

INSPECTION REPORT

THORNTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thorntree, Middlesbrough

LEA: Middlesbrough

URN: 111633

Head teacher: Mrs J Davison

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Pullan
30839

Dates of inspection: 20th – 24th March 2000

Inspection number: 190745
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Greenway Thorntree Middlesbrough
Postcode:	TS3 9NH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr H Lloyd
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs A Pullan	Registered Inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
			What should the school do to improve further?
			How well are pupils taught?
			Leadership and management.
Mr T Smith	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			Links with the community.
			Welfare, health and safety and child protection.
			Personal development and attendance.
			Personal support and guidance.
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			Accommodation.
Mr D Maddocks	Team Inspector	Information technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
		Art	Staffing.
Mr P Isherwood	Team Inspector	Special educational needs	Curriculum.
		Mathematics	Resources.
		Geography	
Mrs S Jones	Team Inspector	Under fives	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
Mr D Pattinson	Team Inspector	Equal opportunities	Assessment and monitoring.
		Science	
		Design and technology	
		History	

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thorntree Primary School is a larger than average primary school with 160 boys and 172 girls currently on roll. A further 36 children attend the nursery part-time. The school serves the needs of the Thorntree housing estate in East Middlesbrough. Most pupils come from council-owned housing with over 69 percent of the pupils eligible for free school meals. This percentage is well above the national average. The unemployment rate in the area is also significantly higher than the national figure. Sixty-four pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and two have statements of special educational need. No pupils currently at the school come from minority ethnic groups nor are there any pupils for whom English is an additional language. The area has long been recognised as one in need of regeneration. The school has experienced falling rolls over the previous two years as a result of housing demolition in the area and is currently part of the East Middlesbrough Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Thorntree Primary School is an effective school. Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment and poor personal and social development. As a result of good teaching throughout the school pupils make good progress and, despite still being well below national standards, their overall attainment improves. The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher and all staff work together as a team committed to high standards of care for the pupils. The schools' aims are well reflected in its work. The school provides good value for money. The school has more strengths than weaknesses.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good.
- The leadership and management of the head teacher is very good.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well.
- Staff work very well together as a team committed to improvement.
- The school provides high levels of care.
- The development of personal and social skill of the pupils under five is very good.
- The provision for moral development is very good and good for spiritual and social development.
- The school's aims are implemented well.

What could be improved

- Accommodation, layout and provision in the nursery.
- Attainment in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education.
- Role of the governing body.
- Lack of a deputy head teacher.
- Role of the co-ordinators in monitoring their subjects.
- Use of assessment in planning.
- Analysis of data to improve future planning and track pupils' progress.
- The identification of all pupils with special educational needs.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in November 1996. The previous inspection report highlighted very few areas for improvement. There was only one key issue, “raise standards of achievement”. Achievement is still below what is expected nationally but when compared to schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, achievement is average at the end of Key Stage 2. The school’s trend of improvement is similar to the national trend but could be improved. However, the school has successfully maintained many of the areas highlighted as strengths and has accurately identified its own areas for improvement since the last inspection. As a result, the school has made satisfactory improvement, although assessment is still not used consistently to inform future planning. This was identified in the previous inspection and the school has made unsatisfactory progress in this area. The head teacher and assessment co-ordinator have a clear and shared vision for the future development of assessment, and have established precise targets and time scales for its sustained improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	E*	E	C	well above average A above average B Average C Below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	E*	E	C	
Science	E	E*	E	C	

E in bottom 5% of schools*

Pupils’ attainment on entry to the school is very low in comparison to the national average. Pupils make good progress in both the nursery and reception classes. However, by the age of five, their attainment is still very low when compared with other pupils of this age. Despite making good progress throughout their time in the school, pupils’ attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is still very low when compared to national standards and by the end of Key Stage 2 it is well below national standards. By the end of Key Stage 1, the school’s results are well below average when compared to similar schools but by the end of Key Stage 2, results are average when compared to similar schools. This demonstrates the good progress made by pupils. The school has set challenging but realistic targets for the improvement of pupils’ attainment and are on line to meet those targets. The school’s trend of improvement over time is broadly in line with the national trend. Standards are high enough when the social aspects of the school are taken into account.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in response to good teaching. However, a minority of pupils have significant behavioural problems.
Personal development and relationships	The early years make very good provision for developing children's social and personal skills. In the rest of the school, pupils' personal development is promoted well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good; relationships between pupils and classmates are satisfactory.
Attendance	Satisfactory, and starting to improve.

The pupils' good behaviour is a direct result of the good strategies that teachers use. Most pupils are keen to participate in lessons and do their work well. However, a few pupils find it difficult to respond correctly to school rules and to allow other pupils to work without interruption. Pupils enjoy coming to school and, overall, have satisfactory attitudes to learning. However, a significant minority, particularly in Years 1 and 6, show little interest in their work. In general, pupils listen well to their teachers and most are willing to work, but many have very short attention spans and often fail to complete written tasks in the time provided. Attendance is broadly satisfactory because of the recent improvements, but is still well below the average for primary schools nationally. There are large numbers of pupils with poor attendance records. However, as a result of new initiatives aimed at encouraging pupils to come to school regularly, attendance is starting to improve, and present levels in almost all year groups are now around, or exceeding, the school's current target figure of 92 per cent. Unauthorised absence is close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good. In 97 per cent of the lessons seen teaching was at least satisfactory with good teaching seen in 38 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent teaching seen in 28 per cent of lessons. However, unsatisfactory teaching was seen in 3 lessons (3 per cent). Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and work. They teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well; however, opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other subjects are not developed sufficiently. This means that pupils are not given enough direction as to how the knowledge they have gained in English and mathematics can be used to benefit other subjects. Throughout the school, teachers use questioning well to ascertain pupils' levels of understanding and they know their pupils well through this day-to-day informal assessment. As a result, they choose appropriate teaching methods for all pupils and pupils' social and moral skills are given particular emphasis. However, teachers do not analyse tests in sufficient depth to identify pupils' specific strengths and weaknesses. Pupils enter school with little motivation to learn or to do well. They respond well to the good teaching in the school and develop a greater interest and willingness to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, apart from information technology. Provision for personal and social development is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory, although the school does not identify all pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. The provision for spiritual and social development is good, while the provision made for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils.

The school offers a satisfactory curriculum in all subjects except information technology. By the age of 11, most pupils are still reliant on adult help and are still only using the simple features of the programs they use. In addition, they have little real understanding of the use of spreadsheets, databases and how computers can control, measure and simulate physical events. There is good provision for pupils' personal and social education. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and homework clubs. The school welcomes parents into school and provides many opportunities for parents to be involved in the school through parents' evenings, curriculum workshops and helping in classrooms. However, despite these invitations very few parents actually choose to attend.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides very good leadership and management. The school needs a deputy head teacher. Subject co-ordinators have started to monitor attainment and provision within their subjects but do not yet do so sufficiently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Caring and supportive but not sufficiently involved at an early stage in making decisions about the future of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school does not analyse its performance data sufficiently.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory.

The head teacher has a very clear educational direction for the school. As a result, she provides strong leadership and manages the school well. The governing body are very caring and supportive of the school but have not yet sufficiently developed the role of "critical friend" and are not involved early enough in making decisions about the school or in monitoring curriculum developments. The school does not have a deputy head teacher to assist with management responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators have only just begun to monitor their subjects but do not yet do so with sufficient rigour. Planning is

monitored on a termly basis but co-ordinators do not yet analyse pupils' work, observe the quality of teaching in their subject area or have portfolios of pupils' work to refer to when making judgements about attainment. Principles of best value are applied. The school has sufficient qualified teachers to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. The teachers are supported well by a large number of support assistants. The accommodation is large, spacious and well used. However, many areas are in need of refurbishment and redecoration. In most areas the schools' resources are adequate; however, resources in the nursery are inadequate, especially large equipment for outdoor play.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Teaching is good • The school is approachable • The school expects children to do their best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in school • Homework

Too few parents returned the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting for any significant judgements to be made. However, inspectors would agree with parents' positive comments and disagree with the negative comments. During the week of the inspection, behaviour in and around school was good. Most pupils understand and respond well to school rules. A few pupils do not always show appropriate behaviour, however, this is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Homework is set consistently and appropriately throughout the school; however, many parents do not support the completion of work at home. To help those pupils who have difficulty completing work at home the school provides a homework club.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 When children start at the nursery, their attainment is very low compared to the national average. Despite making good progress throughout their time in the school, by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education is well below average. The school has set challenging but realistic targets to improve pupils' attainment and is capable of meeting those targets. Pupils low level of skills in literacy and numeracy have a significant impact on their achievements in other subjects.

2 In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds, the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics were very low when compared to all schools nationally. These results were well below average when compared to similar schools. Since 1996, the school's results have been improving faster than the national improvement, but the 1999 results were worse than the 1998 results.

3 In the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds, the school's results in English, mathematics and science were well below average when compared to all schools nationally. However, these results were broadly in line with results from similar schools. The school's results have been improving over the last three years at a similar rate to the national improvement.

4 Children enter the nursery with very poor language and social skills and an extremely limited knowledge of their world. They make steady progress in the nursery, especially in gaining language and personal skills. However, by the age of four, most children still have very poor skill levels in writing, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Children continue to make steady progress in the reception classes but, by the age of five, only the most able children reach the expected levels.

