

INSPECTION REPORT

**Coppull Parish Church of England Voluntary
Aided Primary School**

Roe Hey Drive, Coppull, Chorley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119470

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Mercer

Reporting inspector: Mrs Margaret Heard
16887

Dates of inspection: 31/01/00 - 03/02/00

Inspection number: 192045

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Church of England Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Roe Hey Drive Coppull Chorley Lancashire
Postcode:	PR7 4PU
Telephone number:	01257 791669
Fax number:	Not available
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend John Hudson
Date of previous inspection:	24 th - 28 th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Margaret Heard	Registered inspector	English, Art, Physical Education (PE)	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? Equality of opportunity
Eric Langford	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Lynn Alvy	Team inspector	Science, History, Geography. Areas of learning for children under-five	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mike Duggan	Team inspector	Mathematics, Design Technology (DT), Information Technology (IT), Music	How well is the school led and managed? (Staffing, resources, accommodation.) Special Educational Needs

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	
Information about the school	7 - 12
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	13 - 17
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	17 - 19
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	19 - 22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	22 - 24
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	24 - 25
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25 - 27
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	27 - 28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1. This school provides full-time education for 170 pupils aged from four to eleven years. It is situated in Coppull, a suburb of Chorley in Lancashire. There have been some significant changes in the composition of the school since the previous inspection: the school now has a higher than average proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs and an above average number of pupils with statements of special educational need. In addition, during the last year there has been a significant rise in family mobility in the area: about twenty per cent of the pupils are recent entrants to the school. Class sizes are average.

2. The pupils come from a wide range of different backgrounds. The socio-economic circumstances of the majority of families are overall slightly below the average nationally. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. Most pupils are white and about two per cent come from other ethnic groups. English is the first language for all the pupils currently attending the school.

3. Many children starting school at the age of four years have below average skills in language and literacy and in their personal and social development. At the time of the inspection, almost all of the children in the reception class were under five.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

4. Coppull Parish Primary School is a very caring and well-managed school. There is good teaching that interests and motivates the pupils, and the standards across the school as a whole are sound. The headteacher, the staff and the governors work hard to improve the school. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- There is a very high standard of behaviour throughout the school.
- The pupils enjoy school, are eager to learn and bring positive attitudes to their work.
- The headteacher's leadership is effective and there is a strong commitment to ensuring that the pupils work hard and do their best.
- There is good teaching and the lessons capture the pupils' interest.
- The school has a very caring ethos and the pupils' welfare is given a high priority.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school keeps parents well informed and involves them in the school's work.

What could be improved

- The effectiveness of monitoring of teaching and learning to identify what is working well and what is less successful.
- The use of the school's assessment procedures to track the academic progress of the pupils and to involve them in evaluating their work and setting targets for improvement.
- The standards of spelling and handwriting.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

5. The last inspection in 1997 found the school to have significant weaknesses in management and in the strategic use of resources. It was judged to be providing unsatisfactory value for money. The quality of education and the standards achieved by the pupils were in need of some improvements. Since that time, the headteacher, staff and governors have implemented many positive initiatives and, as a result, there have been some significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

6. The school is now efficiently managed and well led. All the key issues identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed. In general, the standards achieved are better than those reported in the previous inspection, although this is not reflected in the results of the national tests for seven and eleven year olds. This is because the school has a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs, a significant proportion of whom have been admitted since the school was last inspected. Since the last inspection the level of pupil mobility has increased quite dramatically, owing to socio-economic factors.

7. The school sets challenging targets for improvement and the staff are working hard to implement new initiatives. The school's targets for English and mathematics in 2000 are unlikely to be achieved because the current Year 6 cohort has changed significantly since the targets were first set. However, the school is well on course to meet its targets for subsequent years. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential. The school is now making better provision for higher attaining pupils, and the overall quality of the teaching in the school has improved.

8. In the 1997 inspection, weaknesses were identified in the school's curriculum framework. The school has put in place policies and schemes of work for all subjects and these provide clear guidance about what is to be taught in each year. All of the teachers now plan their work to an agreed format and the school has revised its assessment procedures. Overall, the school has made a good rate of improvement since the previous inspection and has a good capacity for securing continuing improvement.

STANDARDS

9. 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	C	E	D	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	E	C	C	
science	D	E	D	E	

10. There are nationally agreed standards for children to attain by the age of five. (The Desirable Learning Outcomes) The majority of the children currently in the reception class will achieve these goals by the time they are five years old, and a small group are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics. In the physical area of learning, many children have well-developed control and co-ordination.

11. The standards achieved in the national tests for seven and eleven year olds vary significantly year on year. This is because the number of pupils in each year group varies greatly and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and statements of need is not the same in each age group. Comparative information showing trends in attainment over time needs, therefore, to be treated with some caution.

12. When the results of the pupils with statements of special educational need have been disaggregated from the calculations, the assessment information shows that in the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds the pupils achieved standards close to the national average in mathematics, but standards were below average in English and science. When comparing the school's results in the 1999 tests with those achieved by similar schools, the standards are below average in mathematics and well below in English and science. However, a very high proportion of the pupils who took the national tests last year were on the school's register of special educational need and about one quarter of the class joined the school during Key Stage 2.

13. Across the school as a whole, the inspection team found that the standards in reading, mathematics and science are improving and are broadly in line with national averages. However, standards in spelling and handwriting are below average. The school has begun to address these weaknesses.

14. The pupils achieve sound standards in other subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2. Literacy, numeracy and IT skills are developed effectively through history, geography and design technology. In science, there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to apply their numeracy skills. Standards in IT are satisfactory overall.

15. The school's targets for eleven year olds are below the national targets, but they are none the less suitably ambitious given the higher than average number of pupils with special needs and the higher than average level of pupil mobility in the current Year 6 cohort. The targets for this group are that 60 per cent of pupils achieve Level 4 or above in English and 68 per cent achieve this standard in mathematics and science. The targets for 2001 are for 64 per cent of pupils to gain Level 4 or above in English, 68 per cent to achieve this standard in mathematics and 70 per cent in science. These are realistic, given the current composition of the Year 5 cohort. They show that the school is committed to raising standards and is setting itself appropriate goals.

16. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading and in mathematics were close to the national average and within the average range when compared to similar schools. In writing, standards were below average when compared to all schools nationally, and well below those achieved by similar schools. Inspection findings are that standards in reading, mathematics and science are currently in line with the expectations for seven year olds, but that standards in writing are below average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are eager to learn, interested in what they do and keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. The pupils are polite and courteous and act responsibly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships throughout the school are a strength. The pupils are considerate and respect the views and opinions of others.
Attendance	Good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and are punctual.

17. These aspects are strengths of the school and there are no major weaknesses.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Good	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

18. In the reception class, the teaching seen was good overall and in knowledge and understanding of the world and in the physical area of learning, there was some excellent teaching. In English, mathematics and science, the teaching at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory and at Key Stage 2 it was good. At Key Stage 1, there was some good teaching in geography and in physical education. At Key Stage 2, some very good teaching was observed in English, mathematics, science, history, music and in swimming. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is sound overall, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in science.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is suitably balanced. It covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the recommended areas of learning for children under five.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. The teachers and support assistants work in close partnership to support the pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The development of personal, moral and social awareness is given a high priority. Cultural and spiritual development are sensitively fostered.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is very good provision for the pupils' welfare, underpinned by the school's caring ethos. Although there are sound procedures in place for monitoring the pupils' academic progress, some further work is needed to ensure that the recorded information is of a consistently high quality throughout the school.

19. All statutory requirements are fully in place. The school's implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is effective. There are good systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs. The care and welfare of the pupils and the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strengths of the school. There is a close working partnership with parents, who receive good quality information about what their children are learning, and who are consulted on important aspects of the school's work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is an effective leader and is well supported by the deputy head. The staff work well together and there is a strong sense of teamwork. Monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development and needs to be more rigorous and systematic.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are supportive and take their responsibilities seriously. Strategic planning is good. The needs and interests of the pupils and the quality of their learning are given a high priority. The governors undertake appropriate training, but their role in monitoring and evaluating the school's work, as a critical friend, is not so fully developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's analysis of performance data is thorough. It is used well to identify what needs to be done to improve standards. The school adopts the principles of best value in all expenditure and specific grants are used effectively to support pupils with special needs, for example.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes effective use of its resources. The accommodation is good and is used well. Staffing and resources are satisfactory. The school gives sound value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The high standard of behaviour. • The opportunities to be involved in the school. • The welcoming and caring atmosphere • The ways in which the school seeks parents' views and values their contributions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like to have a formal opportunity once each term to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher. • The range of out-of-school activities.

20. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by the parents and found that:

- the pupils' behaviour is very good, they like school and the work is interesting;
- there is a very caring ethos and welcoming atmosphere and the school responds positively to the views of the parents by for example, providing good quality information about what the pupils will be learning each term;
- the opportunities for parents to look at their child's work, to discuss their progress and to agree targets for development with the class teacher, could be improved;
- the range of out-of-school activities is satisfactory, though not extensive.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

21. The inspection took place at the start of the spring term and the pupils had settled well into their new classes. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are taught in single age groups for English and mathematics and in three mixed age classes, each containing pupils from two different age groups, for all other subjects. This arrangement was introduced in September 1999 to support the school's drive to raise standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Inspection evidence suggests that this is working well. One third of the present Year 6 cohort joined the school in the last three years, around a third are on the school's register of special educational need, one pupil has a statement of special need and two thirds of the group are boys. Many of the pupils in this cohort, are attaining standards below the expected level for eleven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science. A very small group of higher attaining pupils are achieving slightly above the nationally expected level (Level 4) for pupils of this age. The school's results in the recent national tests for both seven and eleven year olds and the inspection findings show that higher attaining pupils are better catered for now than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

22. The attainment of the children on entry to the school at the age of four varies significantly from year to year. In general, many children have below average skills in language and literacy and in their personal and social development. A higher than usual proportion of the children in the present reception class have had nursery education. The baseline assessment results for this group show that the majority of these children are achieving at an average level for their age, when compared with other schools. By the age of five, attainment is generally in line with what is expected for this age group. They attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all the six areas of learning. A few children are achieving above this and are currently working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum in English and in mathematics. Many children have well-developed control and co-ordination in the physical area of learning.

23. The results of the national tests for seven year olds show an improving picture in reading and in mathematics. However, there are fluctuations year on year because of the variations in the number of pupils with special educational needs and in attainment levels when the children first start school. For example, in 1998 the pupils attained standards in reading and in mathematics that were above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The headteacher's analysis of performance data shows that this cohort of pupils were well prepared when they first started school and made good progress throughout Key Stage 1. In the 1999 tests, the results were broadly in line with the national average, and the average for similar schools, in reading and in mathematics. However, writing standards were below the national average and well below the average when compared with similar schools. In science, teacher assessments in the same year show that the pupils attained standards broadly in line with the national average and the average for similar schools.

24. The results of the national tests for eleven-year-olds over recent years show a more static picture of improvement, and a dip in standards in 1998, but a deal of caution must be applied because of the uneven distribution of pupils with special needs and statements of need. In the 1999 national tests, when the results of pupils with statements of special educational need have been disaggregated, the standards attained by eleven-year-olds were close to the national average and the average for similar schools in mathematics, but below average in English and in science. The school has analysed its performance thoroughly and is taking appropriate action to address the weaknesses identified in teaching and learning.

There are no significant trends in the attainment of boys and girls at seven or eleven. Higher attaining pupils do well.

25. The achievement of low attaining pupils including those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Sometimes, the lesson introductions are too long and this curtails the rate of learning for some of these pupils.

