

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MELLING COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104889

Headteacher: Mr C Ratcliff

Reporting inspector: Mrs C McBride  
2810

Dates of inspection: 30 April- 3 May 2001

Inspection number: 192916

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wheeler Drive Melling Liverpool
Postcode:	L31 6DL
Telephone number:	0151 547 3349
Fax number:	0151 549 2375
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr H Dowell
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2810	Mrs C McBride	Registered inspector	Art and design Information and communication technology Music Religious education Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Quality and range of opportunities for learning Leadership and management
13723	Mrs J Overend	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
1065	Mr J Hagan	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Physical education Foundation Stage	
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	English Design and technology Geography History Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Primary Associates Limited  
West Lancs Technology Management Centre  
Moss Lane View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TN

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33 Kingsway  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Melling Primary School is of average size. Its roll has increased since the last inspection from 191 to 209 pupils. The school has fewer pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, than other schools. It also has fewer pupils learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is average and although pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, overall their social circumstances and their attainment on entry to school are average. Approximately 18 per cent of pupils have not attended nursery before starting school. The school has more boys (120) on roll, than girls (89). In Years 5 and 6, approximately two thirds of pupils are boys.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Melling Primary School is effective in attaining well above average test results by the end of Key Stage 1 and in helping most pupils achieve average levels by the end of Key Stage 2. Its curriculum is not effective enough in providing for pupils' personal and social development. There is good teaching in most literacy and numeracy lessons but it is less good in some other subjects. Routine management by the governors, headteacher and key staff is good, but the school does not have a clear enough direction for its work and this aspect of leadership is unsatisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- School's performance in national tests at Key Stage 1 is well above average
- Grammar, punctuation, spelling and reading are taught well at both key stages
- Children are taught number facts well and they develop a good knowledge of their tables
- The school's good links with the community enrich the curriculum
- In the Foundation Stage (reception class), lively teaching motivates pupils, captures their interests and helps them develop positive attitudes to school.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in religious education and information and communication technology (I.C.T) at both key stages
- Challenge for higher attainers in Key Stage 2
- Pupils' personal development at both key stages and their attitudes to school at Key Stage 2
- Quality and range of the curriculum and entitlement for all pupils
- Leadership is not giving a clear enough direction or firm enough steer to the work of the school

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Over the last few years, it has maintained its high performance in test results at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in English showed most improvement and average standards in mathematics and science have been maintained at Key Stage 2. The school received an achievement award from the Department for Education and Employment in recognition of its results. However, there is room for further, faster improvement. Standards have risen at the expense of other subjects such as information and communication technology, religious education, geography, music and physical education, where standards have fallen since the last inspection. A great deal of time and effort has been put into improving strategies for managing pupils' behaviour and whilst this is now satisfactory overall, standards in

pupils' personal development and attitudes to their work have slipped. Teaching is of a similar quality, although there are a few more unsatisfactory lessons in Key Stage 2. Some strategies for challenging higher achieving pupils have been introduced but the match of work to their needs is still not close enough in lessons and they could achieve more than they do. Whilst the day-to-day management of the school and its administration remain good, it has not been led well by the headteacher in working towards common goals throughout the intervening years. The school's drive towards better test results has not been balanced well with its stated aim of providing a varied and interesting curriculum and there are too many inconsistencies in its practice. The school has addressed all the issues from the previous inspection report to some extent, but with varying degrees of success. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	E	B	B	well above average A above average B
mathematics	C	D	C	D	average C below average D
science	C	C	C	C	well below average E

The school's performance in tests for pupils aged 7 has been consistently very high in mathematics and writing. The latest writing results in 2000 were among the highest 5 per cent in the country. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average in reading, writing and above average in maths and science.

The school's test results for pupils aged 11 show that after slipping behind in 1999, they are now holding their own against primary schools nationally and against those with a similar pupil intake. However, they are not rising as fast as in other schools across the country and inspection findings show that higher achievers could do better.