5 Pupils make steady progress in English. By the end of Year 2 their attainment is well below average, and by the end of Year 6 it is still well below average. By the end of Year 2, most pupils take pleasure in reading, but use limited strategies for tackling unknown words relying predominantly on sounding out the letters of the word and using picture clues. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a limited understanding of comprehension and have difficulty understanding what is implied in a piece of text as opposed to what is actually written. In writing, pupils find it difficult to apply what they have learnt in literacy lessons to writing at a greater length. Pupils develop an understanding of grammar and punctuation, but have difficulty applying this when producing independent pieces of writing. Most pupils are beginning to understand that stories have to have a correct structure and contain descriptive vocabulary. However, many pupils still find it very difficult to write imaginatively which limits the content of their stories. Handwriting and presentation are now developed systematically throughout Key Stage 2, but by the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in these areas are still below what is typical of eleven year olds. The literacy hour is beginning to have an impact on pupils' English skills, but pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects.

6 Pupils make steady progress in mathematics. By the end of Year 2 their attainment is well below average, and by the end of Year 6 it is still well below average. By the end of Year 2, pupils are adding and subtracting numbers up to and beyond 20. Most can write these numbers but some reverse the figures. Most pupils have difficulty in discussing their work because of their poor language skills, and this has a particular impact on their ability to solve mathematical problems. By the end of Year 6, many pupils still find difficulty in expressing themselves. This also has an effect on problem solving, where they do not always recognise key words and are unsure of what to do. All pupils can accurately

add or subtract two digit numbers, while most can add and subtract four digit numbers. Most pupils understand angles but only the higher attaining pupils can measure them accurately. Most pupils can collect information and construct bar charts, but few can interpret them or create accurate line graphs. The numeracy hour is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' mathematical skills.

7 Pupils make steady progress in improving their scientific knowledge and understanding although many pupils' progress is limited by their language skills. By the end of Year 2 their attainment in science is well below average, and by the end of Year 6 it is still well below average. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to practically investigate science is well below average, because they are given insufficient opportunities to plan experiments, or to obtain, consider and record evidence to help them develop the skills of scientific enquiry. By the end of Year 2, pupils describe the arrangements of seeds in a variety of fruits, and record their findings through simple drawings. Pupils investigate how a bulb lights, but do not yet understand a simple electrical circuit. By the end of Year 6, pupils know that day and night occur because the earth spins on its axis. They describe how some materials can be changed, and know that some changes are irreversible. Pupils recognise the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat, and learn ways in which animals are suited to their environment. However, the skills of scientific enquiry are not well developed. Although many pupils can predict the likely outcomes of an experiment, few recognise the need for fair tests, or fully understand the effect that altering one variable has on others. Very few pupils deduce or hypothesise, taking account of identified patterns when drawing conclusions. They describe and record observations, but do not use the correct scientific language.

8 Pupils make steady progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of using information technology to manipulate text, pictures and numbers. However, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in information technology is well below average. By the age of seven, pupils have a poor understanding of how information technology can be used and only use the simplest of features in the programs they use. Most pupils are very reliant on adults to help them use these programs and to load, save or print their work. By the age of 11, most pupils are still reliant on adult help and are still only using the simple features of the programs they use. In addition, they have little real understanding of the use of spreadsheets, databases and how computers can control, measure and simulate physical events.

9 Pupils make steady progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of religious education. However, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment is below average, partly because their low language skills prevent them making better progress. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 found the vocabulary used to describe church furniture difficult to remember but could explain some of its uses. Pupils in Key Stage 2 try hard to suggest the meaning of objects such as the different foods put on a Seder plate for the Passover but their ideas are firmly based in their own experiences. Pupils learn information about different world faiths but their ability to explain ideas about belief and the meaning of symbols is below average.

10 Pupils make steady progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of other subjects. However, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in art, design and technology, geography, history and music are below what is typical for pupils of this age, partly because pupils' lack of skills in English and mathematics has an impact on their attainment. Standards in physical education are typical of their ages.

11 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Those pupils who have been identified as needing additional support or provision have appropriate individual education plans with clearly identified targets. Reviews are held regularly to measure pupils' progress against these targets. Parents are invited to these review meetings but few choose to attend. However, the school does not have clear criteria for the identification of pupils with special educational needs and,

consequently, not all pupils have been identified.

12 Pupils enjoy coming to school and, overall, have satisfactory attitudes to learning. However, a significant minority, particularly in Years 1 and 6, show little interest in their work. In general, pupils listen well to their teachers and most are willing to work, but many have very short attention spans and often fail to complete written tasks in the time provided.

13 Behaviour is generally good, but only in response to firm control from teachers. Many pupils have little or no self-discipline and need clear and regular guidance in order to behave well. A significant minority have severe behavioural problems. However, almost all pupils extended a warm welcome to inspectors. They greeted them politely, and regularly held doors open for them without being asked to do so. Bullying is not a problem and no incidents were observed or reported during the inspection. Exclusions are also very low and dealt with appropriately. Pupils do care for their school and show due respect for its fabric and fittings.

14 Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and are a strength of the school. However, many pupils are very self-centred, and relationships amongst them are only satisfactory. They find it difficult to work co-operatively and show little consideration for other peoples' feelings and beliefs. Squabbles are not uncommon, especially amongst younger pupils.

15 Pupils' personal development is satisfactory although many enter the nursery with very poor social skills. They willingly accept responsibilities offered to them through becoming members of the School Council and carry out their duties thoughtfully and conscientiously. Most pupils follow instructions well and are able to work on their own when tasks are made very clear to them, but opportunities for them to plan their own learning or to show initiative through their studies are very limited.

16 Overall, attendance remains broadly satisfactory for this school, but is well below the average for primary schools nationally and there are a large number of pupils with poor attendance records. However, as a result of new initiatives aimed at encouraging pupils to come to school regularly, attendance has improved, and present levels in almost all year groups are now around, or exceeding, the school's current target figure of 92 per cent. Unauthorised absence is close to the national average.

17 Punctuality is satisfactory. Most pupils arrive on time and are settled in class promptly at the start of lessons. Some, however, regularly arrive late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18 The quality of teaching is good, with 4 out of 10 lessons seen judged to be good or very good. However, a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was seen (3 per cent). This is an improvement on the previous inspection where 4.4 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Throughout the school, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of most of the subjects they teach, with the exception of information technology where subject knowledge is poor. As a result, teachers are confident enough to plan lessons that are lively and interesting to pupils and thereby gain pupils' attention and interest. For example, a Year 6 English lesson was based around an alien invasion with activities linked to profiling the characteristics of the aliens and descriptive writing about the actual invasion. This stimulated the pupils to write imaginatively whilst grammar, spelling and descriptive vocabulary were taught effectively.

19 Teachers use a range of questions well. Some questions posed are to ascertain pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Others require a more detailed answer and are used effectively to develop pupils' reasoning skills. For example in a Year 3 mathematics lesson pupils had

to rapidly recall pairs of numbers that were a multiple of 5 but that totalled 100, whilst in a Year 5 art lesson pupils had to justify their choice of a particular style of painting. This means that teachers know their pupils well and match activities well to pupils' abilities. As a result most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in the development of ideas and in gaining new knowledge.

20 All the teachers are very caring towards their pupils and take time to understand each individual pupil's home background and circumstances. Many pupils have challenging behaviour and lack the self-discipline to remain on task or to concentrate for long periods of time. However, because teachers know and understand their pupils well most have good control and insist on high standards of behaviour. They also vary the pace, timing and range of activities within a lesson very well to ensure that most pupils remain interested and involved enough to work productively. Most pupils respond very well to the caring attitude of the teachers, showing respect and concentrating on their work. In the few unsatisfactory lessons seen it was as a result of those particular teachers not having established strategies for control as effectively as other teachers. As a consequence pupils did not apply themselves as well to tasks as they did in other classes.

21 Many pupils start school with poor social skills. Teachers clearly identify the development of relationships as a high priority. Every opportunity is taken to reward pupils with praise, thereby developing their self-esteem. Pupils therefore feel valued and most teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, resulting in pupils showing respect to adults. Instructions are given clearly and precisely so that pupils feel confident in knowing what they are doing. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods including whole class, group and independent activities. However, because of the challenging nature of some pupils' behaviour and because pupils find it difficult to work either co-operatively or independently too few opportunities are given to pupils to develop independent learning and to take on responsibilities. This is resulting in low attainment in aspects of some subjects, particularly in the experimental aspect of science and using and applying mathematics to solve problems.

22 The school implements the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers teach these basic skills well and as a consequence these strategies are developing well and are beginning to raise standards. However, teachers rely too heavily on knowledge about their pupils that has been gained through questioning and as a response to work set. There is insufficient detailed analysis of tests that pupils take to clearly identify strengths and weaknesses. As a consequence, teachers set tasks that appear challenging based on their informal knowledge of pupils but they cannot be certain that these tasks are sufficiently challenging or that standards attained are high enough. This means that although teachers' planning adequately supports their lessons they cannot be certain that all aspects of English and mathematics are being given the appropriate emphasis.

23 The quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Targets are clear and measurable and are linked to both English and mathematics. Some pupils have been identified as having behavioural problems and their plans include specific behavioural targets. Most teachers refer to pupils' individual educational plans when planning lessons. This results in work being set that is well matched to pupils' ability. For example, in a reception class lesson on using musical instruments to make different types of sounds, pupils with special educational needs were asked appropriate questions to develop specific targets identified on their individual education plans. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs are well supported both by teachers and support assistants. They plan together to ensure that pupils have a balance of group and whole class work. This has a positive effect on the progress these pupils make.

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

23 The school has made satisfactory progress in most areas of curriculum development since the last inspection. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all National Curriculum areas except the control and monitoring aspects of information technology. In religious education the school follows the agreed syllabus.