26. Throughout the school, the inspection judgements are that the pupils achieve average standards in nearly all subjects, but for the majority of the pupils, standards in spelling and handwriting are below average. Standards in reading have improved since the last inspection, when it was reported that many older pupils viewed reading as a chore. This is definitely not the case now, as the pupils have a broad variety of reading experiences across the curriculum and most read widely, are enthusiastic about books and achieve standards in line with national averages. A small group of higher attaining pupils do well and their reading and writing are slightly above the nationally expected level for eleven year olds. The provision for higher attaining pupils has improved since the previous inspection. The teachers now make better use of assessment information to plan work that stretches this group of pupils.

27. The targets that the school has set for the pupils in Year 6 are ambitious, given the disproportionately large number of pupils with special needs. The staff have high expectations of these pupils and the school has organised the teaching groups in order to maximise opportunities for them to reach their full potential in English and mathematics. The targets for 2001 show an appropriate rise in the percentage of pupils expected to reach Level 4 and above, and this concurs with the school's assessments of the pupils in Year 5 and is suitably realistic and appropriately challenging.

28. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the school. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 2 where the school has put in place effective arrangements for pupils to work in small groups outside the classroom with additional teaching support from the headteacher and support assistants. This is a recent initiative and is enabling the pupils to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). At Key Stage 1, the support assistants work in close partnership with teachers during lessons and the pupils are well supported to access the curriculum and make sound gains in their learning.

29. Throughout the school most pupils have well-developed listening skills and are keen to engage in discussions about their work. Some pupils use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary to communicate with confidence on a wide range of topics. The teaching throughout the school gives a high priority to extending the pupils' vocabulary and, as a result, the pupils are interested in the use of language and in finding out the meanings of new words. The majority of the pupils are enthusiastic about reading, both for pleasure and for information, and use an appropriate range of skills such as phonic and contextual clues to tackle unfamiliar words. Older pupils enjoy the challenge of researching facts for themselves to support work in history and geography. They work systematically to locate the information they need and make good attempts to interpret quite challenging texts.

30. The standard of writing is below average at both key stages. The emphasis on encouraging the pupils to write expressively and to use strategies to engage the reader's interest is having a positive impact on improving the quality of the writing, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The development of instructional and evaluative writing is a strong feature of some of the work in design technology where good examples were seen in Years 2, 5 and 6. However, the development of writing skills has some weaknesses. The youngest pupils are confident mark-makers and quickly progress to writing conventionally and using their phonic knowledge to support spelling. Many of the pupils in Year 2 produce well-formed letters but

they are not encouraged to begin writing using a joined hand. In Years 3 and 4, the use of joined handwriting is inconsistent and although the pupils have regular practise, they do not readily transfer these developing skills to their everyday work across the curriculum. Inaccuracies in the application of basic spelling rules are too frequent a feature of much of the writing across the curriculum in Key Stage 2, particularly so in Years 3 and 4.

31. Standards in mathematics are slightly below the national expectations at the end of both key stages. The current Year 2 and Year 6 cohorts have a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In general, most pupils in the other year groups are on target to meet the national expectations by the time they are seven and eleven. Pupils are confident in carrying out mental calculations and in explaining their strategies. Higher attaining pupils have a ready facility with numbers. However, there are missed opportunities for the pupils to apply their numeracy skills in science investigations. Throughout the school, most pupils have a soundly developed understanding of shape, space and measures and they work with reasonable levels of accuracy. They handle data in mathematics and in science with appropriately developing proficiency.

32. Standards in science across the school as a whole are broadly in line with national expectations, but the current end of key stage cohorts are unlikely to attain in line with national averages, because a high proportion of the pupils has special educational needs. Pupils generally have a sound knowledge of all aspects of science and carry out investigations showing a developing awareness of cause and effect. Some pupils have difficulty explaining causal relationships, but they are well supported by the teachers.

33. Standards in information technology (IT) are generally in line with national expectations for seven and eleven year olds. Some of the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 use computers with confidence to research information and to compose writing directly on screen, using the spellchecker and editing their work. The use of IT throughout Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and computers are used well in lessons. The use of IT in Year 3 is less well developed. Few examples were seen in books or around the classroom.

34. Standards in all the other foundation subjects are in line with the national expectations for seven and eleven year olds. The school has maintained the strengths identified in the previous inspection and has broadened the range of work undertaken in the foundation subjects to good effect. This is particularly the case in art, geography and physical education. The pupils achieve good standards in drawing and in singing throughout the school, and in swimming at Key Stage 2.

35. The achievements of the pupils are generally appropriate throughout the school. The lessons build on the pupils' prior attainment and the majority of the teaching seen takes account of the needs of all groups of pupils. The demands placed on the different groups of pupils are mostly at an appropriate level. The pupils usually understand what they are being asked to do and can explain how this fits in with earlier work and extends their knowledge, skills and understanding. Throughout the school, the pupils apply themselves well to the tasks in hand, because they find the work interesting, and are developing positive work habits. There is a consistently high level of challenge and expectation in Years 5 and 6, where the progress seen in lessons and in the pupils' recorded work is often good.

36. The school tracks the attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics and makes use of this information to group pupils in Key Stage 2 and to provide extra support such as additional literacy teaching, for some pupils in Years 3 and 4. Booster classes for Year 6 pupils, who are close to attaining Level 4, are working effectively. This is apparent from the school's success in raising the achievement of most of the targeted pupils last year in English and mathematics. The deputy-headteacher has developed a system of individual

pupil target-setting in Year 5 and this is having a positive impact in improving the standard of the pupils' work and in fostering their self-esteem.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

37. Pupils enjoy coming to school and display very good attitudes to the school and to their work. They listen well, demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work and show themselves to be well-motivated and enthusiastic learners, able to sustain concentration during lessons. Most show a very good degree of confidence and self-discipline in undertaking their work and all were seen to collaborate well with others in group and paired activities. Children under five make good progress in their personal and social development. They are confident, self-disciplined learners, who are well able to make choices for themselves when selecting equipment for instance, and readily share and take turns.

38. The standard of the pupil's behaviour in and around the school is very good and serves to enhance the developing relationships between staff and pupils. The well-structured system of behaviour rewards and sanctions is clearly understood by the pupils, applied in a consistent manner by the staff and is proving to be very effective in supporting the ongoing development of the pupils in the school.

39. There have been no instances of pupil exclusion since the last Ofsted inspection and no evidence of any bullying in the school. Incidents of bullying in the past are considered to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with to the benefit of all involved.

40. The pupils are very friendly and considerate towards each other, to staff and to visitors and demonstrate by their actions that they know right from wrong. Many display a natural sensitivity and awareness of the needs of others and good examples were seen in the school of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils and adults alike. Pupils happily take turns without question, and willingly share and treat property and learning resources with care.

41. The school provides very good opportunities for the personal development of pupils, many of which are personalised within each classroom. Very good opportunities are provided for the older Key Stage 2 pupils who undertake individual roles and responsibilities across the school. In particular, their close involvement with the younger pupils through the shared reading scheme, and the guidance and help they provide to the pupils in Years 3 and 4 for example, in identifying and selecting appropriate school library books for topic research, benefits both sets of pupils and enhances their learning.

42. Of worthy note is the system of school house captains and deputy captains which helps to develop and promote a positive approach to team work within the school and enhances the personal development of the oldest pupils. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils and an atmosphere of care, mutual respect and tolerance permeates the school.

43. The very good attitudes, relationships and behaviour patterns demonstrated by the pupils, reflects the high expectations of the teachers and contributes significantly to the pupils' social and academic development. This represents a significant improvement on the judgements reported in the previous Ofsted report of 1997.

44. Attendance at the school is good and has been maintained at this level since the last Ofsted inspection. However, the school's overall attendance statistics are affected by the number of family holidays taken during term time. Pupils enjoy coming to school, arrive punctually and settle quickly in class so that lessons can start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

45. The quality of the teaching seen during the inspection week was good overall. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and there has been an increase in the percentage of good teaching across the school. During the inspection week, the class teacher in Year 3 was taken ill with flu, and the headteacher took over the class.

46. Across the school as a whole, 16 per cent of the teaching seen was very good or better, and there was some excellent teaching in a small number of these lessons. 37 per cent of the teaching was good and the remainder was sound.

47. The quality of the teaching for children under five is good. Some excellent teaching was seen in knowledge and understanding of the world and in the physical area of learning. The lessons are thoroughly well planned and there are some exciting ideas such as the 'Teddy Bear Hunt', where early geographical understanding was superbly developed alongside very good attention to language extension and early reading skills. Routines are well established and the teacher has high expectations of the children. The range of available play equipment sometimes limits the opportunities for structured play.

48. The quality of the teaching seen at Key Stage 1 was sound overall, and in about 25 per cent of lessons the teaching was good. The good teaching was seen in English, mathematics, geography and physical education. Lesson planning is secure, the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is sound and they prepare their resources well. Class control is good; the pupils are familiar with the organisational routines and know what is expected of them. The teachers recapitulate on what has been learned earlier, use questioning well to check on the pupils' understanding and then explain clearly what the pupils will be learning in the lesson. This enables the pupils to tune-in quickly and to participate fully in the introductory discussion. Sometimes, the amount of time spent on whole-class activities is too long, even though the pupils sustain their concentration well, because there is not enough time remaining for the completion of recorded work. When this happens, the plenary sessions are also rushed and there are missed opportunities to check on the depth of the pupils' understanding. This was the case in some of the lessons in English and in mathematics. Good organisation enables the teachers to work with small groups of pupils whilst others work independently. On most occasions, the tasks are well matched to the pupils' prior attainment levels and this enables the pupils to build on what they already know and can do. Occasionally, as in a mathematics lesson in Year 1 for example, where the pupils were involved in shopping activities, the same range of coins was given to each group, and to begin with, some lower attaining pupils became confused with the coin values. However, the teacher was quick to intervene and provided effective support for this group, who then made sound gains in their understanding. On the whole, the pupils concentrate hard in lessons, are clear about what they are doing and can explain what they are learning. They work sensibly and productively and generally make sound gains in their understanding and in acquiring key skills in literacy and numeracy.

49. The teaching at Key Stage 2 was good overall and in roughly 20 per cent of the lessons seen the teaching was very good. The very good teaching was seen in some of the lessons in English, mathematics, science, history, music and swimming.

50. The teachers show good subject knowledge and make skilled use of questioning techniques to engage the pupils and to check on their understanding of the work. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and this supports humorous exchanges, which add to the pupils' enjoyment of the lessons. The teachers are enthusiastic and maintain a good pace by keeping discussions focused, reminding pupils about the time

they have left to complete their work, and carefully matching the tasks for independent work to the needs of each group. As a result, the pupils feel confident about the work they have been given, try their best and sustain a good working rate. They know that the teachers value their responses, because they receive acclaim. They are not afraid to seek help when necessary. In the main, all groups of pupils make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. In the lessons where the pupils become enthused by the work, and are given specific support through good quality demonstration of techniques and positive feedback, which helps them to make improvements to their work, they make good gains in their learning. Noteworthy examples of this included an English lesson in Year 4 and 5 when the pupils were writing character descriptions, and an art lesson in Year 6, where the pupils were making linoleum prints.

51. Where the teaching is very good, the pupils are excited by their learning. This was the case in an English lesson in the Year 5 class for example, where two contrasting versions of 'Aesops' Fables' stimulated a high quality debate covering changes in language use, differing approaches in the way that the main characters were depicted and the way that the texts were structured. Groups of pupils went on to carry out research tasks, carefully matched to their prior attainment levels, and with a suitably high level of challenge, so that they had to pool their knowledge and justify their views with reference to the texts in order to complete the work successfully. The pupils worked productively throughout the lesson, improved their understanding of the characteristics of myths, fables and legends and became engrossed in the richness of language used to describe the characters.