At the end of both key stages, pupils reach average standards for their age in all other subjects except in information and communication technology, where they are below average and in RE, where they do not meet the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Eleven-year-old pupils reach average standards in swimming. The school concentrates its efforts mainly on literacy, numeracy and science, but does not balance this well enough with work in other subjects. As a result, pupils' achievements in areas other than literacy, numeracy and science are not as strong as they could be. Pupils at both key stages have secure mathematical and scientific knowledge and understanding for their age. They can read with understanding and write accurately. However, they are not as good at applying their knowledge to develop other work or in solving problems.

Children enter the school with average attainment. By the time they leave the reception class, almost all of them achieve what is expected of them in most areas of learning. Many exceed expectations in communication, language and literacy and also in mathematics. Their personal and social development is good overall. In other areas of learning their achievements are more modest and they could achieve more.

The school's targets for pupils aged 11 have been ambitious and whilst it has made concerted efforts and has come close to achieving them, this has been at the expense of standards in other subjects and opportunities for children to achieve well and reach high standards in other aspects.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils in the Foundation Stage show excellent attitudes. Key Stage 1 pupils show mostly positive attitudes; they want to learn and are keen to do well. Attitudes at Key Stage 2 are satisfactory in most lessons. Some pupils however do not concentrate as well as they should and tend to distract others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Mostly good throughout the school. Some restless behaviour during lessons when older pupils are not active enough or tasks are too easy for higher attainers or too hard for others.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory in the reception and infant classes. Unsatisfactory for older children as there are not enough opportunities for them to make a contribution to the school community or to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning; there is little chance for them to evaluate what they have achieved and reflect on what they need to do next. Relationships between pupils are mostly good.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are both satisfactory.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

During the inspection, 11 per cent of lessons were judged very good, 48 per cent good, 34 per cent satisfactory and 7 per cent unsatisfactory.

The school has put the bulk of its teaching efforts into developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. Most pupils learn these skills at a good rate, although the pace is often too slow for higher achievers because work is not challenging enough for them, particularly in Key Stage 2. Although just over half of lessons seen during the inspection were of good or better quality, the impact of teaching over time and throughout all aspects of the school is more satisfactory.

Teaching of numeracy is successful in helping all children to learn number facts and strategies for calculation such as doubling, halving and rounding up. They know their tables facts and understand how to apply the four rules of number and place value. Teaching of literacy enables children to develop a good understanding of what they read, use accurate spellings, punctuation and grammar in their writing and learn a neat handwriting style.

Less attention has been given to extending pupils' skills through using them in other subjects or in supporting their personal and social development. Pupils have too few chances to evaluate their own work and marking does not provide them with enough feedback for them to know how they could improve it further. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to work together as part of investigative work or problem solving activities.

Most of the high quality teaching seen was in Key Stage 2 in information and communication technology and music. This is the best teaching in the school because it motivates and interests children; they are all involved and take a great pride in their achievements. These lessons are exciting and have the spark which too much of the teaching in the school lacks. Lessons in the reception and infant classes are of better overall quality than those in the juniors because teachers create a more productive atmosphere in classrooms, which is more conducive to learning. Infant teachers spend less time trying to maintain order or gain children's attention.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise is shared well; they use this knowledge well to give good demonstrations and explanations. Homework tends to be given at the teacher's discretion and the benefit pupils gain depends largely upon their access to it, which varies between classes.

Pupils with special educational needs learn at a steady pace, although this increases when they are supported in small groups or as individuals. Teaching in the Foundation Stage motivates children well and encourages them to concentrate and develop perseverance with their work. It is successful in promoting children's literacy skills and mathematical development. However, there is scope for children to learn at a faster pace in other aspects of their work and to learn more through play.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. The school has strongly focused its curriculum on raising standards in English, mathematics and science but this has been at the expense of other subjects and the pupils' broader experiences. Some Year 6 pupils do not receive their full curriculum entitlement in religious education and music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils learn at a good rate when withdrawn to work in small groups or when they are supported in class. During some lessons they do not have enough support to cope well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory in most aspects. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their lives and the lives of others but the school does not promote their sense of responsibility well enough.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Child protection procedures and monitoring of attendance are good. The school's procedures for checking on pupils' progress are not effective enough.