24 For those pupils who are not yet five the school provides an appropriate curriculum around the recognised areas of learning. The provision for language development and social and personal development is good and reflects the emphasis placed on these skills by the school. Provision for physical development is unsatisfactory in the nursery due to the poor condition of the outdoor play area and a shortage of suitable play equipment. This has a negative impact on the early development of physical skills but particularly on co-operative activities. There are many good features to planning the curriculum for under fives, especially for literacy and numeracy in reception and the way children are prepared for these activities in the nursery. Some opportunities for developing children's range of experiences are missed in the nursery because activities that children choose themselves do not have a planned focus.

25 In Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum is satisfactory. The school has introduced a number of strategies to improve attainment including the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the Mathematics Enhancement Programme. These have been satisfactorily introduced and are starting to have a positive effect on pupils' learning. They are improving basic skills in literacy and numeracy. However, planned opportunities to teach literacy or numeracy skills in other subjects are very limited. There is a lack of use of information technology in the curriculum apart from in the information technology room.

26 The school has introduced booster classes in both literacy and numeracy to raise standards of attainment. These are well organised and are developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

27 Planning is satisfactory overall. There are policy statements and schemes of work in all curriculum areas. However, in the foundation subjects, schemes of work have not yet been fully reviewed to reflect changes in the curriculum.

28 Pupils' personal, social and health education are well promoted in the curriculum. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught sensitively to the pupils. There are close links with the police and other organisations, for example in the very good quality citizenship sessions. To promote healthy living the school has joined the Healthy School's Standard.

29 The school ensures that all pupils identified as having special educational needs receive a broad and balanced curriculum and this has a positive effect on their learning. The special needs Code of Practice is implemented by the school.

30 There is a good range of extra curricular activities available for the older pupils in school. These include football, information technology, recorders, art club, needlework and a chess club. These clubs have a positive effect on developing pupils' self esteem and social skills. An after school homework club allows pupils the chance to develop academic skills. The curriculum is well enhanced by visitors to the school. For example, a local artist visits the school and runs the art club and a visiting author has improved literacy skills. The school develops pupils' creative education by inviting drama and musical groups to perform in school. Visiting clergy from a wide range of Christian Churches enhance spiritual development and develop good links with the community. A visit to an Outdoor Adventurous Activities centre contributes well to physical education and develops pupils'

confidence and self-esteem.

31 Some links exist with other schools through football and music, and occasionally pupils work with outside groups on local projects. Regular opportunities are provided for student teachers to work in school as part of their training, but there are no links with local business or commerce. Arrangements for transferring pupils in Year 6 to secondary schools are satisfactory.

32 Procedures for supporting and promoting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers place strong emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem and building up their confidence. They use praise and rewards appropriately to encourage effort, and pupils' achievements are regularly acknowledged and celebrated. The School Council, is an effective body. For pupils who need additional behavioural or emotional support, the school has set up a homely quiet room where they receive counselling from an appropriately qualified member of staff.

33 The school has continued to place considerable emphasis on the provision for pupils' personal development since the last inspection. Provision for spiritual development is good and ensures that pupils experience worship led by ministers from local churches as well as school led assemblies. The daily act of collective worship meets all statutory requirements and involves pupils in reflection on ideas basic to Christian belief. Pupils in Year 6 read the prayers they had written about God as their friend, in assembly. In religious education Year 2 pupils wrote prayers of thanksgiving to Jesus as part of their work on the Easter festival. Pupils learn about the beliefs held by people who belong to world faiths other than Christianity, such as in Judaism when they learnt about the festival of Passover. Circle Time helps them to reflect on their own feelings and those of their peers. The curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to experience wonder as young children in reception listen in amazement to the range of sounds produced by a violin. Older pupils were fascinated by the use of instruments to portray characters in 'Peter and the Wolf' and surprised each other by the quality of the poems they had written about fire.

34 Provision for moral development is very good and a significant strength of the school and helps pupils to become aware of right and wrong while focusing on raising self-esteem and learning how to value other people. All staff use a consistent approach to discipline based on praise and reward. Pupils with behavioural problems are supported by the school's counsellor and have the opportunity to discuss their problems in privacy and comfort. Pupils are taught to respect the adults in the school who lead by example. Sanctions are understood and the school receives support from parents in their efforts to help pupils become more responsible for their actions. Opportunities for pupils to take personal responsibility for their behaviour in research and investigative work are limited, as staff work hard to keep pupils on task and learning through the school day.

35 The school provides its pupils with many opportunities to develop good social skills. A day's workshop on Good Citizenship, led by local policemen, was in progress during the first day of the inspection. The theme was based on helping each other to behave responsibly in the local environment. Year groups from top infants elect representatives each term on to the School Council which considers ideas from pupils about how to improve their school. They help raise funds for improvements such as purchasing benches for the school playground. Though the school raises some money for national charities the focus is mainly on improving their own school environment. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good but there are instances of some friction between children in all year groups.

36 Cultural development is apparent in the teaching of art, music, literature and dance and provision is satisfactory. Pupils study the works of well-known artists as inspiration for their own art work. They enjoy singing a wide range of songs in sessions led by musicians who visit the school regularly. The school does not have anyone that co-ordinates multi-cultural education. As a result, opportunities to learn about other cultures are limited to the study of multi-faiths in religious education and curriculum topics in subjects such as geography and history.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37 The school continues to take good care of its pupils. Child protection arrangements are very good and reflect local authority guidelines, with a member staff having designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies if cases of abuse are suspected. A suitable health and safety policy is in place and day-to-day working practices are good. Standards of cleaning are high, the building is tidy and generally in good repair. Pupils are supervised carefully throughout the day and lunchtime routines are managed smoothly and efficiently. As a result, the school functions as an orderly community. There are appropriate arrangements for dealing with accidents and illness; emergency equipment is serviced regularly and there is a fire drill each term.

38 Procedures for promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour are very good, and implemented firmly and effectively by most teachers. This ensures that lessons run smoothly and that pupils act sensibly out of class. Rewards and sanctions are appropriate, well understood by pupils, and applied fairly. A straightforward code of conduct is displayed in all classrooms. Clear guidelines are in place to deal with any incidents of bullying.

39 The school is very keen to improve attendance and is now setting annual targets to help meet this objective. This year it is aiming for an overall figure of 92 per cent, and to date this has been achieved regularly by almost all year groups. Pupils who have full attendance are rewarded, whilst those with low attendance are actively pursued to come to school and, where appropriate, this involves the assistance of the local authority's welfare service. Attendance is thoroughly monitored. Registers are completed efficiently at the start of sessions in accordance with current guidelines and any absences that are not explained promptly are investigated. Rates of attendance, however, are not reported in the prospectus.

40 Monitoring of pupils' personal development is effective, but is mainly carried out informally by teachers, who know their pupils very well. There are, however, written comments on pupils' annual reports and, where appropriate, formal targets are set for pupils with behavioural problems.

41 The school's arrangements for the monitoring and support of academic performance are sound. The school uses a range of tests including statutory and optional national tests. However, the information available from these tests is not used effectively to predict future targets or to influence planning. For example, information gained from an initial assessment of individual pupil's strengths and weaknesses carried out soon after they start in the nursery is not used to predict test results by the end of Key Stage 1. There is little use and analysis of test information to identify and overcome specific weaknesses in order to help track pupils' progress more effectively. There is little analysis of the performances of different ability groups, or by gender, to help eliminate discrepancies. For example, the school does not have clear criteria for identifying pupils with special educational needs, and has historically under-estimated numbers of pupils who are on the Special Needs Register. However, the school has identified these weaknesses in its assessment procedures. The head teacher and assessment co-ordinator have a clear and shared vision for the future development of assessment, and have established precise targets and time scales for its sustained improvement. For example, one priority requires senior staff to attend training to enable them to analyse data more effectively.

42 Assessment is not used consistently to inform future planning. This was identified in the previous inspection and the school has made unsatisfactory progress in this area. All teachers know their pupils well and use informal assessments to help pupils make progress on a day-to-day basis. However, there is no systematic approach to the use of formal assessment. The discrepancy between teacher assessment and test results last year in the national tests in science shows that assessment is not being used accurately. However, the school has made a good start in improving its assessment

arrangements. For example, group targets, supported by parents, have been set for all pupils in English and mathematics. These are helping to overcome weaknesses and are enabling pupils to become more involved in and informed about their own learning. Marking is not used consistently for assessment purposes. It is carried out carefully and conscientiously, with comments designed to help pupils feel that their work is valued. However, it does not always tell the pupils what they could do to improve their work.

43 The school ensures that all pupils identified as having special educational needs receive a broad and balanced curriculum. The new head teacher, with the help of the special educational needs co-ordinator, has developed new procedures for the identification of these pupils. However, the school does not yet use clear criteria to identify all of these pupils. As a result, all pupils who need additional support have not been identified. The school ensures that the progress of pupils identified as having special educational needs is regularly reviewed. Outside support agencies are used well and have a positive effect on the learning and behaviour of these pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44 Links with parents are extremely limited and have very little impact on pupils' learning despite the school's best efforts to build a meaningful partnership with them. Parents are always welcome in school, and a wide range of activities is provided for them to promote interest and involvement in their children's work, but support for these is minimal. Very few parents help in class, although those who do, provide valuable assistance with activities such as reading. One parent also runs an after school football club. Response to the parents' surveys prior to the inspection was very low, albeit very positive. All parents who replied to the questionnaire indicated they would feel comfortable approaching the school if they had any worries or concerns about their children and the vast majority consider that the school works closely with them. Response to the home school agreement has been generally satisfactory, with around half of all parents signing up to it. The Friends Association remains active and provides good support for the school through a range of organised fund-raising events. Arrangements for informing parents of new pupils starting in the reception class are generally good. They are enhanced by the offer of a home visit from the class teacher, but meetings organised in school to discuss its routines and expectations are not well attended.