52. In many lessons where the pupils are given writing tasks, the teachers do not place enough emphasis on reminding the pupils about how to set out their work. Sometimes the teachers do not explain what they will be assessing. The routine of checking spellings and punctuation, towards the end of lessons, is not well established and the pupils' work often contains simple errors that could easily be avoided. On some occasions, too much time is spent on oral work and the pupils have to rush their writing. There are some examples, notably in the Year 5 class, of good quality marking, where the teacher comments in a supportive way on the pupils' progress in meeting their personal targets, and models extracts from their writing, to show how it can be improved.

53. Sometimes there are missed opportunities to extend the pupils' cultural understanding, through looking at printing techniques from around the world, for example. Opportunities for spiritual reflection are not so readily planned for through music, art, dance or science. The school is aware of these weaknesses and has identified this as a priority for the forthcoming year.

54. Throughout the school, the teaching has a positive impact on the quality of the learning for the pupils with special educational needs. The teaching takes good account of the targets in the pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). The work is generally well matched to the pupils' needs, there are trusting relationships between the pupils, teachers and support assistants. Sensitive management of these pupils during whole-class lessons ensures that they participate fully in discussions and receive positive encouragement, fostering their self-esteem as learners. Sometimes the lesson introductions are too long and this limits the time for the pupils to work on specific tasks related to the targets in their IEPs. The support assistants are very well briefed, know the pupils well and make useful assessments to share with the teachers at the end of lessons.

55. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall. The school's implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is effective and the staff have received appropriate support and training. The lessons are well planned and adhere closely to the national frameworks. Literacy skills are soundly developed through history, geography and

design technology, in particular. The pupils have opportunities to practise their research skills when for example; using books to find out about significant features of Viking life-styles. Older pupils have written clear and detailed instructions about how to make a five-pointed star and a picture-frame. There is a strong emphasis on numeracy skills through design technology, where right from Year 1, the pupils are encouraged to estimate and to measure. For example, the pupils estimated the amount of pipecleaner they would need to construct arms for their peg-dolls and then carefully measured out the required length. In PE lessons, pupils solve spatial problems as they rearrange the position of gymnastics apparatus so that exit points are not too close together. In science, there are some well-planned opportunities for the pupils to apply their knowledge of numbers and measures, though this is not the case throughout the school. IT skills are soundly developed across the curriculum, although the pace of work is sometimes too slow. Older pupils frequently make effective use of their developing word-processing skills to compose stories and poems and use desktop publishing to present their work in attractive ways, by superimposing a design or picture. Data handling skills are a keen feature of the work in science.

56. The school has undertaken some good work in identifying the characteristics of effective teaching as part of the process of addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. In-service training has been carefully targeted at subjects where the previous report identified specific weaknesses, for example in the teaching of gymnastics and dance at Key Stage 2. As a result of this work, the overall quality of the teaching has improved.

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

57. Overall the school provides a suitably balanced curriculum that meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and covers the recommended areas of learning for children under five. Particular emphasis is placed on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and personal and social development resulting in a successful start to learning as the pupils enter the school. Whilst not extensive, the school takes part in educational visits, and visitors support work in history, art and design technology. For example, grandparents talk about their experiences of the past, and the older children take part in outdoor pursuits. The local area is used well to support the science and geography curriculum. The time allocated to swimming is used effectively and the pupils make very good progress in this area. Care is taken to make sure that pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the whole life of the school and unobtrusive support enables them to meet with success.

58. The last inspection identified the need to improve the consistency in the quality of planning across the curriculum. This weakness has now been successfully addressed through the implementation of a sound format for long, medium and short-term planning. The school has adopted the planning frameworks in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this has helped to improve the planning in other subjects. Policies and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. The schemes for each subject set out clearly the achievements the pupils need to make at each stage of their learning in order to attain the expected levels by the age of seven and eleven. They effectively incorporate the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance as a precursor of planning for the forthcoming changes to the National Curriculum. Whilst these initiatives are having a positive effect on the pupils' progress across the school, the systems for regular monitoring of the learning outcomes in each subject are not yet fully in place. For example there are some inconsistencies in the quality of the planning overall for the development of spelling and handwriting in general throughout the school. The quality of the planning in the Year 3 class is not as detailed as it is in the other classes at Key Stage 2.

59. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory overall. It is generally broad and

balanced and planning follows the recommended Desirable Outcomes for Learning and the Early Learning Goals. It provides a very firm foundation for the progression of learning into the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. Planning for structured play is sound, though the range of experiences is limited by the available resources.

60. The school has worked hard to meet the challenge of teaching literacy and numeracy through the effective development of national initiatives. Provision for planning and teaching of these skills is thorough and generally delivered effectively particularly in the reception class for example. Teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 plan opportunities for pupils to undertake interesting research and writing tasks in subjects such as history, geography and information technology. Opportunities are also provided to develop numeracy skills in subjects such as science and geography although these are less well developed in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. In Year 6, for example good opportunities are provided for pupils to research using databases as well as books. Recorded work in Years 1 and 5 includes some good examples of the development of reading and writing skills through scientific investigations. Long and medium-term planning across the curriculum includes specific references to the acquisition and extension of literacy, numeracy and IT skills.

61. Some parents expressed the view that they would like to see a wider range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection found that the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils to have access to a range of sporting and other activities beyond the school day. Both boys and girls enjoy activities such as football, netball and rounders. The school is involved in competitive sports with other schools in the area. Those pupils who are interested have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder during lunchtime sessions.

62. In general, there is good access for all groups of pupils to the whole curriculum. Careful consideration is given to the grouping of pupils in order to maximise the available support. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils of different ages and abilities to work together, for example when undertaking investigations in science. In these lessons, pupils of all levels of attainment, boys and girls receive equal attention and benefit from working together.

63. The provision for the pupils' personal and social education is satisfactory. The school is a very caring community. Parents are most pleased with the welcoming and caring atmosphere and feel that their children become mature and self-reliant. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught appropriately within the 'Good Health and 'Growing-Up Programmes', and support from qualified professionals is enlisted where appropriate.

64. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. Local organisations and businesses support school events and provide places for curriculum visits. For example, local people are involved in events at the school as well as coming into school to talk about their work, to teach handicraft skills, or share memories of their past. Internet applications are installed on the school's computers and will very shortly be available to the pupils.

65. The school makes effective arrangements to form constructive relationships with other institutions for the benefit of pupils. For example, the school has developed close links with the local nursery and pre-school playgroup. This helps the children to make a smooth transition to school.

66. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and is an improvement since the last inspection.

67. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. From entry into school pupils are sensitively encouraged to develop an early insight into the needs and feelings of

others. The youngest pupils are joyful and enthusiastic about their own learning and often spontaneously applaud the success of their peers. Whilst listening to a story about an orphan in Bolivia, pupils in Key Stage 1 were asked to reflect quietly on the plight of the homeless. Older pupils bow their heads reverently in prayer and commit their thoughts to those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are encouraged to develop their thoughts and feelings, for instance when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were experimenting with colour in art to create images of sadness, joy or contemplation. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of planning for cultural and spiritual development throughout the curriculum. The school is aware of this and has identified further work that needs to be done. There are limited opportunities for pupils to consider the faith and beliefs of others by meeting people at first-hand and exploring ways in which their commitment is demonstrated.

68. The school makes good provision for moral development. As a church school this is based on strong Christian ideals. There is clear reference to expectations of behaviour from entry into the school and the pupils respect the school's rules because they are sensible and fair. Consequently they have a well-developed sense of responsibility. Effective opportunities are provided in lessons to discuss moral issues as, for example, the right of Henry V111 to divorce his wives. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 had lively opinions about the morality of changing the rules to suit his desire to bear a son. Expectations of honesty, trustworthiness and consideration for others are very high.

69. Provision for the pupils' social development is good. Adults throughout the school provide very good role models. Pupils are given small responsibilities from an early age for example, class monitors are chosen each week and the pupils are proud to fulfil their roles. Lunch and break times are social occasions and a harmonious atmosphere permeates the school. Pupils automatically step aside to let others pass in the corridor or doorways. They are polite, courteous and friendly. Older pupils take care of younger pupils and support each other in lessons. They listen respectfully to each other in discussions, take turns with resources and equipment and accept responsibility willingly. Residential and other visits provide opportunities for pupils to relate positively to each other and to the adults who accompany them. Activities shared with other schools, such as inter-school sports and matches enhance social development beyond the school.

70. The school makes satisfactory provision for cultural development. An audit identified some gaps in resourcing and suitable purchases have been made, for example, a range of books and photographs depicting other cultures and images, music and musical instruments from Eastern and Western cultures. In geography Year 5 and 6 pupils learn about contrasting European cultures and discuss the differences in life-styles. In history pupils learn about their own cultural heritage and explore environmental issues. A parent reads African-Caribbean poetry to the older pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to learn songs and traditional dances from around the world. Pupils also learn about famous people such as Martin Luther King.

71. Cultural development has a much higher profile in the school than was the case at the time of the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

72. The school's provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils in its charge is very good and is a strength of the school. This represents a significant improvement since the last Ofsted inspection in 1997.

73. Very good child protection procedures are in place, which are well understood and acted upon by staff in the best interests of the pupils. Staff are well trained and alert to the need for

regularly monitoring the well being and welfare of the pupils in their care. All staff respond in a discreet and sensitive manner to any personal queries raised with them by pupils.

74. Very good arrangements are in place for the correct storage of medicines and for the effective management injuries to pupils occurring during the school day. Effective strategies have been established to identify and support those pupils identified as having special educational needs and for the review of their targets and progress in consultation with their parents.

75. The school has established very good health and safety procedures that embrace the whole spectrum of the pupils' time in the school. Fire evacuation drills are undertaken each half term and regular half-termly health and safety inspections are carried out with all reported recommendations being considered and acted upon by the governors.

76. There are very good standards of catering in the school with a menu range providing appetising meals and a well-balanced diet for the pupils. The school premises are maintained to a high level of cleanliness. The whole school site provides a very safe and secure environment for both pupils and staff alike.

77. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well. All the staff display a high level of care and concern for the pupils and there is evidence in lessons of the very good rapport and respect that exists between them. Pupils feel safe and happy and have the confidence and independence to raise any queries and concerns they may have with the staff.

78. Very effective pupil registration systems are in place that fully comply with statutory requirements. These incorporate very good whole school recording and monitoring procedures, to report on and manage all incidents of pupil lateness and non-attendance.

79. The very good and well-established behaviour management routines help to enhance and promote the self-image of pupils, and contribute greatly to the very good attitudes to learning displayed by the pupils. The comprehensive whole-school behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each classroom at the beginning of each year to provide each pupil with a meaningful focus of the school's expectations for behaviour. The clear and well-documented behaviour procedures are understood by pupils and parents, applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff and successfully used to promote the very good behaviour to be seen in and around the school. There is no evidence of any bullying or harassment of pupils and past incidents are judged by pupils and parents to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff.

80. The school has very good arrangements in place to provide pupils with support and guidance towards raising their personal and educational attainment levels. These include the establishment of single age group classes in Key Stage 2, to better support the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and the use of teaching assistants to work with small groups of lower attaining pupils to provide additional carefully tailored support. The school has developed very good pre-school links and these, coupled with the effective use of home visits, informal induction talks by staff and the informative school induction booklet, provide for the efficient and welcoming introduction of new pupils and parents into the daily routines of school life. Good relationships have been developed with the Southlands Technology College and Year 6 pupils benefit greatly from their seamless transition into secondary education.

81. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), headteacher, staff and support assistants work well together in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). These plans have clear and realistic targets and the arrangements for assessing the

pupils' progress against their targets are effective. The support assistants have undertaken appropriate training and make a valuable contribution to the quality of the provision for this group of pupils.