Parents are generally satisfied with the school, but there is room for improvement in the way the school communicates with them about what is taught and how well children are progressing.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Day to day management of the school is good but leadership is unsatisfactory. The headteacher is not effective enough in ensuring that agreed school policies are followed or that there is consistency in its work. Some teachers with responsibility for subjects do not have a good enough overview of pupils' standards and achievements in their area.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are interested, committed and involved. They have regular involvement in the work of the school. They keep an eye on standards and compare the school's performance to that of other schools but do not take a strong enough part in shaping the overall direction of the school or in checking that it meets its aims.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has correctly identified its strengths and weaknesses in the school development plan but is not as effective as it should be in bringing about improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The school compares its performance to other schools and seeks to obtain best value for money. Financial and other resources are managed satisfactorily.

The school has sufficient staff and is currently extending and improving its accommodation. There are resource shortages which affect the quality of provision for pupils in information and communication technology, physical education and in the physical area of learning for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like coming to school</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and they make good progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework given in some classes</li> <li>• The information they receive about what the school teaches and how their child is getting on</li> <li>• The range of extra –curricular activities</li> <li>• The behaviour of some children</li> </ul>

Parents hold generally positive views about the school and these are endorsed by the inspection. However, there is room for improvement in all the areas which they have raised.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Over the last few years, the school's strong concentration on teaching reading, writing, mathematics and science have paid off in very good test results at Key Stage 1 and improved results in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. In all subjects, 7 years olds are doing better than pupils from similar backgrounds in other schools. The performance of 7 year olds in the 2000 national tests in writing was among the highest 5 per cent in the country. In some years, pupils aged 7 have also achieved similarly high standards in mathematics and reading.
2. Overall, in tests at aged 11, pupils are holding their own compared to those in other schools. Inspection findings show that there is room for further, faster improvement at Key Stage 2, as more pupils could attain higher standards. Although in the 2000 tests boys did not do as well as girls, this is not a recurring pattern over time.
3. Inspection findings at both key stages do not differ from test results. Pupils' achievements in learning to read with understanding, writing accurately and calculating sums quickly are strong. However, the strength of pupils' work at both key stages is in the knowledge and understanding they have as opposed to their skills or ability to apply what they know to solving problems. In writing, pupils' skills do not develop to a more than average level in Key Stage 2 because they have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects. Similarly in mathematics, pupils show above average knowledge of number facts and can calculate quickly, but are not as skilled in using this knowledge when presented with a practical problem. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of scientific facts for their age at 7 and 11 years but are not as confident at devising their own experiments or suggesting ways to find answers to scientific questions.
4. Pupils' achievement is better at Key Stage 1 and standards are higher because their attitudes to their work and their concentration and perseverance are better overall. Teaching at both key stages does not give pupils enough chance to work together in different ways to solve problems, practise skills or use their own initiative. Whilst the infant children conform to these teaching routines, junior children grow restless with the same approach being used in lessons and there is scope for more imaginative teaching.
5. Although the school has achieved high standards at Key Stage 1 and very respectable standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science, at Key Stage 2 this has been at a cost. Standards in information and communication technology, religious education, music and physical education, geography and music are not as good as they were four years ago, at the time of the last inspection.
6. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Although pupils acquire some factual knowledge about people's religious beliefs during the infants, neither this, nor their understanding of important feelings or religious issues is developed well enough in the juniors.
7. In I.C.T, having been average, standards are now below average at the end of both key stages because pupils have insufficient time to practise their skills on computers. This is partly due to the school's inadequate computer resource, but also because teachers do not plan enough activities, which allow pupils to develop their skills through work in other

subjects. Higher attaining pupils do not always build well on the skills they bring from home.