45 Communications with parents are satisfactory. Parents are kept sufficiently well informed about school life through regular newsletters, and replies to the questionnaire indicate that they are generally happy with the quality of information provided about their children's progress. However, attendance at parents' evenings is very low despite various different formats being tried by the school for these occasions. Pupils' end of year reports meet requirements and are generally informative. The prospectus is incomplete. It lacks information about attendance and does not state that parents have a right to withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship. The governors' annual report is generally satisfactory, although details about the implementation of the special educational needs policy are not specific. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept appropriately informed and invited to review meetings, but very few of them attend.

46 Teachers inform parents at an early stage if there are problems with a child's learning. Parents are not usually involved in reviewing individual education plans but they are informed about any changes made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47 The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall but some areas require improvement. The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher. The current head teacher has only been in post a short time but has successfully implemented many changes and has set a very

clear educational direction for the school. She is supported by 2 senior teachers who are currently sharing the role of deputy head teacher. This has sustained the school through a period of financial difficulty but the lack of a deputy head teacher means that the head teacher has no-one with whom to share management roles and, consequently, her work load is too heavy. The day-to-day management of the school is effective allowing the teachers to concentrate on teaching. The two secretaries have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and support the head teacher well. The school presently has a deficit budget. This has been the case for the last three years and is a result of falling rolls plus the cost of installing closed circuit television cameras. As a result of careful financial management this deficit has been reduced. However, as the area is currently undergoing many regeneration projects the school has no clear indication as to how and when the falling roll will be resolved.

48 The previous auditors' report cited a number of issues that the school had to redress. The current head teacher has successfully addressed all of the issues raised and appropriate financial controls and monitoring are now in place. Good use is now made of the local education authority's services thereby ensuring compliance with the principles of best value. Grants given to the school, for example as part of the education action zone or for pupils with special educational needs, are used well. The head teacher has excellent relationships with both the staff and the pupils, resulting in them feeling valued and supported. Monitoring of the quality of teaching has effectively highlighted areas for development for teachers' personal and professional development. Clear strategies for improving pupils' behaviour are in place and these help to ensure that the aims of the school are clearly reflected in its work. Priorities have been well established and all staff now share a commitment to raising standards and providing an effective learning environment. However, results of national tests are not analysed well. The school has set realistic and challenging targets but has not identified specific areas for improvement from previous results. Consequently the school has not identified specific strengths or weaknesses.

49 Governors are very interested in, and supportive of, the school. They fulfil all their statutory duties. A committee structure is in place and some governors have specific monitoring responsibilities such as special educational needs, literacy and numeracy. Despite this, the governors rely too much on the professional expertise of the head teacher and are not involved at an early enough stage in making decisions that effect the long-term financial and educational direction of the school. For example, the governing body approves the school development plan and budget when it is submitted to them, rather than helping to decide the priorities at the start of the process. The school development plan identifies areas that need improving or developing. Time scales and the staff responsible for the improvements are identified.

50 Subject leaders do not yet monitor their areas sufficiently. The head teacher monitors the quality of teaching. All subject leaders monitor teachers' planning to ensure there is full coverage of the National Curriculum. However, they do not evaluate this monitoring to target specific areas for development. Subject leaders do not monitor the quality of work produced in pupils' books and there are no portfolios of work for teachers to use for judging standards. As a result, subject leaders do not have a full knowledge about standards in their subjects or areas that require specific development.

51 The school needs to review its policy on the identification of pupils with special educational needs. Some pupils are identified at an early stage and are provided with good additional support. However, the school does not have clear criteria by which to identify pupils with special educational needs. This has resulted in many pupils not being identified as requiring additional support or provision and the numbers of pupils on the special needs register not being a true representation of the amount of pupils with special educational needs. For those pupils who have been identified documentation is completed effectively and good use is made of outside agencies. Individual education plans have clear targets and there is good liaison between special needs teachers, class teachers and the co-ordinator to monitor progress.

52 The school has sufficient teaching staff to meet its needs. There is a good mix of established, experienced staff and younger recently trained teachers. There have been many new appointments since the last inspection. However, because of the falling number of pupils a number of teachers are on temporary contracts. There is a good number of additional support staff, although the funding for many relies on grants from the local education authority and the education action zone, that run out in the near future.

53 Teachers' professional development is planned to match the priorities identified in the school development plan. Teachers and other staff are given opportunities to improve their knowledge through carefully chosen training activities. Appraisal is carried out informally, but it is well organised and is effective in identifying personal training needs. Systems for the induction and mentoring of new staff are well established and work effectively.

54 The resources for learning are adequate overall. They are particularly good in science, design and technology and religious education. In the library some of the books available are old and of too simple a level to help to develop older pupils' research skills. In information technology the computer resources are very good; however, there is a lack of equipment to allow pupils to monitor and measure external events such as temperature. As a result the school is unable to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in this subject.

55 There is ample accommodation to deliver the planned curriculum. Classrooms are appropriately furnished and generally spacious, and good use is made of spare rooms for activities such as art and food technology. The school also benefits from having two large halls and a large separate dining room. Corridors have recently been fully carpeted to enhance the overall comfort of the interior, and to reduce noise levels. Displays are generally satisfactory, but do not contain significant quantities of pupils' own work. The buildings are in good repair although many areas require refurbishment and redecoration. They are cleaned to a high standard although a strong unpleasant smell often exudes from the boys' toilet in the Key Stage 2 area. Outside, the very large playing field and large hard-surfaced play areas are also well maintained.

56 The quality and use of accommodation in the nursery are unsuitable for young children to play and learn in. Although the room where it is located is very large, it is not well laid out and has poor general amenities. The partitions that separate activities are rather high, and the way they are distributed prevents staff from having a clear view of pupils at all times. There is no proper kitchen area for the preparation of food or for cooking, and the main sink unit is located in one of the two toilet areas. Displays are generally uninteresting. The outside play area for the under fives is also unsatisfactory. It is featureless and does not contain a soft-surfaced area. This prevents the use of large climbing frames and, as a consequence, restricts the development of pupils' physical skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57 In order to continue to improve the quality of education at the school, the governors, head teacher and staff should:

Improve the provision in the nursery by improving:

- the quality of indoor and outdoor accommodation;
- the range of resources for outdoor play;
- planning for activities chosen by pupils;
- assessment and recording procedures.

(Paragraphs 24, 56, 59, 60, 67)

Raise attainment in English by:

- using assessment more effectively to identify specific areas for development;
- using the skills acquired in literacy lessons and applying them to writing across the curriculum;
- providing more opportunities for independent writing for a range of purposes;
- developing reading skills to include a fuller comprehension of what is implied in the text as well as what is actually stated;
- more effective monitoring of the provision made for English.

(Paragraphs 22, 25, 50, 71 – 75)

Raise attainment in mathematics by:

- using assessment more effectively to identify specific areas for development and to set specific individual targets;
- providing more opportunities to developing investigative mathematics skills;
- developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary;
- developing numeracy skills across the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 22, 79 – 85)

Raise attainment in science by:

- developing pupils' independence in planning experiments, collecting and using evidence through carefully structured investigations;
- using assessment more effectively to identify specific areas for development and tracking pupils' progress;
- improving teachers' confidence in the teaching of science;
- fully implementing the recommendations in the schools' science development plan;
- more effective monitoring of the provision made for science.

(Paragraphs 50, 87 – 91)

Raise attainment in religious education by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to explore meaning and belief especially when studying multi faiths;
- monitoring the curriculum to ensure continuity and progression of ideas as well as factual information.

(Paragraphs 9, 123 – 126)

Raise attainment in information technology by:

- clearly identifying what skills pupils should have learnt by the end of each year group;
- improving teachers' confidence and expertise in using information technology;

- purchasing the hardware and software needed to deliver the full requirements of the national curriculum;
- using information communications technology more effectively to promote pupils' learning in other subject areas;
- more effective monitoring of the provision made for information technology.
(Paragraphs 54, 112 – 115)

In addition, governors should consider the following minor issues when producing their action plan:

- appoint a deputy head teacher to assist the head teacher.
- improve the role of the governing body by becoming more involved at an earlier stage in making decisions about the school's future development.
- determine clear criteria for the identification of pupils' with special educational needs.
(Paragraphs 41, 43, 51)

The school has already identified most of these issues in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1%	27%	38%	30%	3%		

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	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	36	332
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		206

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	64

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	62

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.24
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.16
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	24	20	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	15
	Girls	10	9	6
	Total	22	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	50% (67%)	45% (59%)	48% (50%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (81%)	87% (84%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	17	16
	Girls	10	7	7
	Total	23	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	52% (67%)	55% (66%)	52% (53%)
	National	82% (81%)	86% (85%)	87% (86%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	34	25	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	21	26
	Girls	9	13	13
	Total	25	34	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42% (25%)	58% (16%)	66% (25%)
	National	70% (65%)	69% (58%)	78% (69%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	14	12
	Girls	9	4	6
	Total	19	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	32% (33%)	30% (29%)	30% (41%)
	National	68% (65%)	69% (65%)	75% (71%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	23.7

Education support staff: Y1 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	36

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	6	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998 - 1999
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	£
Total income	693,200
Total expenditure	648517
Expenditure per pupil	1455
Balance brought forward from previous year	-47018
Balance carried forward to next year	-2335

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	368
Number of questionnaires returned	22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	27	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	32	5	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	41	14	5	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	30	10	10	10
The teaching is good.	55	41	0	5	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	33	10	0	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	36	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	59	27	5	0	9
The school is well led and managed.	62	24	0	0	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	30	10	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	38	10	0	10

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

58 All children are given the opportunity of three terms part-time attendance in the nursery before progressing to a reception class in the September or January preceding their fifth birthdays. Children enter the nursery with very poor language and social skills and an extremely limited knowledge of their world. The majority of children have an adequate range of physical skills but a significant minority find it difficult to play with their peers.