82. Throughout the school there are satisfactory formal systems in place for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment, progress and personal development. Extensive work has been undertaken by the school to raise staff awareness of assessment and there is now a strong commitment to the use of data and other assessment information in raising pupils' achievements. For example, careful assessment is made of pupils' attainment as they enter and leave the reception class. This information is used to good effect to plan future work for the children. Regular standardised tests in English and mathematics are used in both key stages to supplement the information gained from the early assessments and end of key stage tests. Areas of weakness are identified and staff are deployed to meet these needs. For example in Year 3, pupils who did not reach the required standard in the English tests at the end of Key Stage 1 receive Additional Literacy Support (ALS). This is well organised and is helping to raise the pupils' self-esteem and to improve their reading and writing skills. There is clear guidance in the assessment policy on planning and using assessments in day-to-day work. Some teachers record useful evaluations of the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science on their weekly planning sheets and make effective use of this to plan the next lessons. In general though, the school's assessment systems are not yet fully embedded across the school and this results in some inconsistencies in their usage. Parents feel strongly that the staff place great emphasis on getting to know each child individually, and that the school makes the best possible provision to support them.

83. A useful marking policy guides teachers on providing targets for improvement. It is not fully utilised across the school, although some good practice was seen in Year 5 and Year 6. Systems to assess the pupils' work in English are well established in Year 5 to set individual targets for improvement. Where assessments in mathematics and science are built into the schemes of work they are generally used well to monitor pupils' achievements and to plan future work. However, more frequent application of monitoring procedures by the headteacher and the subject co-ordinators, to identify specific strengths and weaknesses is needed to support the school's programme of improvement.

84. The format of the annual written report for parents meets statutory requirements, but there is insufficient space to record attainment and progress in the foundation subjects and religious education. In general, the reports give a clear picture of what has been covered during the year. However, there is some inconsistency in the level of detail about the pupils' strengths and weaknesses in each subject. In the more evaluative reports, parents gain a clear picture of where their child needs support and can then work with the school to provide additional help.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

85. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive a very good level of care and education. This represents an improvement since the last Ofsted report.

86. The school welcomes and actively encourages all parents to become fully involved in their children's learning. The school appreciates greatly the voluntary contribution of five regular and some fifteen occasional parent helpers, and is grateful for the valuable input they provide to enhance the pupils' learning. The impact of the home-school agreement and close working liaison that exists between teachers and many of the parents has had a significant impact on the quality of the pupils' learning, by setting out homework expectations, for

example.

87. The quality of information provided for parents is good and is much improved since the last inspection. Parents are kept regularly informed about all aspects of school life, from school events and pupil activities, to curricular details and the specific achievements of their children. Very good consultation procedures are in place and parent views are canvassed on matters relating to their children's learning. The home-reading diaries are a useful and effective link between home and school learning. In general the end-of-year progress reports provide a clear picture of the range of work that has been covered. However, there are some inconsistencies in quality and some reports do not always give sufficient detail about an individual pupil's strengths and weaknesses or set out clear learning targets.

88. Many parents expressed the wish for formal parent and teacher consultation meetings to be organised each term to provide opportunities for them to discuss how they can best support their children's progress on a more regular basis.

89. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in both the informal and formal reviews of their children's progress. Parents record their comments on the individual education plans and work very closely with the school. Some parents provide valuable support for this group of pupils in the classrooms.

90. The ongoing development of the school's partnership arrangements with parents helps to promote the good name of the school and provides significant benefits to enrich the pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

91. The headteacher is an effective leader and is well supported by the deputy-headteacher and the staff. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a firm commitment to school improvement. The headteacher has carried out a thorough analysis of the school's performance, and together with the staff and the governors, has identified the right priorities and measures to raise standards and to improve the quality of education.

92. Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in subject management. The subject co-ordinators now have a firm grasp of their responsibilities and have developed sound guidance and appropriately detailed schemes of work to support planning, teaching and learning. They provide effective support for their colleagues, but their role in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning is under-developed. This is identified as a priority in the school development plan. The deputy-headteacher's work on piloting a system setting termly targets for each pupil in Year 5 is very well executed, and is boosting the rate of progress for these pupils in English and mathematics. The pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve their work and they receive clearly-focused support and excellent feedback on their achievements. They are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and to readjust their targets accordingly. There are plans for this approach to be adopted throughout the school.

93. The school's aims and values encapsulate the principles of a Christian tradition and the caring ethos is highly apparent in the day-to-day work of the school. The quality of the relationships between the staff, pupils, governors and parents is a strength of the school and helps to foster a high level of commitment to the successful achievement of the school's priorities.

94. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are used effectively to inform school development planning. The headteacher monitors the quality of the teachers' short-term

plans and has observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Whilst this represents a positive start, the arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning at first-hand are not sufficiently rigorous. There have been limited opportunities for analysing pupils' work and monitoring the rate at which they are learning. As part of the school's strategic planning for improvement, some teachers moved to different year groups in September 1999, and this is a positive development. However, there is a need for a more systematic programme of monitoring to build on the teaching strengths and to provide guidance and support as the teachers adjust to the needs of different age groups.

95. The school development plan is well conceived and the priorities for improvement are firmly based on a detailed and thorough analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The plan includes sound and considered criteria to evaluate the school's progress and level of success. Financial planning is determined by the school's five key priorities, all of which are rooted in the drive to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

96. The co-ordinator for special educational needs ensures that the school's procedures meet the Code of Practice. There are good systems in place to ensure the early identification of pupils' needs and all staff receive regular training to keep up-to-date.

97. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and plays a supportive role in shaping the direction of the school. Since the last inspection, the governors have taken a more active part in many fundamental aspects of the school's management through an effective structure of sub-committees. This is a great improvement and is helping the governors to work more efficiently. Careful consideration has been given to ensuring that governors with key responsibilities such as special educational needs, literacy and numeracy, serve on one other sub-committee in addition to forming the curriculum support and development group. In this way, the governors are kept well informed and are able to work in close consultation. The governors play a full part in drawing up the school development plan with the headteacher and staff. The views of parents are also canvassed. Several governors have visited the school and joined in the staff training for literacy and numeracy.

98. The governing body's strategic financial planning is good. For example, the decision to invest in an additional part-time teacher to create single age-based classes for English and mathematics, and freeing up the headteacher from having a full-time class teaching commitment is proving to be very beneficial. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive additional good quality support from the headteacher and other staff, enabling the teachers in Years 4, 5 and 6 to pitch the work at a suitably challenging level for the other pupils in the class. These organisational strategies, coupled with the good teaching, are enabling the pupils to make improved levels of progress. In all aspects of the school's management, the governors and the headteacher are mindful of the principles of 'best value'. Comparative data is used well to support the identification of priorities and the governors keep a keen eye on competitive tendering. For instance, careful consideration was given to the relative merits of two quotations for swimming provision to ensure a cost-effective option that does not compromise on quality. Parents feel that the school provides many opportunities for them to contribute their ideas and that the school is quick to take action to meet their requests, for example, in providing good quality information about what is being taught in each class during the term. The governors are beginning to take a more active role as a 'critical friend', though in general their role in monitoring the school's work is under-developed.

99. The investment in additional teacher time to support the 'booster classes' for the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 proved to be successful in raising the attainment of many pupils in Year 6 last year. The Additional Literacy Support programme in Year 3 is well organised and the pupils are making good gains in reading and are enthusiastic and well motivated.

100. The school is making the best use of the small amount of extra funding it has received to enhance IT provision in preparation for connection to the National Grid for Learning (NGfL). Other grants such as funding to support pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need are used well.

101. The school is efficiently managed on a day-to-day basis. Communication systems work well and the administrative assistant gives good support to the headteacher and the staff.

102. There is an appropriate number of qualified staff to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. These are deployed flexibly and effectively to make best use of specialist knowledge and expertise. The teachers are well supported by classroom assistants, who have received relevant training. A particular strength of this partnership is the way in which the curriculum is made more meaningful to pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher and special needs co-ordinator ensure appropriate provision and liaise well with parents and outside agencies. The administrators and midday staff are hard working, enabling the day-to-day life of the school to operate efficiently and effectively. Despite some difficulties in securing staff, the site management is good.

103. The range and quality of educational resources are now satisfactory overall with improvements in art, history and book provision since the last inspection. The recent installation of three new computers has had a positive impact on information technology. All areas of the curriculum are adequately supplied with books, artefacts, videos, materials and equipment and these are frequently supplemented from outside sources. All resources are well housed and are accessible to teachers and pupils as appropriate. Pupils are appreciative of the resources and materials provided, and share and care for them well.

104. Overall the school accommodation is good, free of litter and graffiti and well used to provide a stimulating and secure learning environment for the pupils. The external fabric of the school is in reasonable repair, although some of the woodwork is in urgent need of renovation and repainting. There is good provision of grassed and asphalt play areas, but there are no seating areas for the pupils or fenced-off play area for the children under five. The school has made good improvements to the libraries, but the book corners in the reception class and in the Key Stage 1 classrooms are not particularly inviting and some are cramped.

105. The internal decoration of the school is aesthetically pleasing and good use has been made of carpets and bright colours in most of the teaching areas to give a warm and welcoming feel to the school. The school hall, seven classrooms and music room are all of a good size and there is a good provision for the storage of resources. The Key Stage 1 and the Key Stage 2 libraries are attractive and inviting, even though their location, within internal school walkways, imposes some restrictions on the ease with which pupils can undertake research. Walls and flat surfaces around the school are generally well decorated with examples of pupils' work and useful audio-visual aids, all of which enhance the learning environment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

106. In order to further improve the quality of education that the school offers to its pupils, and to build on the good improvements since the last inspection, the headteacher should:

1. monitor more frequently and at first-hand the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms in order to identify what is working well and to raise the standard of teaching to a

consistently high level across the school. (Paragraphs 58, 83, 94, 98, 132, 142, 170)

The headteacher and staff together with the governing body should:

2. continue and complete the work identified in the school development plan on improving the assessment, recording and reporting of the pupils' attainment and progress to ensure that :-

a) the system for setting individual targets for each pupil, which is being successfully piloted by the deputy-headteacher, is adopted throughout the school;

- b) the assessment and marking of the pupils' work enables them to see clearly what they must do to improve its quality;
- c) the end-of-year written reports provide consistently high quality information for parents about what their children know, understand and can do, and where they need to improve;
- d) the recently developed system for tracking the pupils' attainment and progress year-on-year is implemented across the whole-school and that the outcomes are securely monitored and evaluated. (Paragraphs 82, 83, 84, 87, 92, 130, 131, 141, 158, 177)

3. Raise attainment in writing by:

- a) continuing the good work being undertaken to improve the content of the pupils' writing;
- b) improving the standards of spelling and handwriting by :-
 - bi) agreeing what is expected of the pupils in each year group and how this will be achieved;
 - bii) improving the teaching of spelling and handwriting and setting consistently high expectations of the pupils;
 - biii) monitoring the quality of the pupils' written work across the curriculum to identify specific areas where the pupils need more practise. (Paragraphs 26, 30, 52, 58, 118, 123, 124, 127, 150.)

107. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- improve the planned opportunities for cultural and spiritual development, particularly through the foundation subjects, as outlined in the school development plan (paragraphs 53, 67, 157.)
- improve the quality of the classroom book corners in the Key Stage 1 classrooms (paragraphs 104, 133.)
- create more opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum (paragraphs 31, 60, 139.)
- improve the resources for structured play in the reception class (paragraphs 59, 62, 104.)