8. Standards in geography are now average at both key stages, whereas previously, they were above average by the time pupils left the school. This is because less time is given to developing pupils' skills, for example in map reading. Less fieldwork is undertaken and pupils' achievements in these aspects are not as good as they were.
9. Music was also noted by inspectors as above average four years ago, but standards are now more in line with the average for 7 and 11 year olds. This is because the subject leader for music does less teaching in Years 3 and 4. With less specialist input, these pupils do not receive the same quality of teaching as before and their slower progress in these years affects their overall achievement. Also, some Year 6 pupils miss music lessons for the best part of a term whilst preparing for national tests.
10. Whilst previously above average, physical education is now average. Eleven-year-old pupils reach average standards in swimming and most can swim 25 metres. Games skills are not as good because lessons do not offer enough challenge for them to extend their skills further. The school's restricted accommodation in the hall also narrows the range of gymnastic and dance activities which can take place.
11. Most children enter the reception class with average attainment and achieve more than is expected for their age in learning to read and write. They also attain above expectations in learning to count and add up. In other areas of learning almost all achieve what is expected for their age by the time they leave reception but there are not enough opportunities for them to learn through imaginative play and they could achieve more.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make steady gains in literacy and numeracy. Whilst the school has work planned for them to follow, there is sometimes not enough support during lessons to enable them to make good rather than satisfactory progress.
13. The school has shown great determination to improve its performance in national tests. Targets set for the number of pupils aged 11 to achieve the national average in English and mathematics have been ambitious. Whilst it has succeeded in coming close to meeting them, this has been at the expense of achievement in other subjects. Opportunities for children to achieve well and reach high standards in other aspects have decreased.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. Children in the reception class have very positive attitudes to their work and behave very well. They are very enthusiastic learners, for example, when joining in story time with obvious enjoyment and confidence. They come in to class very happily and move quickly from one activity to another when required to do so. They demonstrate high levels of independence when they have their milk, tidy away, wash their hands and settle into the next activity with a minimum of supervision. They are polite in their interactions with adults and each other.
15. Pupils in the infants usually have good attitudes to their learning. Once their interest is engaged in a task they work and sustain their concentration well. They will persevere with harder tasks and work well together in groups or pairs. In the juniors pupils generally demonstrate satisfactory attitudes. When engaged in exciting or practical tasks, as seen in a Year 5 science lesson, the children collaborate well in groups. In this lesson, they

handled equipment carefully and achieved accurate results. However, when lessons are uninspiring some show little interest and become restless, which affects the rate of progress for the whole class.

16. Standards of behaviour are mostly good. In most cases pupils behave well in lessons. They conduct themselves well around school and are compliant in assemblies and the lunch hall. They treat equipment and resources with respect. A significant number of parents at the pre-inspection meeting and on the questionnaires indicated concerns about behaviour in the playground and bullying. During the inspection playgrounds were well supervised and there was no evidence of bullying and incidents of aggression were rare. Small pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour occur in lessons deemed to have unsatisfactory teaching or where work is not well matched to the children's needs. In these lessons pupils pay little attention to the teacher and chat to each other.
17. Relationships between pupils are good but their personal development is unsatisfactory. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and, when given the opportunity, will carry out their job well. They seek out jobs but there are too few opportunities for them to do this. They respond with enthusiasm to charity initiatives such as the recent sponsored event, raising over £900 for care of the elderly. The children have the chance to sit in friendship groups but some take advantage of this privilege rather than accepting the responsibility they have to behave well. There are too few opportunities for the children to extend their independent learning skills, or to show initiative for example, in finding things out for themselves.
18. Attendance is in line with the national average and is satisfactory. There is no unauthorised absence and the children are usually punctual. The school meets its statutory requirements to record and report attendance.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

19. The overall quality of teaching is very similar to that seen at the time of the last inspection although it is now more strongly focused on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In this respect it is successful as pupils attain high standards by the time they are 7, and most reach the average for their age in these areas by the time they leave the school. It is less successful than it was at helping children to achieve high standards in all subjects, fostering their personal development or in extending their literacy and numeracy skills through using them in other aspects of their work.
20. Teachers at Melling evaluate their work and are keen to take on new ideas or suggestions as to how lessons could be improved. The quality of literacy and numeracy lessons for example, has improved because teachers have adapted their work to meet the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy initiatives. There is however, scope for more improvement. Whilst over half of lessons seen during the inspection were of good or better quality, on balance the impact of teaching on the rate of pupils' learning over time and across all aspects of their development shows more of a satisfactory picture.
21. Teaching in the reception and Key Stage 1 classes lays down good foundations for children in learning how to read, write and calculate. Children learn these literacy and numeracy skills at a good rate in the infants. From the reception class onwards, they make rapid gains in understanding how words are formed through good phonic teaching. Teachers put a lot of energy into ensuring that children learn to recognise words and parts of words by sounding them out. Correct handwriting styles are taught and pupils learn how to use punctuation and spell correctly. At Key Stage 2, the overall quality of literacy lessons is good and this enables children to build further on these skills.