59 The provision for children under five is satisfactory overall with good provision for language and literacy and social and personal development. The provision for physical development in the nursery is unsatisfactory because of unsuitable outdoor accommodation and a scarcity of resources. The provision is well planned except for activities that children choose themselves in the nursery.

60 Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery, especially in the acquisition of language and personal skills. However, baseline assessments indicate that they have very poor skill levels in writing, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development by the age of four. This is in comparison with expectations for four year olds both locally and nationally. Children continue to make satisfactory progress in the reception classes but only those children capable of higher attainment achieve the expected learning outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, by the age of five. More children are closer to achieving desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development and in movement knowledge and awareness in physical development, by the age of five, than in other areas of learning. The lack of structured assessment in the nursery means that only those children with the most apparent special needs are identified early and included on the school's register. Staff in the nursery have very good personal knowledge of the needs of each child beginning with home visits prior to entry, but rely on their own resources to provide early support. The identification of special needs is more comprehensive by the age of five and over a third of children in reception are on the special needs register.

61 The school places great importance on social and personal development which is reflected in the provision for children under five. They make good progress in learning how to relate to adults in school. These young children are taught and nurtured by adults who are excellent role models in all aspects of social and personal development. Children are encouraged to take turns, share and listen to their peers. Older children in the nursery were observed sitting quietly while talking about and tasting different fruits. Younger children found this activity interesting for a very short period of time but preferred to eat the fruit rather than talk about it. The simple procedures and rules for living together, that they learn in the nursery, are built on in reception and underpin the whole curriculum. Children begin to understand the need to be aware of others when they move round the hall in physical education and know that it is dangerous to bump into each other. They walk quietly and calmly along corridors and listen attentively in assemblies. Children begin to exercise some self-control and can take turns, as observed in group work when they were given the opportunity to play a violin with help. Though the majority of children do not achieve desirable learning outcomes for five year olds in their ability to work co-operatively with each other, they make good progress in most aspects of personal and social development.

62 Language and literacy are key areas of development in a provision for children under five and adults take every opportunity to involve them in dialogue. Their vocabulary is very poor when they enter the nursery and some children are already eighteen months behind for their age, as shown in the results of a simple diagnostic test. Older children in the nursery are prepared carefully in language and

literacy skills for their transfer to reception. Those children capable of higher attainment are beginning to write their names independently and all children learn to sit and discuss a picture from a big book with an adult, before progressing to the more formal approach to literacy teaching in reception. Though children make satisfactory progress in language development overall, only a minority achieve desirable learning outcomes in all aspects of literacy by the age of five. The majority achieve better in listening than speaking and better in reading than writing, but overall are well below expectations for children by the age of five especially in writing skills, that are very poor. Children enjoy books and are happy to talk about their reading. Those children capable of higher attainment identify most sounds and there was evidence of word-building being used to work out words such as 'cowboy'. They enjoy shared and guided reading but need constant reinforcement to make sense of text. Writing skills are very limited and even those children capable of higher attainment lack confidence in writing independently. Progress is slow but evident in response to good teaching.

63 These children enter the nursery with very little experience of number and many strategies are used to help them to count, recognise the meaning of numbers and begin to learn some mathematical vocabulary. They sing number rhymes, play games both individually and in groups and explore filling and emptying containers in water play. Mathematics is taught in reception based on the procedures recommended in the Numeracy Strategy and children benefit from the use of a plenary session to reinforce their learning. They were observed comparing the weights of two objects and to predict which was heavier and which lighter. Scales were used to weigh the two objects and Venn circles to classify them into groups. Children found this activity very difficult and relied heavily on adult support to constantly reinforce the concept under investigation. Some children are gaining confidence in counting but only those children capable of higher attainment perform simple operations with numbers to ten. Overall children attain well below expected levels by the age of five.

64 Provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory overall with good experiences observed in both the nursery and reception. Children in the nursery were enjoying a project on food and examined, tasted and talked about a wide range of fruit and vegetables. A simple system to enable children to record their likes and dislikes was used and children enjoyed placing their disks on large pictures of the fruit or vegetable being tasted. Children in reception explore sound using musical instruments, and learn words such as 'vibration'. Though they can identify how some sounds are made they have very limited vocabularies to expand on their ideas. This task is followed up by children making their own instruments using simple designs. They can use some of the command buttons on a computer keyboard such as 'delete' and 'shift' as they use a number programme. Children have a good sense of location in the school and know whether they have younger or older siblings. The project on new babies in the nursery led to extensive role-play and more interest of the use of the home corner. They enjoy construction toys but do not concentrate for very long on any activity. Overall their knowledge and understanding of the world is very limited and well below that expected for children by the age of five, though they have made satisfactory progress in their learning. They have made good gains in knowledge in relation to their very poor prior attainment identified in baseline assessments. Teachers use their very good knowledge of the children to plan appropriate activities that extend both their knowledge and understanding of the world.

65 The provision for creative development is satisfactory and some good teaching was observed, especially in reception. Children have poor observation skills on entry to the school and they are encouraged to look carefully at objects and draw what they see of shape and design. They had drawn flowers with the onset of spring and were observed trying to draw a violin in reception. Pencil control is poor and pictures of people drawn on entry to the nursery had very few features. There was some evidence of progress when the task was repeated after half of term. Arms had hands and legs feet. Very few figures had a body even after a term. There was evidence of significant progress being made in observational skills in reception, for some children included detail on their drawings of a violin without prompting. They enjoy singing in assembly and can recall nursery rhymes. Their movements

are imaginative in physical education and they respond well to the different sounds of a tambourine. They find clapping a rhythm very difficult. Overall their creative work is below that expected for five year olds in quality and variety but there is evidence of good progress being made in drawing and movement.

66 The provision for physical development is unsatisfactory in the nursery. These children do not have sufficient opportunity to develop co-operative play safely. They enter school with some positive physical skills and make progress in their own personal range of movements. Their ability to share toys in the nursery is poor. They make significant progress in reception where they are encouraged to explore movement ideas and reflect on their work both as individuals and in relation to other children. Their fine motor skills are poor but they make satisfactory progress in the nursery in response to good developmental teaching of early writing skills. Poor concentration means that physical skills related to model making, such as cutting and gluing, are slow to develop and need clear planning and adult guidance especially in the nursery. Overall physical development of gross motor skills by the age of five is close to that expected for five year olds but their fine motor skills are clearly below that expected for their age.

67 Procedures for assessing children under five are satisfactory but their use to identify special needs to ensure comprehensive, early intervention is unsatisfactory. The baseline assessment is used to set group targets for both learning and behaviour in reception and is updated regularly each half-term. Individual records are not used to set formal targets for each child. Children in the nursery are assessed on entry for vocabulary but this information is not used to identify the real level of need and support required. Staff in the nursery have very good knowledge of each child beginning with home visits prior to entry, but do not keep formal records. They keep samples of children's work and update scores of diagnostic tests. There are no criteria in place to ensure that this valuable store of information is used for the benefit of each child in both the nursery and reception.

ENGLISH

68 By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in English is below the levels expected for their age in speaking, listening and reading but is well below in writing. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, pupils' results were well below average when compared to all schools but were average when compared to schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The schools' results have shown a steady improvement over the last three years.

69 Pupils enter the school with very low levels of speaking and listening and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Despite this, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is still below what is expected for their ages. Most pupils reply to questions from the teacher clearly and confidently but do not use complete sentences, preferring to use one or two word answers. Many have difficulty justifying or explaining preferences, for example when comparing one artist with another. They are very willing to speak to visitors and helpers in the school and do so in a friendly, polite manner but few use standard English. Throughout the school most pupils listen attentively but many can only do so for a short time and become easily distracted. Many pupils have difficulty listening carefully. As a consequence they do not follow instructions well and are unsure how to complete tasks. Teachers then have to repeat or re-explain procedures.

70 Pupils make good progress in reading throughout both key stages but attainment by the end of Year 6 is still below what would be expected for 11 year olds. In Year 1, pupils recognise most letter sounds and use them to sound out unknown words. They have a limited amount of words that they recognise by sight but only those pupils capable of higher attainment can actually read complete sentences. By the end of Year 2, most pupils say they enjoy reading. They have not developed a preference for books and enjoy both fiction and non-fiction. However, they use limited strategies for

tackling unknown words relying predominantly on sounding out the letters of a word and picture clues. They confidently discuss the title and author of books and can retell simple stories using their own words. Very few pupils read with expression although they are becoming more confident and fluent readers. Many pupils prefer a particular style of book or author and show an understanding of what they have read by explaining why some of the characters react the way they do. However, few pupils understand how characters or plots develop. Throughout the key stage pupils have a sound knowledge of how the library is organised. By Year 6, pupils can locate books and use them to find relevant information. They understand and use the contents and index pages of books effectively. However, many books are of too simple a level and do not develop pupils' skills of skimming a text for understanding or scanning a text for information. Pupils have a limited comprehension of text and have difficulty understanding what is implied within a piece of text as opposed to what is actually stated. The lack of these skills restricts pupils from attaining the higher levels.

