, standards in geography are somewhat higher, because it is taught more consistently through the school. By the age of seven most pupils can identify features on maps of different scales, for example they can find Maltby on a map of the United Kingdom. Brighter pupils can identify different countries and towns, although the lower attaining pupils often confuse them, for instance thinking that London is a country. Through their well-planned studies in the locality, reception and Year 1 pupils learn about traffic and road markings and gain a good understanding of road safety. In Year 2, good use is made of a staff member with special knowledge to encourage pupils to

think up their own questions about the Farne islands. Generally, most pupils are not confident in identifying attractive and unattractive features in the locality using appropriate vocabulary. In some cases, pupils' recorded work in geography does not reflect their growing knowledge and understanding.

122. Pupils have positive attitudes to both subjects. They enjoy the story element when learning about people and events in the past and the practical work when undertaking simple field studies in geography. In one observed lesson, because the teacher started by using an aerial photograph of Maltby, pupils' interest was quickly captured and they were keen to share their ideas about different traffic conditions.

123. Teaching in geography is good. Insufficient evidence was seen to make a judgement about history. Good use is made of resources such as maps and photographs, as well as the very effective programme of visits, to stimulate interest and expand the pupils' experience. The youngest pupils, for example, were looking forward to seeing a real farm with good preparation in class before the visit. Teachers use questions well, not only to check the information remembered, but to get pupils to think more deeply about the subject. As noted above, in one Year 2 lesson, pupils themselves were helped in constructing relevant geographical questions such as "How do you travel to...?" and "What jobs are there...?" to put to another teacher whose son works in the Farne Islands. In some classes, pupils' work is not well organised in their files and the marking does not reflect the history or geography aspects of the work. As a result, pupils cannot see the progress they are making and skills are not sufficiently developed from Year 1 to Year 2.

124. Planning is guided by a clear topic framework and supported by published guidelines about what needs to be covered each year within a broad time allocation. The time available for history is barely sufficient to cover the programme of study in sufficient depth. Teachers in each year group plan together and the co-ordinator has an appropriate overview of what is planned. Assessment is weaker, with very little recorded information about what pupils have learned. Consequently, lessons do not always build sufficiently on what has already been covered.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards in information technology (IT) are in line with national expectations, which maintains the position at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have a sound grasp of IT across the full range of the subject, which is better than is found in many schools.

126. Pupils use computers confidently. By the time they are in Year 2 they can use the mouse to launch programmes and to select items from a menu. They benefit from having the same range of programmes available in each classroom and from the fact that they all work in a similar way. This helps them to build up their skills more quickly and to concentrate more on what they are trying to achieve with the IT rather than how to make it work.

127. The youngest pupils have used art programmes successfully to draw over the screen and to select shapes and images for their own pictures. The use of the keyboard is closely linked to their development in writing and, by Year 2 most pupils are reasonably fluent in finding the correct letters and entering text. They can change the size and style of the words they enter, for example to produce a realistic label for the side of a model lorry that had been made in design and technology.

128. Pupils in Year 2 can also enter data and produce graphs. They have used IT following a traffic survey to list the types of vehicle they saw and then decided between the different types of graph that the program could generate to present their results. They preferred the bar graph rather than a pie chart because it made the results easier to read. Pupils understand the need to save their work, older children open work they have done earlier and print it.

129. Some teachers know the subject well themselves, others are less confident but are generally well prepared for lessons and teaching is sound overall. Most of the teaching during the inspection was related to programming the Roamer floor turtle. Teachers made this lively and interesting as well as stressing the importance of care and accuracy. Pupils responded well and enjoyed their success. Working in groups they took turns very fairly and supported each other well with suggestions and corrections.

130. The subject is managed well in the school. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well informed. She has adapted the national guidelines to the needs of the school and has successfully raised other teachers' awareness of the subjects' importance. Other subjects are increasing the use that they make of IT, for example using CD Rom to find information in history and this is planned to continue developing. Resources are good and generally used effectively in classrooms.

MUSIC

131. Only one lesson was seen in music with some examples of very short activities, a year group singing session and music in assemblies. Other evidence was taken from the planning and schemes of work. The musical activities which were seen show that pupils are reaching appropriate levels for their age. During assembly, they listen quietly to music of different types as they wait for everyone to arrive and for the assembly to begin. They sing hymns tunefully and remember the words quite well.