22. Despite pupils' competence in literacy, teachers at both key stages rely too much on using worksheets for recording pupils' work in other lessons. This means that children do not have enough scope for writing at more length or recording their views in more imaginative ways as worksheets often require a word or a sentence by way of response. Whereas pupils are learning the early skills of reading and writing at a good pace, their progress slows as they get older because of too little practice in subjects such as history and religious education.
23. Most numeracy lessons have good features at both key stages and pupils develop a good knowledge of mathematical language, number facts and strategies for calculation such as doubling, halving and rounding up. Teachers are good at reinforcing mathematical knowledge and pupils have a secure grasp of their tables facts. They are taught how to apply the four rules of number and the value of different digits.
24. A weakness in junior classes is that the pace of learning is often too slow for higher achievers because work is not challenging them. The school's systems of checking pupils' progress are not strong enough. As a result, teachers do not have a sufficiently accurate view of how far pupils have progressed and where they need to improve. In some lessons therefore, work is not best matched to pupils' needs and often higher achievers are not extended far enough whilst pupils with special needs or lower attainers do not cope well. This sometimes leads to restlessness and boredom and pupils' behaviour starts to slip.
25. Pupils with special educational needs learn literacy and numeracy skills at a steady pace, although this increases when they are withdrawn from class and supported in small groups or as individuals. Classroom assistants and teaching assistants are deployed well. Teachers give them a clear brief about what it is they expect pupils to learn and how they can best support different groups.
26. Although the best teaching was observed in a small number of junior lessons, those in the reception and infant classes are generally of better quality. This is because teachers create a more productive atmosphere in classrooms, which is more conducive to learning. Infant teachers spend less time trying to maintain order or gain pupils' attention.
27. Teachers tend to use one teaching style and rely on the same technique during most lessons. This involves an input by the teacher to the whole class, followed by all pupils working as individuals on the same task with extension activities for those who finish first. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this well to give good demonstrations and explanations. In most lessons however, there is too little opportunity for pupils to show initiative by working together on solving problems, finding things out for themselves or discussing their ideas. Children are not involved enough in assessing and evaluating their own work. Some marking is of good quality but too much of it is cursory and it does not always give pupils a clear idea of how well they have done or what they need to do to improve. Homework tends to be given at the teacher's discretion and the benefit that pupils gain depends largely upon their access to it, which varies between classes.
28. High quality teaching was seen was in Key Stage 2 in information and communication technology and music. This is the best teaching in the school because it motivates and interests children; they are all actively involved in practical tasks and take a great pride in their achievements. In a very good Year 5 music lesson for example, the class worked initially as individuals and small groups to develop a series of complicated rhythms. Their efforts were gradually drawn together by the teacher until the whole class performed a

musical piece. This was an energetic and exciting lesson and had the spark which too much of the teaching in the school lacks.

29. Lively teaching in the reception class engages children's interest and although there are some missed opportunities to extend children's learning through play, there are some situations which capture their imagination well. On one occasion, the teacher told a group of lower attaining children that pirates had come and buried lots of things in the sand. The children started to dig in the sand tray for them and when they found the buried items, they had to sort them into groups of things which either began with the sound 'ch' or which did not. This helped the children develop their knowledge of letter sounds and they concentrated really well for a long time on this enjoyable activity.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