71 Pupils make steady progress in writing throughout the school. They enter the school with very few literacy skills and by the end of Year 2 still find writing independently very difficult. Most pupils write sentences that contain very few words and find it difficult to spell many common words. The stories they write are very brief and rely heavily on stories they have heard, for example, The Three Little Pigs. In Years 3 and 4, many pupils still do not use the basic punctuation of capital letters and full stops consistently and most stories are very brief, not written in complete sentences and lack development of a plot. Pupils have difficulty altering their style of writing to fit a particular purpose; for example they will write up a science experiment and an account of their holidays in a similar style. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make steady progress in understanding the structure of grammar and punctuation. However, most of the written work they are given involves exercises demonstrating understanding of vocabulary or grammar, which limits pupils' progress in writing independently. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are beginning to understand that stories have to have the correct structure and contain descriptive vocabulary. However, many pupils still find it very difficult to write imaginatively which limits the content of their stories. Handwriting and presentation were an issue in the last inspection. Handwriting is now developed systematically throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils who have had full experience of this system from an early age demonstrate better skills than those pupils introduced to this system in Years 5 and 6. However, few pupils show a pride in the way their work is presented. Consequently by the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in these areas are below what would be expected.

72 Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress and are well supported by classroom assistants. The school makes full use of the Additional Literacy Strategy for Years 3 and 4 and booster classes for Year 6. Teachers are aware of the targets set in pupils' individual education plans and match work well to pupils' needs.

73 The teaching of English is good with a high proportion of the lessons seen being very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen which was a result of the teacher not being sufficiently clear in teaching the objective of the lesson and pupils became confused. Planning in English is effective with teachers taking account of the Literacy Framework. Most teachers try to make the subject appealing to pupils through lively, animated teaching, good use of stimulating resources and by conducting their lessons at a brisk pace. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons, concentrate on their tasks and are eager to work. All teachers are well organised and prepared in advance of the lessons so that no time is wasted. Most teachers know their pupils well and use a variety of strategies to ensure pupil participation in lessons whilst maintaining firm control of those pupils who have limited concentration or challenging behaviour. As a consequence, pupils show a keen interest in English lessons and respond well to the challenging activities with which they are presented.

74 The English curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements. The school has introduced the Literacy Strategy and has also correctly identified the areas that require further development. The

subject leaders are beginning to monitor provision and have correctly identified the need to improve pupils' writing. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of work produced by pupils to identify specific areas for development. Drama is not taught specifically throughout the school but is used successfully in assemblies. Assessment of pupils is undertaken annually with the use of optional test material available to schools but results in these tests are not analysed to identify areas for development or track individual pupils' progress. There is no consistent marking policy and, as a consequence, marking is not always used effectively to inform pupils about how their work could be improved. The procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment in reading have recently been introduced and do not clearly identify how pupils' reading should be improved and are not yet used consistently by all teachers. Pupils are encouraged to take their reading books home regularly to share with parents but many parents do not support their child's reading at home.

75 Teaching in other subjects does not support the development of literacy skills. Pupils use a variety of books to support other subjects and topics but writing in the style appropriate for a particular subject is not well developed, for example, writing up experiments in science or empathetic writing in history. As a result, pupils' skills are not developed as well as they could be.

76 English resources are adequate. The school has recently spent a lot of money on a variety of books to support the Literacy Framework. The reading scheme has a wide selection of good quality books and, as a result, pupils like to choose books from school to read for pleasure. English makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers take the opportunity to discuss moral issues when they are presented in stories. Sessions at the end of literacy lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to value the work of their classmates.

MATHEMATICS

77 By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in mathematics is well below the levels expected for their age. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, pupils' results were well below average when compared to all schools but were average when compared to schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The schools' results have shown a steady improvement over the last three years.

78 Pupils enter the school with poor mathematical skills. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress in most areas of mathematics but progress in the use of mathematics to solve problems is unsatisfactory. The school has recently introduced both the Mathematics Enhancement Programme and the National Numeracy Strategy. These are starting to have an effect on raising attainment, particularly in the area of mental mathematics, but are at an early stage of implementation. The school has also taken full advantage of booster classes for Year 6 pupils. Despite this, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is still well below what is expected for eleven year olds.

79 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils add and subtract numbers to 20; they recognise and name two-dimensional shapes including circles, squares, rectangles and triangles and know how many sides each shape has. Pupils capable of higher attainment recognise patterns such as odd and even numbers, count in multiples of five and understand balance. Many pupils have poor language skills and, as a result, have difficulty solving problems that contain words. Pupils are more confident when solving problems that include money for example, 'spending money at the school fair'. However when recording work many pupils reverse some of the numerals.

80 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils add and subtract 4 digit numbers and numbers that include 2 decimal places. They understand probability, using terms such as impossible, likely and unlikely and work out the area of a regular shape by multiplying length and width. Pupils collect and tally

information and record it using block graphs. However, work on line graphs and the interpretation of data is not well developed. In the area of shape and space pupils understand the term angle and those pupils capable of higher attainment measure them accurately. They understand that the opposite of addition is subtraction and the opposite of multiplication is division and calculate sums using these methods. However, many pupils cannot use these methods to independently solve problems. When given careful and explicit guidance, pupils answer simple word problems correctly. However, because of poor language skills many pupils do not always recognise key words and are therefore unsure of which process to use. Pupils make steady progress in the development of mental strategies. For example, by the end of Year 6, pupils calculate large numbers by adding or subtracting to the nearest multiple of ten and then adjusting their answers appropriately. However, progress is limited by pupils' language skills as they have difficulty explaining how they have calculated an answer or giving a full explanation as to their reasoning.

81 Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress and are well supported by classroom assistants. The school makes full use of booster classes for Year 6. Teachers are aware of the targets set in pupils' individual education plans and match work well to pupils' needs.

82 The school has made satisfactory progress in mathematics since the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy and Mathematics Enhancement Programme have been introduced effectively. The school has set targets based on the results of statutory and other tests. However, teachers are not yet fully analysing the assessment results to identify areas of strength and weakness or to set individual targets. The additional support given to pupils in Year 6 is of very good quality and is used effectively to develop learning.

83 The teaching of mathematics is good with a high proportion of the lessons seen being very good. The pupils respond well to this good teaching and show good attitudes in the mathematics lessons. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen, which was a result of the teacher not effectively controlling pupils. This resulted in some pupils behaving inappropriately and not making the progress of which they were capable. Planning is effective using either the Mathematics Enhancement Programme or the National Numeracy Strategy. Most pupils listen carefully and are eager to answer in the mental mathematics sessions. Most teachers explain the objectives of the lesson to the pupils so that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Questioning is used well to develop learning in almost every class. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher asked pupils to explain how they worked out problems. This was then developed by the teacher asking for examples of alternate ways of solving the problem. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. Most teachers know their pupils well which means that they can set challenging activities. They use a variety of strategies to ensure pupil participation in lessons whilst maintaining firm control of those pupils who have limited concentration or challenging behaviour. Support staff are used very well in the group sessions and this support ensures that all pupils understand what they are doing. However, in some introductory sessions support staff are not sufficiently involved in the lesson.

84 The use of mathematics across the curriculum requires development. There is no systematic planning or monitoring of its use. There are examples of mathematics being used in other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils count seeds in science and in design and technology pupils measure and weigh. In geography pupils develop mathematical skills by plotting co-ordinates. There is some use of information technology but this is not well developed.

85 The mathematics curriculum meets the National Curriculum requirements. The subject leaders are beginning to monitor provision and the quality of teaching. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of work produced by pupils to identify specific areas for development. The school uses the good learning resources effectively to develop learning. Assessment of pupils is undertaken annually with the use of optional test material available to schools but results in these tests

are not analysed to identify areas for development or track individual pupils' progress. There is no consistent marking policy and, as a consequence, marking is not always used effectively to inform pupils about how their work could be improved.

SCIENCE

86 By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in science is well below the levels expected for their age. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, pupils' results were well below average when compared to all schools but were average when compared to schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The schools' results have shown a slight deterioration since the last inspection.

87 All pupils make steady progress in most areas of science except investigative and experimental work where progress is unsatisfactory. Progress is hindered because of pupils' limited vocabulary and narrow range of previous experiences. Many pupils lack the ability to recall previous information appropriately. Consequently, teachers cannot build on previous learning at an acceptable rate. Others, especially in Year 6, are reluctant to record their work to reinforce learning. Their skills of scientific enquiry are not sufficiently developed for them to independently plan experiments or to obtain, consider and record evidence.

88 Pupils in Year 1, identify a range of sources of light. They recognise the differences between living and non-living things, and between natural and man-made materials. They know the main parts of plants, such as, the root, leaf and stem, and learn that seeds grow better in wet conditions. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils describe the arrangements of seeds in a variety of common fruits, and record their findings through simple drawings. They learn that materials can change by such processes as heating or bending and investigate how a torch bulb lights. However, they do not yet understand a simple electrical circuit.

89 In Year 3, pupils know that the length and position of shadows cast by the sun depends on where in the sky it is located, and that pushes and pulls are forces. In investigative work they discover which materials allow magnetic attraction to pass through them most easily, and say whether what happened was what they expected. Year 4 pupils appreciate that a bulb will not light if the electrical circuit is open. When investigating differences in the size of parts of a skeleton in pupils of similar ages, they make predictions, record their results on a prepared framework, and learn about the importance of a fair test. In Year 5, pupils test the solubility of some common materials. They understand different life cycles, such as a frog and sunflower and recognising that living things grow and reproduce. They learn about the location, size and function of the lungs in the human body. However, by the end of Key Stage 2, their skills of scientific enquiry are not well developed. Although many are able to predict likely outcomes, few recognise the need for fair tests, or fully understand the effect that altering one variable has on others. Very few Year 6 pupils deduce, hypothesise or take account of identified patterns when drawing conclusions. They describe and record observations. However, they do not use scientific language precisely enough and have difficulty recording work independently in an appropriate scientific format.