The school development plan identifies the need for further action on monitoring and evaluating the school's work, and improving the systems for tracking the pupils' attainment and progress.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	11	37	47	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	170
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	47

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	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.1	School data	0.4
National comparative data	5.4	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	10	12	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	10
	Girls	8	10	10
	Total	16	17	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (77)	77 (81)	91 (84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	9
	Girls	8	12	11
	Total	16	22	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (81)	100 (85)	91 (86)
	National	82 (80)	86 (84)	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	13	22	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	10
	Girls	11	12	11
	Total	17	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49 (48)	57 (65)	57 (71)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	11
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	21	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (65)	69 (65)	69 (71)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	168
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	283,722.00
Total expenditure	273,676.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,529.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,110.00
Balance carried forward to next year	19,156.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	170
Number of questionnaires returned	86

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	41	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	54	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	56	9	3	1
The teaching is good.	38	54	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	45	24	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	41	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	30	56	8	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	57	36	2	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	38	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	30	26	8	16

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

108. The children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection the majority of the class were under five. The children's attainment on entry to the school is generally below average and varies widely year on year. This is reflected in the baseline assessment and confirmed by other data analysed by the school. A higher than usual proportion of the children currently in the reception class have had nursery education.

109. The children make good progress and by the time they reach the age of five most attain the expected standards for this age in personal and social education, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. A few attain standards above the level expected. They make rapid progress in physical development and many reach standards that are above the level expected for their age.

110. In personal and social development the children attain standards that are in line with those expected of their age. The school has effective procedures to ensure that the children have a calm and enjoyable start to their schooling. Good relationships are quickly established between the children, their families and the staff. Teaching in this area is consistently good, management is often excellent and as a result the children behave well, persevere with tasks and listen carefully to instructions. Sensitive intervention, clear instructions and firm but fair guidance ensure that the children respect each other, take turns and share equipment fairly. The under-fives are responsible members of the school community, joining in appropriately during school assembly, waiting for their dinner quietly and getting changed sensibly for physical education lessons. Planning for this area of the curriculum is very good and includes the early development of self-awareness and the sense of belonging to a wider community.

111. The majority of the children enter the reception class with below average language and communication skills. A small group of children have well-developed oral skills. Planning for literacy is thorough and reading and writing, speaking and listening are taught effectively. The children achieve well in this area as the teacher makes learning interesting whilst including all the necessary strategies to develop early literacy skills. The children enjoy reading together and follow stories carefully, offering sensible comments and using the pictures as clues to support their understanding of the text. In the story about 'The Bear Hunt', the children made accurate references to the language in the text and could interpret the feelings of the main characters: 'the mud will be squashy' and 'the children will be scared'. They read simple words and make sensible guesses using their phonic knowledge. The majority of the children know each letter by its name and its sound. They make good attempts at writing their name and some can write sentences unaided when describing their teddy bears, for example. The support assistant is used well to assess individual progress whilst the teacher is conducting the first part of the literacy session.

112. The teacher plans carefully for the development of mathematical skills and there is some good direct teaching in this area of learning. Clearly structured, enjoyable lessons develop number recognition and counting skills effectively. Progress is good as a result. For example in a lesson using 'sum things' to count forwards and backwards to ten the children tried very hard to succeed and made rapid gains in their understanding. By the end of the short session the majority could count forwards and backwards from 20 with a good level of accuracy. Most children can name circle, rectangle, square and triangle. The teacher's clear instructions and crisp delivery enable the children to attempt to use comparative

mathematical language successfully. A few children know some of the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Practical activities, with good additional adult support and well-chosen resources are used to consolidate and extend this learning. Mathematical language is taught through story, songs and rhymes and the children begin to use the vocabulary associated with size. Recording is already accurate and well presented. For example, some children know the terms 'more and less' and record this using pictures of objects. They match numbers of objects in the set and write the numeral accurately.

113. In knowledge and understanding of the world, the children attain standards expected of their age and make good progress. They begin to understand how the computer works and use the mouse accurately to move the pictures around the screen. Teaching is good and on occasions excellent, for example during a lesson when the children went on a 'Bear Hunt'. They were spellbound, listened intently and persevered to read the rhyming clues as they followed a route around the school. They are beginning to locate features indoors and outdoors and to describe their uses such as, the staffroom and car park. They recall previous learning from a colour and shape walk last term to locate the class teacher's car; a clue used to find the third bear. They volunteer information related to the pattern and shape of paving stones and know the number of their house and the name of roads in the local area around the school. The teacher plans carefully to challenge the children's thinking and build on their prior learning.

114. In physical development the children make rapid progress. In the classroom and around the school they move with control, use equipment and resources such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors with a correct grip, in most cases, and draw and paint carefully. Effective planning linked to clear learning objectives, high expectations and challenge means learning is an enjoyable experience and the children want to succeed. In a physical education lesson for example, the children changed quickly, moved into the hall sensibly, showed self-control, and persevered to complete the tasks. The majority of the children move around the hall with good control of their movements. They understand and follow sensibly the teacher's instructions to stop and start. The teacher's judicious use of praise and involvement of the pupils in demonstrating their actions helps the class to refine their skills.

115. In creative development, the children's learning is good, and by the time they are five most children attain the expected standards, and some exceed them. The children are encouraged to make choices about the materials they use and to observe carefully, for example, when making observational drawings of teddy bears. The tasks are often linked to a story they have read together or the current topic, so that the children develop an immediate interest in the activity. The teacher's planning makes effective links between the Desirable Learning Outcomes and the National Curriculum. The children perform as a group and are confident to try tasks individually. Most can clap their own name rhythm and join in rhymes and songs with enthusiasm.

ENGLISH

116. In 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above in the National Curriculum tests for reading at the end of Key Stage 1 was close to the national average and in line with the results of similar schools. Thirty-six per cent of the pupils attained the higher Level 3, which was above the national average. In writing, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was below the national average, and low in comparison to similar schools. However, higher attaining pupils did well in the national writing tests for seven year olds, with twenty-seven per cent reaching Level 3, which was above the national average.

117. In the same year at Key Stage 2, when the results of pupils with statements of special

need are disaggregated, the percentage reaching Level 4 or above in English was still below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5; seventeen per cent, was close to the average nationally. These results were an improvement on the previous year, but some caution is needed in interpreting trends over time because the school has a higher than average number of pupils with special needs and this is more acute in some year groups than in others. In addition, about 20 per cent of the pupils in Key Stage 2 have joined the school in the last two years. The school is determined to continue to raise standards and has set challenging but realistic targets for year groups in Key Stage 2 and for individual pupils in Year 5, as part of a pilot project, led by the deputy-head. A thorough analysis of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning has enabled the school to target resources and training. A good start has been made on improving the quality of the pupils' writing by helping them to broaden the range of expressive vocabulary and to use techniques to engage the reader. The school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is effective and the structured programme of work is helping to raise the teachers' expectations of the pupils, and to improve the pace of lessons and the rate at which the pupils are learning.

118. Inspection findings confirm an improving picture, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. Evidence, which includes the scrutiny of past and present work, lesson observations and discussions with pupils, shows that standards in speaking, listening and reading are in line with the national expectations at the end of both key stages. Standards in speaking and listening and reading throughout the school have improved since the last inspection. Standards in writing are below the national average in Years 2 and 6, but this is because these two ends of key stage year groups have a higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. In Year 6, this is further compounded by the fact that around one third of the present pupils joined the class over the last academic year. Taking the school as a whole, the writing in books and around the school shows that the pupils' compositional skills are improving. However, their spelling is still weak, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and there is an inconsistent approach to the introduction and use of joined handwriting from Year 2 upwards. Pupils with special needs make sound progress in meeting the targets in their individual education plans.

119. Pupils enter compulsory education with below average levels of attainment in language and literacy. Most pupils make good gains in reading, speaking and listening, and sound progress in writing development throughout both key stages. The majority of the pupils are confident communicators. By the age of seven, for example, higher attaining pupils show they have listened carefully and are quick to respond to the teacher's questions about the story of 'Katie Morag'. They develop their views about weather conditions by referring to the language of the text. Most pupils gave clear instructions when teaching a visitor how to use a weather forecasting program on the computer and talked animatedly about their own discoveries. Those with special needs receive good support from an assistant, who skilfully interprets the main points of the lesson and encourages the pupils to share their observations of the text. Throughout Key Stage 1, the pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, and confidently explain their ideas.

120. By the age of eleven, many pupils express their opinions thoughtfully and clearly. In a lively debate about body piercing, in the Year 6 class, the pupils paid close attention to the differing views of their peers, challenging an opposing view politely by picking up on points made earlier, and expanding on these ideas. Lower attaining pupils in Year 5 were well supported by an assistant as they prepared to perform an extract from a playscript about the story of 'Odysseus'. They made good gains in improving the expression and clarity of their delivery because the assistant checked on their understanding of the text, explored their views about the characters motives and feelings and, when needed, modelled key parts to help the pupils to capture the drama of the events. In Years 4, 5 and 6, the pupils listen

carefully and are learning how to convey their ideas clearly. In Year 3, the pupils' listening skills are not so finely tuned. The pupils are usually eager to contribute their ideas, but the rule about signalling their intention to speak, by raising their hand in the air, is not firmly established, and the pupils do not listen as well to each other.

121. Reading standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations. Most pupils by the age of seven are enthusiastic about books and particularly enjoy reading simple narratives. A few show a preference for non-fiction texts. For example, a Year 2 boy was particularly keen to find out about Scotland and persevered with a challenging text by seeking out photographs of places he found interesting and using the index and maps to search for additional information. Most pupils use a variety of strategies such as phonics, contextual and picture clues and often correct themselves by reading the whole sentence and then returning to an unfamiliar word. Pupils with special needs read frequently to an adult and are developing their confidence and self-esteem. They often make good gains in reading. All pupils choose a colour-coded home-reading book matched to their prior attainment level as well as a library book to share at home. This system was introduced following the previous inspection when it was noted that the pupils had a very narrow reading experience and lacked confidence when reading aloud. This is certainly not the case now. The pupils are enthusiastic readers, who are keen to look at books and often ask if they can look in more detail at the 'Big Books' used during the literacy hours. In lessons, they show curiosity and excitement about features of non-fiction texts such as a glossary, and are keen to explore the definitions of words such as 'tornado' with their teacher.

122. By the age of eleven, most pupils are confident and enthusiastic readers. In their reading diaries, they often record their emerging views and make detailed sketches of characters based on their own interpretation of descriptive passages in the book. When discussing texts during guided reading sessions, they show a clear grasp of the main events and are able to back-up their opinions by selecting relevant information. Year 6 pupils take turns to run the library during lunchtimes and show a good knowledge of authors and genre. They guided younger pupils in locating books about Vikings to support work in history for example, and checked to make sure that the Year 3 pupils could use the contents and index to find specific information.

123. Pupils in Key Stage 1 undertake a suitably broad range of writing activities, but their recorded work shows an undue amount of time spent in writing weekly accounts of personal news. These diary entries rarely amount to more than a couple of short sentences at the most and the language structures are often repetitive showing little evidence of progression. When given the opportunity to retell simple stories, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 show that they are able to sequence the main events and usually pay attention to the use of full-stops and capital letters. Poetry, book reviews, letters and instructional writing to accompany work in design technology show a developing awareness of the different purposes of writing, but pupils are not given enough chances to write imaginatively and to invent their own stories. By the age of seven, some pupils are able to spell simple regular words correctly and make effective use of their phonic knowledge.

Most pupils form their letters correctly and a few higher attainers show good pencil control when practising handwriting exercises, but these skills are not always transferred to other written work.

124. By the end of Key Stage 2, the writing of about two thirds of the pupils is beginning to show considered thought in the choice of vocabulary. For example, some of the poetry in Years 5 and 6, stimulated by music and discussion, explores moods and feelings to very good effect. Some pieces of extended writing, produced by higher attaining pupils, describing imaginary adventures and quests, contain complex sentences and good attention is given to sustaining ideas and using devices to hold the reader's interest. Amusing character

descriptions, undertaken by pupils in Years 4 and 5, showed good attention to vocabulary choices, but poorly developed spelling skills and insufficient attention to handwriting presentation. The school has rightly targeted additional time and resources to improving the content of pupils' writing at Key Stage 2. Work in books, in the pupils' records and on display around the school indicates considerable progress is being made. However, insufficient attention is given to improving basic spelling and handwriting, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and to setting out clear expectations to ensure a sufficiently high quality of presentation throughout the school as a whole.