132. In the one short lesson that was seen, the pupils learned from the teacher's imaginative approach that pitch involves notes being high or low and that these can be represented by symbols. A metal tray and fridge magnets were used effectively to illustrate patterns of high and low notes and pupils were asked to create their own scores using their own symbols. All attempted this though there were some difficulties in the way they placed the symbols which could form a useful development point. Because they were unable to space their symbols on the high and low place evenly, some symbols are exactly on top of the others; an interesting problem when they come to play their efforts!

133. The reception classes join together for singing at the end of the day. The majority of the children join in with familiar songs and actions sensibly and with enjoyment whilst the new children listen and try to take part. In the only other activity, where music was seen, it was part of a range of activities within the afternoon. The activity was very brief and had so little content that it failed to develop pupils' skills. Pupils listened, not very intently, to a piece of music and only some tried to answer the questions.

134. The school has its own detailed scheme of work written by the co-ordinator which gives much useful guidance and examples of suitable material for lessons. Resources are good and include some instruments from other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. The standards of attainment in physical education are satisfactory as in the last inspection. During this inspection only games lessons were observed but all areas of the National Curriculum are being covered at appropriate times during the year. The limited accommodation in the nursery and reception department restricts development in some areas – this remains unchanged since the last inspection.

136. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, now ranging from sound to very good. Overall it is good. Good teaching is characterised by clear planning and tightly focussed objectives. However, although clear instructions are given throughout the lesson, learning objectives are not generally shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson or referred back to at the end in terms of what has been achieved. The lessons usually have a good pace. In reception good use was made of this time by pupils listening to some music in preparation for a future lesson. This also had a positive effect on the behaviour of the children. Good use is made of appropriate vocabulary. A good balance of time is spent on the various components of each lesson with pupils being given time to both consolidate their skills and try out new ones. Demonstration is used well to develop further ideas.

137. Attainment in the subject is currently recorded satisfactorily through end of key stage assessments and photographs included in individual pupil portfolios.

138. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Good routines are established in this subject. Children are very clear what is expected. Many pupils are able to work well both individually and as part of a pair. Pupils are given opportunities to practice sending, rolling, bouncing and receiving a ball, which they generally do with a good degree of control. Some pupils in Year 1 were able to dribble a ball around a track and the majority have a good understanding of space. This was particularly good in reception where pupils were able to keep within an agreed area of the larger yard. Pupils respond well to instructions and take part enthusiastically.

139. There is a clear policy document and since the last inspection new guidelines for staff have provided a sound basis for ensuring continuity and progression. Outdoor education, which includes the use of a field, is accommodated within the community, through visits to Maltby Crags or through links with the local Miners Welfare.

140. The surface of the school yard requires attention; a number of pupils slipped whilst involved in games lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Three lessons and assemblies were observed alongside sampling pupils' work and discussion with the co-ordinator, staff and pupils. The findings are similar to those in the previous inspection.

142. Standards of attainment remain satisfactory. From the nursery onwards children are introduced to stories from the Old and the New Testament. Many of the children in the school are able to recognise the bible as a special book for Christians. In Year 1 children are able to describe some of the symbols used in the Christian religion. A recent visit to the local church has been particularly effective in developing pupils' understanding of the use of symbolism within a place of worship. This visit also led to some good quality work linked to church windows.

143. Across the school, pupils are able to relate to events in their own lives and those of their families. For example, a child who has recently been baptised and children bringing in things from home linked to their class theme on weddings. Children are keen to contribute in class discussion but their listening to the views of others is less well developed. Resources are adequate.

144. Pupils are introduced to the celebration of other faiths and at Year 2 pupils are developing a satisfactory knowledge of Judaism. Some pupils are able to name the Torah and recognise that Jews pray in a synagogue and Christians in a church. They are also able to communicate facts about Old Testament stories and recall some of the 10 commandments.

145. The quality of teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory but overall it is satisfactory. Where the teaching is good the teacher revises work from previous sessions and has a clear RE focus for the lesson. Where teaching is unsatisfactory it is the result of unfocussed teaching objectives and an unstructured learning environment with too many activities going on at the same time. There is a weakness in the fact that in these lessons what is planned as RE is often confused with work in other areas, such as personal and social education or music. In these, less focussed lessons pupils are unable to develop their knowledge about religious education. Relationships are positive but there are missed opportunities in both collective worship and lessons for pupils to share their beliefs and feelings.

146. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and clear curriculum plans linking to the locally agreed syllabus) are in place. These have had a positive impact in terms of continuity and progression across the school. The school meets its statutory responsibilities in terms of RE.

147. The links with the local churches enhances the provision in this subject and are very effective, for example in assemblies and through visits. However the staff are aware of the need to develop further the children's experiences in relation to other cultures.