90 Teaching is satisfactory across both key stages, but varies between very good and unsatisfactory. Good and very good teaching is a result of teachers establishing good relationships with their pupils and using effective control strategies. Consequently, most pupils behave well in science lessons and listen attentively. They are interested in their work and answer questions appropriately. Most lessons are taught at a suitably brisk pace, which helps keep pupils on task. This is necessary as some pupils, especially in Year 6, show little self-discipline. Teachers know their pupils well. As a result, work is well matched to the ability of all pupils. However, except for one observed lesson in Year 2, investigative science is not taught well. Some teachers lack the confidence and knowledge to teach investigative science effectively. Lessons are too heavily teacher directed and controlled. This is

because teachers are concerned that discipline will be difficult to enforce during investigative work and will result in poor behaviour. However, inappropriate organisation, and too rigid a structure to lessons also restricts the development of scientific enquiry.

91 The science curriculum meets the National Curriculum requirements. The subject is very well led and there are clear plans and time scales for its continued and needed development, for example, using information technology to compile databases or tabulate the results of experiments. Resources, though sufficient, require auditing and matching to the scheme's requirements. Assessment of pupils is not used effectively to influence future planning or to track pupils' progress. The subject's contribution to literacy is under-developed.

ART

92 Few lessons were seen during the week of the inspection, and these were all in Key Stage 2. However, examination of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils enable judgements to be made.

93 When most children start at the school they have poorly developed artistic skills. Pupils make slow progress in developing these skills and their knowledge and understanding of art. As a result, by the end of Years 2 and 6, the standard of work seen is still below that of other schools. During the last inspection, standards in art were satisfactory. However, since then the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours has reduced the amount of time spent on art and this has had an impact on the standards achieved.

94 Pupils develop skills in a narrow range of areas, although they do use a range of media. For example, pupils in Year 1 make simple drawings using paint, chalk and crayons to illustrate the topics they are studying – for example making chalk drawings of the wolf in the story of the “Three Little Pigs”. In Year 2, pupils look at some of Lowry's work and then use pastels and crayon to make their own drawings in his style. However, most of these drawings are simply copies of the examples that they have been given. In Year 5, pupils look at abstract landscapes, then produce their own by tearing and gluing strips of coloured tissue paper. In Year 6, pupils' observational drawings of plants lack detail or proportion and their drawings in the style of Picasso are, in the main, simply copies of the examples they have been given.

95 The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to very good. Most teachers have secure knowledge of art and place an appropriate emphasis on the development of skills. However, most teachers do not challenge pupils to use their imagination. For example when working in the style of famous artists they allow pupils to copy the examples they are given, rather than use their own creativity to produce their own work. They rely on an outdated scheme of work that does not sufficiently identify the skills that should be taught in each year and this means that pupils are not provided with activities in an appropriate sequence that builds on their previous learning. In addition, the art co-ordinator does not monitor teachers' planning or pupils' work. As a result, pupils' progress is slow. Very good teaching was seen when teachers used their own enthusiasm to bring lessons to life. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher demonstrated how to use clay to make plaques, emphasising techniques very well. She then worked with two other groups, producing papier maché busts that illustrated emotions such as “happy”, “sad” and “angry”.

96 The art curriculum is broad but the school's scheme of work is outdated and focuses more on the activities to be undertaken rather than identifying the skills that should be developed in each year. The school is aware of this and intends to introduce new national guidance in September. Art is used well to support work in other areas of the curriculum, particularly history. Appropriate use is made of information technology to enhance the art curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97 Very few lessons were seen during the week of the inspection. However, examination of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils enable some judgements to be made.

98 Pupils' making skills show good progress throughout the school. As a result, by the end of Years 2 and 6, the standard of work seen is similar to that of other schools. However, designing skills are not as well developed and, therefore, the standard of work seen is below that of other schools.

99 Reception children produce very simple designs of go-carts, drawing on their experience to help them to communicate their ideas. By Year 5, pupils consider the purpose and use of their ideas paying attention to appearance, function, safety and reliability, for example, when designing bridges. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to take into account that users have preferences. This results in them evaluating different ideas. For example, when designing containers they considered the nets of different boxes to find the most appropriate shape.

100 Practical tasks are well planned to enable pupils to choose materials, tools and techniques. They then measure, cut, and assemble their models and employ simple finishing techniques. Year 2 pupils complete models of mini-beasts, using different resources, such as, wood and pipe cleaners, showing they can join materials appropriately. As part of a collaborative project working with textiles, Year 2 pupils make a quilt. Year 3 pupils, as part of work about the Greeks, make a miniature maze, using mostly wood appropriately for this relatively simple practical task. Good models of bridges produced by Year 5 pupils, and led by the subject co-ordinator, indicate that tools have been used with some precision and pupils have used different techniques to join materials. Their completed models are similar to their original design intentions.

101 There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards of teaching or pupils' attitudes to work as too few lessons were observed. However, in the one Year 3 lesson seen, too little emphasis was given to the development of the skills of design and making. However, pupils were completing the task enthusiastically.

102 The subject is currently well led and monitored by a committed and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Her expertise has been largely responsible for the good quality work completed by older pupils in Key Stage 2. However, as she is soon to be leaving, and is currently part-time, it is likely that standards in design and technology will deteriorate unless corrective action is taken to prevent this. There is a good range of resources for the subject, although some are rarely used. Planning indicates that there is regular provision for the development of design and making skills within the curriculum. However, assessment is insufficiently used to assist learning. Food technology, taught in a safe working environment, is appropriately represented, supported by a small though hard working group of parental volunteers.

GEOGRAPHY

103 Few lessons were seen during the week of the inspection, and these were all in Key Stage 2. However, examination of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils enable judgements to be made. Pupils make steady progress in both key stages. However, the standard of work seen in both key stages is below that of other schools.

104 In Key Stage 1, the pupils interviewed had limited geographical vocabulary. They understood terms including hill and river. They knew that they lived in Middlesbrough but few could explain it was a town. Observational skills are developing and most pupils describe features on a journey to

school, for example houses, roads and trees. Pupils have very little knowledge of other areas. In environmental geography those pupils capable of higher attainment recognise that litter and rubbish make places untidy. They understand that they can make places better by putting their litter in bins. All pupils could describe the weather conditions using words like cloudy and sunny. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have an understanding of river development. They understand that rivers start at the source and flow to the sea via the mouth. The higher attaining pupils use geographical terms such as 'meander'. Knowledge of environmental issues is better than other areas. Pupils understand that man is having an effect on the environment. They explain about the problems of acid rain and the cutting down of the rainforests. Skills in comparing and contrasting different localities are not well developed.

105 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is good or very good at times. The lessons are soundly planned. There are good methods used; for example in Year 3 lessons the use of 'Brainstorming' shows the teachers what the pupils already know and develops geographical vocabulary for the whole class. The pace of lessons is usually brisk and this keeps the pupils interested. The teachers use appropriate language to reinforce learning. For example, in a Year 5 lesson the teacher talked about 'the environment'. Teachers praise pupils' answers well. This shows pupils that they are valued and develops their self-esteem and self-confidence. Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to geography and listen well in introductory sessions. There are, however, a small number of pupils who do not respond immediately to requests and as a result a little time is wasted. When given the opportunity to work in pairs, pupils do this well. Almost all pupils relate well to their teachers and support staff. The pupils interviewed in both key stages were polite and answered questions well.

106 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Work on environmental geography has been well developed and is enhanced by visits from a local industrialist. Although not specifically planned for, geography makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy and numeracy. The co-ordinator monitors provision through teachers planning but there is no analysis of pupils' work to monitor pupils' attainment or progress. Pupils write about their topic but research skills could be developed more. Work on co-ordinates develops pupils' mathematical skills. Information technology is not used to enhance the subject.

HISTORY

107 Very few lessons were seen during the week of the inspection, and these were all in Key Stage 2. There was little evidence of work in history in Key Stage 1. However, examination of older pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils enable judgements to be made about Key Stage 2. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 2. However, by the end of Year 6, the standard of work seen is below that of other schools.

108 In Year 3, pupils study the Ancient Greeks, learn the Greek alphabet, compare places of learning then and now, and map their important towns and cities. In Year 4, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of the Romans by finding out about Roman soldiers and their houses. In Year 5, pupils learn about houses from different periods, Sir Francis Drake and Henry the Eighth. They compare rich and poor people's lives in Victorian times and consider occupations of the last century which are less important today, such as thatchers and blacksmiths. In Year 6, pupils gain knowledge of some important events of the twentieth century, study the Jarrow March of 1936 to discover why it took place and compile a profile of an evacuee in wartime. They learn about the use of propaganda, although most do not appreciate its significance in wartime.

109 There is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about standards of teaching and attitudes to learning in history. However, one Year 5 lesson, in which pupils were learning about the life of Anne Frank, was judged very good for both teaching and pupils' response. In this lesson, very

good features of teaching included high expectations, which ensured that tasks were carefully matched to groups of different ability and an imaginative presentation kept pupils fully involved empathising with Anne Frank's plight. The use of challenging questions, and the establishment of very good relationships, where pupils' responses were clearly valued, were other strong features of this lesson. Pupils were clearly enthralled, and responded very well.