125. The quality of the teaching overall is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2. The teachers have a well-developed knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy, which is used to good effect in the planning and content of lessons. At the start of each lesson, teachers swiftly recapitulate on previous learning and explain clearly what the pupils will learn during the lesson. This focuses the attention of the whole class and the pupils know what is expected of them. The texts chosen for whole-class work and guided group work are interesting and make just sufficient demands on the pupils so that they are well motivated, attentive and concentrate hard. Classes are well managed and there are high expectations of the pupils' conduct. In history, geography and science the work makes appropriate demands on all groups of pupils, by providing a variety of relevant contexts to develop writing and research skills. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and opinions with others. In numeracy sessions, pupils have good chances to explain their methods of calculation and this helps to support oral communication skills.

126. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is sound and some is good. Occasionally at Key Stage 1, some of the introductory parts of the lessons are too long and this curtails the amount of time the pupils are able to spend on writing. The teachers use questions skilfully to involve the pupils in class discussions and are careful to ensure that most pupils make a contribution. The pupils' ideas are valued and this gives them the confidence to make suggestions and to share their ideas. A strong emphasis is placed on extending the pupils' oral language by asking them to suggest other words that have the same meaning. The tasks set for independent group work take good account of the pupils' prior attainment and are often presented in interesting ways. Sometimes, the resources provided for independent group work constrain the pupils' learning. This was the case in a lesson in Year 1, where a small group of pupils were finding words containing specific consonant clusters, but were given an inappropriate range of books which made the task too difficult. Although the group could recall from memory words containing these letter-combinations, some pupils felt disappointed by the small number of words they had found. Plenary sessions are usually well focused and provide good opportunities for the pupils to consolidate their learning, but this part of the lesson is sometimes too rushed and the teachers do not always ensure that everyone is able to see the work that is being shared.

127. At Key Stage 2, the teaching is good overall and there are particular strengths in the teaching for Years 4, 5 and 6. Lessons begin promptly, continue at a swift pace and the teachers' exposition is lively, informative and engages the pupils effectively. The chosen texts motivate the pupils and are very well-matched to the teaching intentions. The teachers make skilled use of questioning techniques to check on the pupils' understanding and to encourage them to search for other examples to illustrate key features of the lesson. The pupils know exactly what they have to do during independent group work and set about completing their tasks with enthusiasm, maintaining good levels of concentration and working productively. Some pupils take reasonable care with presentation, but routines for checking spellings and punctuation, and teachers' expectations about the use of joined handwriting are not firmly established. As a result, spelling inaccuracies are all too frequent, and the pupils do not make full use of their knowledge of punctuation.

128. Guided reading and writing sessions are well organised and have a clear focus. The teachers make good use of their knowledge of the pupils when selecting texts, and to determine what needs to be practised. Lower attaining boys in Years 4 and 5 were particularly enthusiastic about a science-fiction text and a playscript of the story of 'Odysseus'. As a result they made good progress in tackling these quite challenging texts with gusto and gained a sense of pride in their ability to decode unfamiliar words and to understand the plot. Skilled support by teachers and classroom assistants enabled the pupils to get under the surface of the text and to begin to explain the characters' motives.

129. In the best lessons, the plenary sessions were well-structured and provided good opportunities for the pupils to share their work, and for the class to consolidate the key features of the lesson. The teachers rounded-off the lessons effectively by explaining how this learning would help the pupils in the next lesson.

130. There are effective systems in place for assessing and recording the pupils' attainment and progress in all aspects of English. Some teachers are using the group reading records very productively, by making perceptive on going assessments of the pupils' reading skills and using this information to plan their teaching. Where the records are less diagnostic and simply record the texts studied, there are missed opportunities for tracking the progress of different groups of pupils.

131. The system of assessing, in detail, a single piece of writing for each pupil mid-way through the year is sound. However, the precision of this assessment varies across the school. At the top end of Key Stage 2, teachers make detailed annotations, of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses against the National Curriculum Level Descriptors. These records contain useful diagnostic information to support future lesson plans. In the other year groups, the levelling process is not as secure because the teachers do not identify the specific features of the writing that show what the pupil can do, and where more support is needed. This picture supports the inspection team's analysis of performance data which shows that teacher assessments of writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are often over-estimated.

132. The subject co-ordinator works conscientiously to support his colleagues and the literacy action plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement. Some informal monitoring of teaching and learning in the literacy hours has taken place, but there is not enough rigour in the monitoring processes, by for example, undertaking regular scrutinies of pupils' work. The school makes sound provision to foster the pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness through drama, poetry and extracts from the media. The school development plan rightly identifies the need to further enhance these aspects of the pupils' learning.

133. There are significant improvements in the quality of the books that are available

both in the libraries and for teaching during the literacy hours. The school makes good use of the County Loans Service. However, book corners in the reception class and in Year 1 still contain some old and unattractive stock and are not as cosy and inviting as they should be. The Year 5 classroom provides a rich and stimulating literate environment.

134. The pupils make good use of computers to compose writing on screen and often work co-operatively in pairs to refine their writing. Critical analyses of poetry such as 'The Gaveloch' and transcripts of dialogue, on display in Years 5 and 6, show well-developed word-processing skills.

MATHEMATICS

135. In 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above in the National Curriculum tests for mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 was close to the national average and similar to the previous year. The results were also in line with those of similar schools. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils gained the higher Level 3, which was above the national average. In the same year at Key Stage 2, the percentage reaching Level 4 or above was also close to the national average and in line with similar schools. A similar picture emerged for the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. This was a significant improvement from the previous year when the results were well below average. The school is determined to continue to raise standards and has set tough but realistic targets for year groups in Key Stage 1 and for individual pupils in Key Stage 2. It is also using the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to bring added vigour and enthusiasm to teaching and learning.

136. The significance of this input is confirmed in the findings of the inspection. Evidence, which includes scrutiny of past and present work, discussion with pupils and observations in lessons, indicates mathematics to be just below the national average at the end of both key stages. This is because of the diverse composition of the two ends of key stage year groups, which contain a higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. This is further compounded by a high transient pupil population factor.

137. Pupils have a sound foundation in numeracy, which reflects the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy. In Key Stage 2 they develop a good understanding of number and are making sound progress in manipulating numbers mentally. Teachers regularly begin lessons with mental 'warm-up' activities. Pupils respond in unison for example, counting on in tens, decreasing by ten and adding four. This consistent approach enables the pupils to become confident with number bonds and to develop a range of strategies for calculations. By Year 6, many pupils, especially higher attainers, have a ready facility with number and some can calculate percentage discounts mentally by a variety of appropriate methods. Mental 'warm-up' and 'warm-down' activities increase in difficulty as pupils proceed through the school, and play a large part in developing, reinforcing and testing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

138. Pupils in Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress and build effectively on the knowledge gained in the reception class. In Year 1 pupils can order, sort and count objects. Many pupils can read numbers and identify odds and evens. Some can recognise number sequences and all are learning mathematical vocabulary, such as 'shorter' and 'longer', 'smallest' and 'tallest' in relation to their heights. Higher attaining pupils are able to count and order numbers competently, and carry out simple addition and subtraction operations with confidence. They are beginning to measure and weigh and to realise the relationship between standard and non-standard measures for example, when measuring items using hand-spans, or unifix cubes. Pupils in Year 2 understand about halves and quarters, and know the names and properties of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, such as square, rectangle, circle, cube and sphere. They

can interpret simple graphs and bar charts, recognise number patterns and add and subtract accurately in tens and units.

139. In Key Stage 2 pupils of all prior attainment levels continue to make sound progress, moving on to multiplication and division and working with increasing confidence in hundreds, tens and units. Pupils in Year 3 have a sound understanding of the basic multiplication tables and processes, and know a range of simple fractions. In Years 3 and 4 they know two- and three-dimensional shapes, calculate area by adding squares, and measure length with increasing accuracy. They draw and interpret simple bar charts satisfactorily and, by Year 5, complete accurate calculations including division of numbers to 100, and draw and measure angles successfully to the nearest degree. By Year 6 pupils can calculate areas of rectangles, triangles, understand probability and symmetry, and use calculators to check their answers. They develop satisfactory skills in data-handling, for example in science when grouping materials into solids, liquids and gases. Some higher attaining pupils can express sequences of triangular numbers and explain accurately how decimals, vulgar fractions and percentages are related. The majority of pupils within the key stage measure length, weight, capacity and temperature with increasing accuracy. Pupils are routinely required to discuss their methods and justify their answers. Although pupils develop a good range of mental methods and strategies, the opportunity to use them in investigative situations is sometimes under-used.

140. The majority of pupils in all classes enjoy mathematics. They like the use of games and the challenge of the daily quick-fire mental session. They are keen to offer answers and ideas, are attentive and settle to their work quickly. During set tasks they work independently and are particularly supportive of each other in group work, as was the case in a Year 2 class dealing with money problems. Most work is neatly set out and well presented. Mathematics lessons are happy and purposeful. Some pupils find it difficult to find words to express ideas, but this does not stop them trying. A good example was noted in a Year 6 lesson when a lower attaining pupil explained that £29.01 rounded to the nearest pound was £30. His mathematical knowledge and understanding was secure and his enthusiasm allowed him to try and express it.

141. The quality of teaching observed was never less than satisfactory and on occasions was good or very good. The majority of the better teaching was seen in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan consistently to the school scheme, which is closely linked to the National Numeracy Strategy. They focus appropriately on all aspects of the National Curriculum with a sound emphasis on numeracy skills, which are also consolidated well in other curriculum areas, for example in science, design technology and geography. Classroom displays are used effectively as reference points for pupils' learning or to record their success. This was seen to good effect in Year 3, for example, when pupils kept referring to two- and three-dimensional shapes as they consolidated their understanding of distinguishing between their properties. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge in problem-solving and everyday activities are usually effectively planned into lessons. Such an example was witnessed in a Year 1 class reinforcing their recognition of value of coins up to 5p during a practical lesson. Teachers give clear explanations and are enthusiastic, encouraging pupils to think, and target their questions to extend the pupils' thinking. The best teaching combines the skills pupils learn with problem solving, discussion and explanation. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils worked effectively, sometimes in pairs, to investigate and recognise the similarity between mixed numbers and improper fractions, and then devise their own examples. Equally good practice was seen in a Year 2 lesson where digit cards were used effectively to enhance the computational skills of addition and subtraction. Marking is not always consistent with school policy, especially at lower Key Stage 2. Where it is best, it gives pupils a clear idea of their own targets and how they are expected to achieve their best. Lessons are nearly always well organised with an efficient use of time and resources, and

smooth transitions between activities.

142. The subject is soundly led and managed. The co-ordinator works closely with the numeracy governor. They share a common enthusiasm and a clear vision for the future successful development of the subject and increased standards of attainment. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced successfully and the benefits are already being realised in most classes throughout the school. The school is part of a local education authority 'mathematics awareness' project, which is beginning to have a positive impact. The co-ordinator reviews teachers' plans but has limited opportunities to evaluate and monitor pupils' work in all classes. She is developing and refining current assessment procedures and has plans to introduce a portfolio of work graded against the National Curriculum Level Descriptors. The school has ensured that the resources for the Numeracy Strategy are in place. They are used effectively and with care.