110 The history curriculum is broad, but too little attention is given developing pupils' understanding of the passage of time, for example by sequencing activities or the use of timelines. A small range of different sources of evidence, such as artefacts, books and buildings are occasionally used to help bring the subject alive for pupils. This could be extended to include adult reminiscences, and a wider range of written sources. Too little use is made of the locality as a resource for developing important skills. There are few examples of writing, to indicate different viewpoints or report on famous events. Pupils do not have a sufficiently wide historical vocabulary by the time they leave the school.

111 The subject has a new co-ordinator, who has not yet established clear priorities for the development of this subject. The co-ordinator monitors provision through teachers planning but there is no analysis of pupils' work to monitor pupils' attainment or progress. A small range of visits, such as to Preston Park, helps to extend historical knowledge and understanding. More artefacts are required to support teaching in Key Stage 2. Pupils are given few opportunities to use information technology in history, despite a wide range of software being available within the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112 By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in information technology is well below national expectations.

113 Pupils make steady progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of using information technology to manipulate text, pictures and numbers. In the reception class, children use computers to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills. In Year 2, pupils use large CD-ROM based databases to find out information about animals. However, they have little understanding about how they could create their own databases, or why databases are more useful than other forms of storing information. By the age of seven, pupils have a poor understanding of how information technology can be used and only use the simplest of features in the programs they use. Most pupils are very reliant on adults to help them use these programs and to load, save or print their work. In Year 5, pupils use simple art packages to create shapes, then change the shades and colours used. They change the size of the "brushes" they use, and select different tools, such as the "paint spray" or "fill tools" to create different images. However, most rely on adult help to save their work, and they do not know how to combine their drawings with text. In Year 6, pupils use art packages to create images in the style of Picasso, and then use the images within a presentation package to create a presentation about the artist. By the age of 11, most pupils are still reliant on adult help and are still only using the simple features of the programs they use. In addition, they have little real understanding of the use of spreadsheets, databases and how computers can control, measure and simulate physical events.

114 During the week of the inspection, a few lessons were observed in the computer suite, where teachers taught information technology skills. The quality of teaching in these lessons varied from satisfactory to good; overall it was satisfactory. Teachers made very good use of the technician and other adult helpers to provide support to pupils. Teachers' knowledge of the programs they were teaching was adequate but, on discussion, it was clear that this knowledge did not always extend to other aspects of information technology. Teachers made very good use of the facilities of the computer room; for example, most lessons started with the teacher using a large interactive white board to demonstrate the aspects of the programs that their pupils would be exploring. However, teachers made very little use of the computers in their classroom to promote pupils' information technology skills or to

enhance the subjects they were teaching. Many teachers expressed a lack of confidence in teaching information technology or in using computers to enhance other curriculum areas. In addition, there is no consistent approach to the use of the results of assessment to plan future lessons.

115 The information technology curriculum is narrow and does not meet National Curriculum requirements because the school is not giving pupils sufficient opportunities to use computers to measure, control or simulate physical events. The current scheme of work does not sufficiently identify the skills that pupils should have learnt by the end of each year. As a result, the school cannot guarantee that pupils are given activities in an appropriate sequence that builds upon their previous experiences. The school is very well equipped with computers, with a computer in every classroom linked to a network, and an excellent computer suite with state of the art equipment. Funds from the Education Action Zone are to be used in the near future to further improve the school's information technology provision. The school employs a technician to maintain the computer suite and provide technical assistance for teachers using it. However, most teachers lack confidence and expertise in using the school's computers, particularly those in their classrooms, partly because they have not been given sufficient opportunities to attend appropriate training. Most teachers are unaware of the full range of software that is available on the school's network and, as a result, do not use information technology to enhance their teaching of other subject areas. As a result of these shortcomings, pupils are not attaining as well as they should be.

MUSIC

116 Very little music was observed during the inspection and no tapes of composition work were available. Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in singing together. They learn hymns and songs in assembly and hymn practices. Only one lesson taught by a member of the school's teaching staff was observed and this was in Key Stage 2. In this lesson pupils were engaged in listening and appreciation. They followed the story of Peter and the Wolf and identified most of the instruments used. These pupils do not find sustained listening easy but made satisfactory progress with help. Some classes enjoy singing together with musicians, who visit the school weekly, funded through the Education Action Zone Project. They enjoy singing and are pleased to have the opportunity to choose many songs in the singing together sessions. Pupils use their musical skills in school productions and take part in extra-curricular activities. They attend guitar lessons and recorder groups as well as having the opportunity to learn other instruments if they have the interest and ability.

117 Teachers observed both from the school and visiting had good subject knowledge. Children were managed very well and lessons had a good spirit and momentum. Medium term planning showed that all aspects of the curriculum are covered over time and some year groups were time-tabled for music during the inspection week though not on inspection days.

118 This subject was identified as an area of weakness in the last inspection report. Since then the school has introduced a published scheme to help teaching. This scheme has been evaluated over time and a new scheme, which is a closer match to the expertise of the staff and needs of pupils, is to be introduced with staff training in September. The new scheme is based on singing and is considered to be more relevant to these pupils' needs than the existing scheme. There are no formal systems in place to assess the progress that pupils make in music. Resources are satisfactory but under-used, especially keyboards. The management of the subject has improved since the last inspection and the new co-ordinator has led the proposed changes to the curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119 Pupils enter the school with poor levels of physical development. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all aspects of this subject and by the end of

Years 2 and 6 standards are similar to those in other schools.

120 Pupils in Key Stage 1 make very good progress in developing individual skills in games, such as throwing and catching. However, they need considerable support when working in small groups as they do not concentrate well and become easily confused. By Year 3, pupils have good ball control when sending, receiving or bouncing a ball to a partner and concentration has improved. In Year 4, pupils show good body awareness and control movements on apparatus with confidence. They are imaginative and produce attractive sequences. Pupils learn to swim in Years 4 and 5. They have a good knowledge of water safety and are aware of the dangers of swimming in unknown waters. Swimming is taught by well qualified coaches at the local swimming baths. Pupils make good progress and most can swim 25 metres by the end of Year 5. The aim for every pupil to achieve this target is usually achieved. In Year 6, pupils choreograph sequences in dance and perform as part of a large group. They work well in pairs and small groups as long as they have a clear focus to their work. Pupils have good physical skills and challenge themselves in the movements they choose in dance and when using apparatus. However, team work is difficult for many of these pupils but they are aware when their efforts have been successful. In Year 6 there is the opportunity for pupils to visit an outdoor pursuits centre. This enhances pupils' understanding of outdoor, adventurous activities.

121 Pupils really enjoy this subject and are very keen to participate, especially in swimming lessons. Their behaviour is usually very good. Whenever behaviour is less than good teachers stop the activity and pupils discuss the reason for this action. All pupils know the need for safety in moving apparatus and in paying attention to others when moving around the hall.

122 Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a wide range of strategies to keep pupils involved. Planning is satisfactory being based on a published scheme that has been adapted to meet the specific needs of each year group. Teachers continually assess what pupils can do but there are no formal systems used except for swimming. All pupils are included in lessons and those pupils who are unable to participate are encouraged to make notes on the activities covered in the lesson and to write down examples of good work by their classmates. These observations are discussed at the end of the lessons. All lessons work towards co-operative activities, as this is a major area of personal development for these pupils. Teachers benefit from the school's involvement in Top Play and Top Sport which provide professional development as well as specialised equipment for games. Accommodation and resources are good and are used well in all aspects of the subject. The school has developed the curriculum since the last inspection, which is enhanced by school clubs and residential visits in Years 5 and 6.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123 Very few lessons were seen during the week of the inspection, however, examination of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils enable judgements to be made. Pupils make steady progress in religious education but attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is below what is expected for their age.

124 Pupils in Key Stage 1 find the vocabulary used to describe Church furniture difficult to remember, but are able to explain some of its uses. They learn information about different world faiths and record their work in pictures with some writing. In a lesson observed in Key Stage 2, pupils recall facts about Judaism and about Hinduism and Islam in discussion. There are strong links with personal and social education. Pupils' awareness of themselves and how to consider the feelings and beliefs of other people are the focus of many Circle Times. Pupils in Year 2 reflect on the importance of co-operation and recall times when they believed that they had been co-operative. They try hard to suggest the meaning of objects such as the different foods put on a seder plate for the Passover but their ideas are firmly based in their own experiences. The strong links with personal and social education help

pupils to understand the need for rules and codes of conduct. They are interested in this aspect of religion and Year 6 pupils consider what values are important to their way of living. Pupils in both key stages enjoy writing prayers and make some links between this activity and the prayers they say in assembly. However, pupils in this school have below average literacy skills which is reflected in what they achieve in religious education and limits the progress they make. They know the information covered by the Agreed Syllabus for pupils up to the age of eleven but their ability to explain ideas about belief and the meaning of symbols is below that expected.

125 Teachers plan their work thoroughly so that pupils cover all elements of the syllabus over time and revisit some aspects to explore ideas in greater depth, such as the Easter Festival. In the lessons observed, teachers demonstrated good knowledge of the subject and used resources well to support learning. Pupils show an interest in religious education and behaviour was good in the lessons and in assemblies. The contribution that the subject makes to raising pupils' awareness to the rich diversity of our society is not fully exploited. Visits are organised to churches as part of the study of Christianity but this does not extend to other religions. There is no formal approach to assessing pupils' understanding of what they have learnt. Teachers are aware of how well pupils are achieving but pass on information informally to their colleagues. This has been recognised as an area for development by the subject co-ordinator.

126 The school complies with the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus. The subject has a committed co-ordinator who has a clear plan for the continuing development of the subject. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development through considering how people in different religions pray and the rules they follow in everyday life. This subject reflects and supports the aims of the school very well.