SCIENCE

143. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 showed that the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2) was in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was also in line with the national average. The results of the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 show that the pupils' attainment was well below the national average and well below that seen in similar schools. The school's own analysis of standards shows the present Year 2 and Year 6 group of pupils are unlikely to attain national averages in the end of key stage assessments at age seven, and the national tests at age eleven. The present Year 2 cohort entered school with a very wide variation of ability and included a high proportion of pupils with below average attainment, plus a significant group of pupils with specific special educational needs. One third of the current Year 6 pupils joined the school in the last three years and a third are on the school's register of special educational needs. As a result the number of pupils taking the tests at aged eleven does not reflect the pupils who first entered the school. Comparisons therefore with national figures are unlikely to be reliable for this particular group of pupils.

144. Inspection evidence shows that attainment across the school as a whole is in line with the nationally expected levels. The schools own assessments and the targets set for 2001 indicate an appropriate rise in attainment for the current group of pupils in Year 5. Inspection evidence concurs with the school's own assessment.

145. In Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound introduction to experimental and investigative science. In Year 1, the pupils carry out investigations into materials to find out for instance, whether they are waterproof. Having first predicted possible outcomes; they recorded and interpreted their findings with support. Higher attaining pupils know and explain clearly that when a material is waterproof it offers protection from rain and snow. The majority of the pupils contributed their ideas about which materials would be waterproof and predicted sensible outcomes. Many pupils can name wood, metal and bricks as hard materials. The teacher challenged pupils' thinking well, through good use of demonstration and focused questions. Her secure subject knowledge supported the development of the pupils' own ideas. As a result, a few higher attaining pupils contributed good ideas for setting up a fair test; for example one pupil suggested counting the sprays of water.

146. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils know that plants need different conditions to survive. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher carefully recapped on previous work and supported pupils with special educational needs and those who had difficulty expressing their ideas. With support the majority of the pupils can name some of the conditions plants need to grow. A few higher attaining pupils use scientific language and know that plants need 'nutrients' in the soil to produce healthy leaves. Below average pupils have difficulty in labelling the parts

of a plant, although after a practical observation, they draw and label the plant, including the roots, and with help talk about how the root functions.

147. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of electricity and can describe how circuits are constructed and how the brightness of a bulb can be varied. Many pupils have a clear understanding of the functions of the body, diagrams are labelled clearly, and higher attaining pupils give clear explanations of how the heart pumps blood, for example. Pupils show an increased understanding of fair testing and make explicit statements about what has been found out, although some pupils do not state reasons for this. Higher attaining pupils and a few average pupils begin to link their statements to underlying scientific knowledge and understanding. For example, that leaves are green because they contain chlorophyll and that this is linked to the process known as photosynthesis.

148. Pupils' progress through the school is sound particularly in relation to their prior attainment. This is seen by the improvement in pupils' knowledge and understanding in relation to investigations. Reception pupils know about and label a set of living things. Year 1 pupils make sensible observations and describe them in everyday terms. In Year 2, pupils extend their ability to make judgements about their observations and to record them more logically. Year 3 and 4 pupils plan an experiment to investigate changing materials and develop their skill by predicting what the outcomes will be. Some pupils develop their use of more explicit scientific language to explain them. By the time they are in Year 5, pupils write accurately about the method used to investigate, for example reversal and irreversible changes using a sugar solution and wax, predict outcomes and draw conclusions. They use correct scientific terms to describe outcomes and know that some materials like wax when heated cannot be reversed. By the time they are eleven, pupils consider evidence and draw conclusions, set up a more advanced database program and use their prior knowledge of electrical circuits to plan and make a game.

149. The pupils are enthusiastic, enjoy science lessons and are eager to learn. They are well behaved and sustain their concentration for longer periods as they move through the school. Pupils work sensibly and safely when undertaking practical activities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, either by extra adult supervision, or careful consideration of groupings within the class. They are confident to join in discussions, although some have difficulty in expressing themselves logically. Pupils are generous in their respect of each other's contributions.

150. Teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of good and very good teaching in Key Stage 2. The teachers' planning, supported by the scheme of work, clearly defines learning objectives, which are linked well to the National Curriculum programmes of study. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection. The teachers know the pupils well and the work is carefully planned to support a wide range of ability. In the lesson with very good teaching, a high degree of challenge motivated and excited the pupils' imagination. They were eager to find out the answers to tasks. The teachers' good subject knowledge, high expectations, very good organisation and management of groups and her on-going assessment of the pupils' achievements were teaching strengths. Very good use of informed support staff means that the pupils with special educational needs, and those who have communication problems, achieve well. The pupils' skills in literacy are used to good effect in their work although the quality and quantity of written work varies and spelling is not always accurate. The application of numeracy skills in science is inconsistent across the school.

151. The very capable co-ordinator supports her colleagues very well through the provision of a comprehensive scheme of work. This provides good support for teachers in Key Stage

2, who are planning for the science curriculum in mixed age classes. The investigations checklist is a useful assessment tool. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the provision for experimental and investigative science. It now has a much higher profile. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' oral and literacy skills, as they develop their ability to explain their investigations, answer questions and record their observations. Information technology is used well in Year 5 and 6 to produce charts and databases. Assessment procedures are sound and are beginning to be used to track pupils' progress through the key stages. The co-ordinator's role in monitoring planning, teaching and learning in the classroom is largely informal. Analysis of the test results for eleven-year-olds has resulted in the purchase of study and revision materials in order to raise attainment in those areas identified as a weakness.

ART

152. Standards in art at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with what is expected of pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. Some pupils achieve good standards in drawing, and the work of Year 5 and 6 pupils on perspective shows well-developed observational skills. Throughout the school the pupils make steady gains in mastering techniques in two and three dimensions. The school has maintained the quality of its work in art and has improved the range of opportunities for the pupils to work with textiles, mixed media, clay and more resilient modelling materials such as wood, wire and plaster.

153. Pupils in the reception class and in Year 1 produce well controlled representational drawings of people, animals and teddy bears, showing good attention to detail. They experiment confidently with different types of printing and pattern making and are developing a keen sense of the use of colour to achieve different effects. Pupils in Year 2 have made clay tiles taking great care to ensure that the clay was rolled out evenly so that it would produce a clear print. Displays of their imaginative drawings and paintings show individuality and good attention to detail to engage the observer's eye. Paintings of poppies, in the style of French impressionists, effectively capture the technique of pointillism. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils showed a sense of pride when talking about their work and often explained how they would improve their work next time, showing a well-developed sense of critique.

154. In Year 3, very little of the pupils' art work was displayed around the classroom. The pupils talked about drawings they had done to illustrate work on myths and fairytales, but they were not excited by art in the same way that pupils in other classes talked eagerly about their work.

155. In Years 4, 5 and 6 the pupils' work is valued and attractively displayed. Observational drawings of musical instruments, an arrangement of sweets and portraits of their peers show good attention to detail, form and line. Work stimulated by a study of the work of Miro shows lively experimentation with colour to convey feelings such as joy, excitement and trepidation. Paintings and montages in the Cubist style show a good awareness of form and composition. Pupils have produced wax tablets similar to those used in Roman Times, detailed designs of stained glass windows and imaginative paintings of creation myths. In all of the work undertaken in these classes, the individuality of the pupils is a strong feature. Many pupils talked avidly about what they had been doing recently in art and were keen to share examples of their best work.

156. In the very small number of art lessons seen during the inspection, the teaching was sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned and the resources and equipment are thoroughly prepared in advance, often pupils volunteer to help set up the classroom and work methodically and sensibly. The teachers demonstrate techniques effectively and explain clearly what they want the pupils to do. Efficient working practices are

well established and classes are well managed. Pupils know what is expected of them and how preliminary work will be developed and extended over a series of lessons. This helps them to concentrate and persevere in the mastery of specific techniques in order to achieve a good result. For example, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were observed to be skilfully adapting their designs and carving them out with precision onto linoleum squares as preparation for print- making activities. Pupils with special needs are sensitively supported by their teachers and meet with success.

157. Pupils in Year 2 experimented confidently, varying the quantity and thickness of the paint they applied to their clay tile to achieve a good quality print. In pairs, they concentrated hard to create a two-colour repeating pattern and made sensible suggestions about how they could improve their work. There were missed opportunities for the pupils to examine fabrics to see how repeating patterns can be orientated in different ways, to create added impact, and to learn about the significance of repeating patterns in Eastern cultures.

158. Since the last inspection in 1997, the co-ordinator has revised the scheme of work and there is now a well-balanced and detailed programme in place for all year groups. In the majority of the classrooms, and around the school as a whole, the pupils' work is attractively displayed. In the most stimulating classrooms, for example Year 5, displays are thoughtfully composed and include artefacts, books and good quality visual aids which complement the pupils' work. Pupils select pieces of work for their portfolios and some of the older pupils include perceptive evaluations of their own achievements. The end-of-year written reports give a clear picture of the techniques that have been covered, but the format of the report constrains the amount of information that teachers can provide about the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

159. Only a limited number of lessons was observed during the inspection week. However, discussion with teachers and pupils, and evidence from planning and displays show that pupils' skills in designing and making develop steadily as they move through the school. All pupils including those with special educational needs in both key stages make satisfactory progress.

160. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils attain standards in line with national expectations. They are aware of the links between the designing and making elements of technology. In Year 1 pupils successfully design and select appropriate tools and paints when making models of bowls, pots and masks from clay. In Year 2, following work on basic disassembling and assembling techniques with a variety of footwear, pupils designed and made their own shoes using card and other appropriate materials. Work was evaluated in both pictures and writing so that the activity was accessible to all pupils.

161. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with the expectations for eleven-year-olds. The pupils can use a process diary to record their design, state materials needed, include changes that were made and evaluate their final design. By Year 6 pupils have sufficiently developed skills to select materials such as wood, rubber bands, card, string and weights as mechanisms, to design and make workable model windmills. With help they also produce an interesting variety of 'pop up' Christmas cards. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have used different techniques including the 'Jinks' method to reinforce and strengthen cardboard and wooden structures. They have a sound understanding of the designing, making and evaluation processes in technology, use technical knowledge correctly and are aware of safety. Work is often precise and care is taken to finish the product well.

162. Attitudes are good and pupils work sensibly together, sharing equipment and tools.

They are interested in their work and show sustained concentration in trying to improve it. A good example was observed in a Year 1 class where pupils were making peg-dolls using plasticine and pipe cleaners. They make sensible choices about the type of materials needed.

163. The quality of teaching is sound. Effective management, organisation and discipline help pupils to develop their understanding of the making process. Good subject knowledge, use of technical vocabulary and the teaching of skills ensure that the older pupils maintain sound progress, as was evident in a Year 5 class using garter stitch to produce knitted patches for blanket-making. There is good deployment of adults who support teachers well. Such an example was noted in Years 3 and 4, where pupils studied the composition of a range of sandwiches in relation to preferences and healthy diets. Lessons are planned ensuring an appropriate balance between the designing and making components of technology. There are good links with other subjects including science, art, geography and mathematics.

164. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is keen to promote it. Following a detailed audit three years ago she has devised a scheme of work, which ensures that all aspects of the process are covered. Resources are being built up and are adequate. Proper attention is paid to health and safety issues. The school has maintained the quality of its work in design and technology since the previous inspection.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

165. Only one history and one geography lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 and two lessons in each subject at Key Stage 2. Judgements are also based on the scrutiny of previously completed work and discussions with pupils and teachers.

166. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards of attainment in history and geography are in line with the levels expected. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show sound knowledge of aspects of Victorian history and of life in Tudor England. They use a variety of sources of evidence including books, photographs, videos and artefacts, and write well-organised and structured accounts about their findings. Information technology is used very well to support and encourage individual and small group research, for example two pupils searched for information on the use of the omnibus as part of their topic on 19th Century inventions. Pupils in Year 5 recorded their feelings about characters and events in thoughtful writing, for example, one pupil writes about Anne of Cleves : ‘...as a Queen married to Henry it would be very annoying here in England.’ and another ‘... I have no loving friends here’. In geography the pupils read maps accurately to plot the course of the River Rhine and name the surrounding countries. Good links are made with pupils’ cultural development in both history and geography. For example, work on rivers is linked well to raising awareness of issues concerning water on a local and global scale. In history, pupils consider the effect that the invention of the steam engine had on people’s lives

167. Pupils’ learning as they progress through the school is sound. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well as a result of the interesting resources, practical activities and opportunities to work with other pupils. Teachers and support staff involve them sensitively in discussion and the other pupils value their contributions. This raises their confidence and self-esteem. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 are challenged particularly well in both subjects. Discussions with younger pupils following a topic undertaken last term effectively demonstrates their understanding of events in the past. They show increasing insight into the contrasting conditions of hospitals and medical care now and during the Crimean War. Links with geography are good and the pupils confidently look for Italy and Florence on the globe as they develop map-reading skills. They have a firm

understanding of place in relation to their own locality. They name cities and towns in the United Kingdom and use the correct geographical terms such as mountains and islands in their topic on the Outer Hebrides. Older pupils extend their knowledge, skills and understanding as they select and combine evidence in writing about the rise of the House of Tudor. In geography, pupils name local landmarks while older pupils understand the contrast between village and town or research the settlement of land use.

168. Pupils show a lively curiosity and interest about history and geography. Younger pupils contribute interesting ideas and are keen to share their views for example, when talking about the uses of some Victorian artefacts. Plans drawn of the Island of Struay in the Outer Hebrides, for example are neat and well presented. Older pupils persevere with tasks and produce interesting writing or personal research. However, the quality of the presentation is variable. The pupils share resources well particularly when working on the computer and respond sensibly when working in pairs and small groups. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from the opportunity to work with different groups of pupils and persevere with tasks as a result.

169. In the lessons observed the teaching was good overall. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and extension activities for higher attaining pupils. In the good and very good lessons, teachers use resources well to motivate, interest and challenge understanding. In a history lesson taken by the headteacher, Year 3 and 4 pupils, for example demonstrated independent learning and motivation due to the very good introduction to the lesson and the use of question and answers to set the context. In a Year 5 geography lesson, lively teacher questions supported and challenged learning so that pupils extended their knowledge about the water cycle whilst using key vocabulary that has been identified by the teacher in her planning. In both cases the teachers' secure and confident explanations and clear understanding of the knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed effectively supported pupils' learning.

170. The teaching of both history and geography benefits from a clear policy and well-structured scheme of work. The decision by the school to adopt the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) schemes of work has supported the planning for mixed age classes well. This also supports the school's two-year rolling programme by building on prior knowledge and addressing progression in learning. Both subjects benefit from the use of additional resources borrowed from the local high school, the library and museum services. Visits and visitors support the curriculum, although these are not extensive. The co-ordinator for geography supports the teachers well and has introduced a number of initiatives, for example a mapping skills sheet to support teaching and to ensure progression through the school. Monitoring of teaching and learning is largely underdeveloped in both subjects. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

171. During the inspection it was only possible to observe a limited number of lessons, especially in Key Stage 1. Judgements are also based on discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of the school documentation and pupils' past and present work.

172. Standards of attainment are satisfactory at both key stages and in line with what pupils of seven and eleven are expected to achieve nationally. This judgement is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils begin using a computer as soon as they start school. In reception and Year 1 they begin to learn mouse control and to recognise letters on the keyboard. Many know how to use the space bar and delete keys, and some pupils can use arrow keys effectively. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can use a simple word-processor and some higher attaining pupils can save, retrieve and print their work. They can also

control the mouse well enough to create pictures and patterns. Pupils' progress including those with special educational needs is satisfactory.

173. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are using word-processing programmes independently to write stories, labels and in some cases do their homework. They highlight and change text and import pictures. Many can use database programs to handle information and to display it graphically. They use a CD-ROM to research topics and select and print appropriate extracts from the text. A good example was noted in a Year 5 and 6 class while studying the Victorians, on the importance of secondary source material. Examination of past work shows that pupils in the later year groups combine drawing and writing, using different fonts and colours, as well as placing emphasis on the layout of text. They have learned control and modelling techniques and have some experience of using spreadsheets. All programmes of study are attempted and all pupils including those with special educational needs make sound progress from year to year.

174. The school has benefited from the recent installation of three new personal computers in the library and upper Key Stage 2 area. This increases the availability of computers for use during other lessons. The facility, together with specific information and communication technology (ICT) timetabled skills lessons, is beginning to have a positive impact. Each classroom contains at least one other computer and teachers manage the subject from these bases. Problems still remain: older machines lack the working memory to run modern software and some are incompatible with the new printers, although some have been amended. This causes frustration for pupils and teachers alike. However, further plans include the imminent installation of £4,300 worth of ICT equipment funded under the National Grid for Learning Scheme. Similar urgent plans are in hand for connection to the Internet.

175. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work in information and communication technology. They can explain procedures and some of the more experienced pupils are able and eager to help others. Such an example was noted in a Year 5 class where pupils were engaged in constructing databases. These computer-based activities offer pupils good opportunities to work with minimal supervision, using initiative and taking responsibility for their own learning. Equipment is treated well and the routines of saving work and recording the session's achievements are carried out smoothly and efficiently.

176. The quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory. The co-ordinator shows good levels of knowledge and presents information clearly and appropriately. During some lessons the pace is slow, with over-direction by the teacher, thus limiting the opportunity for pupils to do practical work. Each lesson has a clear focus on a specific skill to be taught and there are close links with other subjects. For example, some pupils in Year 4 use a word-processor to write a story and save their work on disc. In a Year 6 lesson on spreadsheets pupils successfully use drag, click, enter and star techniques. In the best lessons teachers' expectations are high and learning objectives realistic, as was the case in a Year 2 class learning about the basic advantages of teletext. Teachers are gaining in confidence about teaching the subject, and several are very secure in the use of the new equipment. Classes are managed effectively despite some cramped and busy conditions.

177. The curriculum is well planned to ensure continuity and progression of learning across the school. All pupils experience handling and communicating information, controlling and modelling over a range of topics each term, at appropriate levels. The well-informed and committed co-ordinator provides effective support for his colleagues and helps to raise attainment levels through in-service training and helpful documents. He liaises well with the local high school, which has recently assumed Technology Award Status and has donated valuable equipment, including computers and a video. Assessment procedures are in place but practice is inconsistent. The school is aware of this and plans to introduce a more

formalised system. The school development plan identifies a detailed focus on improving information and communication technology as the next major priority.

MUSIC

178. It was only possible to see a limited number of lessons during the inspection. However, it was clear from these, talking to pupils, listening to singing in assemblies and hymn practice, and attending recorder group sessions, that standards are in line with the national expectations for seven and eleven year olds. In the lessons observed progress was mostly satisfactory, and in some sessions the pupils made good gains in their learning.

179. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 clap beats accurately both with music and unaccompanied. They recognise the slow and fast rhythms in music ranging from a rousing symphony by Saint-Saens to a Bach flute sonata. They can copy a rhythm using percussion instruments. They sing with gusto, clapping the beat in time. In Key Stage 2 pupils know how to use their mouths, tongue and breathing to improve the quality and pitch of their singing. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils accurately echo each line of a new song and keep in tune when singing unaccompanied. They use good diction and appropriate dynamics to tell the story of a song. Pupils learn a range of songs and perform them from memory. They sing four-part rounds to a good standard.

180. Several pupils benefit from individual brass tuition provided by the local education authority. Many instrumentalists can sight-read, play a basic scale and simple tunes, and percussionists are developing a genuine sense of rhythm, and practise hard to perfect their techniques. Overall, all pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. During the inspection the focus of lessons was on instrumental performance, singing and appreciation.

181. Pupils respond well to music. They sing with great enjoyment and work hard to improve their performances in assemblies and at choir practices. These musical activities contribute positively to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. They listen well to teachers, sustaining concentration and remaining motivated. The youngest pupils in reception sing songs unaccompanied with confidence. Many older pupils choose to join the recorder club and attend regularly.

182. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was at least good and in one lesson at Key Stage 2, it was very good. Where teaching is very good, teachers have very secure subject knowledge and are skilled in communicating this to pupils. Such was typified in a Year 5 and 6 class where pupils harmonised vocals in Stockhausen's *Stimmung* style. The teachers have clear learning objectives and plan a coherent programme of work. Most lessons have a good pace, the pupils are well managed and resources are used effectively. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response. They ensure that pupils use their music to enhance activities within the school, such as assemblies and musical productions, and also within the community, for example singing in church and joining other schools in joint presentations.

183. The co-ordinator is a keen advocate of the subject and an accomplished musician. He has compiled a scheme of work, which includes all aspects of the music programmes set out in the National Curriculum. He ensures that a good range of tapes encompassing a variety of world music is in stock, as well as a good supply of tuned and untuned instruments. Although assessment throughout the school is informal an annual test in pitch and rhythm is carried out at the end of Year 1 to identify emerging talent. A strength of the subject is a soundly resourced music room, which is used regularly. The school has improved the planning of music and has maintained sound standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

184. The satisfactory standards in both key stages have been maintained and pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to achieve high standards in swimming.

185. By the age of seven, most pupils show satisfactory control of their bodies and can vary the speed and direction of their movements. They are able to create and sustain a simple movement sequence. They refine their work in response to the teacher's suggestions, and by acting on advice from their classmates who sensitively evaluate each other's performances. They show a sound awareness of space as they move around the hall to music and respond well to changes in mood and tempo by varying their body movements. In a dance lesson where the pupils imagined that they inhabited an underwater world, they showed good levels of control by sustaining slow, flowing movements. They responded readily to instructions and generally made sound progress in refining their movements and improving balance and poise.

186. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed originality when working in groups of three to create a sequence of sudden, staccato movements based on a five-beat rhythm. They collaborated well, sharing ideas, trying out new movements and acting maturely when it proved impossible to make a suggestion fit the rhythm. They worked very hard, persevering to refine the quality of their movements and to work in unison. They show a good awareness of the importance of teamwork. The pupils interpreted two contrasting styles of music well, varying the quality of their movement and showing appropriately developing awareness of sudden and sustained actions, and of deep, medium and high levels of movement. The pupils enjoy their lessons, listen attentively, respond readily to instructions and are keen to experiment and strive to do their best. They watch each other carefully to pick up ideas about how they might improve their own performance and show appreciation of one another's talents.

187. Pupils in Year 4 made good gains in swimming, working hard and putting in a great deal of effort to improve their strokes and to co-ordinate their arm and leg movements. They are confident and self-assured, very well behaved and mindful of their own and others' safety. They enjoy swimming and feel a strong sense of achievement. Higher attaining pupils receive special training to improve their stamina and to enable them to achieve the bronze award, for example.

188. In the small number of lessons seen in both key stages, the teaching was good overall. Lessons are well planned and good attention is given to the scheme of work. The swimming programme is very detailed and sets out precise expectations of the skills that pupils will learn and the rate of progress expected for the majority of the group term-by-term.

189. The teachers have very good control and make judicious use of praise so that the pupils feel their efforts are valued and are encouraged to strive for higher standards of performance. The tasks set are appropriate for pupils of all abilities and are sufficiently open-ended to allow higher attaining pupils to be creative and adventurous in their movements. Teachers assess their pupils' performance and make helpful suggestions on how to improve.

190. The quality of the teaching seen in the three lessons at Key Stage 2 was good and the teaching of swimming was very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory.

191. The curriculum for physical education is suitably broad and balanced and boys and girls have equal opportunities to participate in the full range of activities. Older pupils have the chance to take part in a residential experience where they can try climbing, canoeing and

orienteering, for example. The school has good links with Blackburn Rovers and older pupils participate in inter-school competitions. The range of extra-curricular sports activities includes netball, football and rounders, and although not extensive, the after-school clubs are well attended and the older pupils are appreciative of the chance to become involved.