30. Compared to the findings of the last inspection, the quality of the school's curriculum has diminished and it is now unsatisfactory. A high emphasis has been placed upon raising standards in literacy and numeracy and in this the school has been successful. It has not however, balanced this well with providing a rich, interesting curriculum, which meets all its pupils' needs.
31. The school's curriculum ensures that all pupils acquire the skills to read, write and undertake mathematical calculations competently by the time they leave. However, it is not set up in such a way that gives pupils enough chance to practise these skills well through using them in practical situations. In mathematics for example, too little work is undertaken in problem solving or in using number skills in investigations.
32. The school provides a good range of support for pupils who need extra help. Special classes ('booster classes') are held over a period of approximately one term to improve the competence of Year 6 pupils in literacy and numeracy. These are held at the same time each week which means that the pupils miss lessons in religious education and music and do not receive their entitlement to these subjects. Pupils' access to computers is also often limited to a short session each week and too little work is undertaken in developing new skills or in building on those which pupils bring from home.
33. The curriculum takes account of pupils who show an aptitude for music in that they receive tuition from visiting teachers and are able to progress to a good standard in playing string, woodwind and brass instruments. In sport, there are one or two clubs for Year 5 and 6 pupils, but overall extra-curricular activities and clubs are thin on the ground compared to other schools.
34. Pupils with special educational needs are supported satisfactorily having detailed work plans which enable them to work at improving important reading, writing and number skills. Although these plans are fulfilled to a great extent when they are withdrawn to work with the teacher responsible for this aspect, they are not as successfully met in class. In some lessons, pupils with special educational needs are given the same work as the rest of the class and do not cope as well.
35. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Whilst the curriculum planned for them helps them to develop at a steady rate in most areas of learning, there are too few opportunities for them to take learn through play or exploratory activities. In their personal development for example, there is too little scope or support for them to explore different roles and situations as part of their play. A lack of resources for outdoor play means that they do not have access to as wide a curriculum as they should.

36. A significant weakness in the curriculum is that it does not provide well for pupils' personal and social development, particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils have too few opportunities to evaluate their own work, contribute to the school community or take responsibility. There is however, a carefully planned programme of lessons to make children aware of drugs and health issues and to help them keep safe. Community experts and parents are involved in the programme at appropriate points. The 'Kids Excel' club for fitness also extends awareness of health issues.
37. Good relationships exist with other local schools and links with the community help to enrich the children's experiences. Links to commerce support the work of the school for example, through sponsorship of the school newspaper. There are close links with local churches and to external advice agencies, which enhance the curriculum. The community police involvement in the drugs education programme for example, and the school nurse in health education. Pupils make visits to local places of social and cultural interest as well as those linked to work they are undertaking. Community visitors such as a local author visit the school during book week.
38. Although each area is still satisfactory, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not as strong as it was at the time of the last inspection.
39. The Acts of Worship meet statutory requirements and make a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies are mainly Christian in character and are suitably planned to provide times of guided reflection and prayer. Pupil participation is encouraged in the singing, which is clearly enjoyed, whilst others accompany with instruments or operate the overhead projector. The school does not take advantage of opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness through the subjects of the curriculum.
40. The children consider and contribute to their own codes of conduct each year and there are some opportunities for moral debate in personal, social and health education lessons. However with the inconsistent use of the behaviour policy, rewards and sanctions children sometimes show little awareness of the effects of their behaviour on others.
41. The school provides a residential holiday in Year 6 to help children's independence and social skills. They learn about their society through the good community links, visits and visitors. Consideration of the needs of others is promoted through charity initiatives. Opportunities to listen to and value the work and opinions of others are limited as are opportunities for responsibility around school and for using initiative in their own learning.
42. Children experience a wide range of music including music from around the world. Visits to art galleries, museums and places of educational interest help the children appreciate their own traditions and culture as do visitors from the local community. Contrasting locations are studied in geography, as is life in other countries. In religious education other religions are studied but this tends to be limited to facts about customs rather than the people's feeling and beliefs.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

43. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the level of sound provision for the support and guidance of pupils and for ensuring their welfare. Parents are happy with the helpfulness and care of the teachers. The parents of children in the Foundation Stage are given very effective help as they settle in to the school.

44. Attendance is monitored very closely so that there is no unauthorised absence. Attendance promotion has improved since the last inspection with monthly awards for individual children and class awards. The school regularly reminds parents of the need for good punctuality. The effect of all this is to keep attendance and punctuality in line with the national picture for primary schools.
45. The school works very hard to monitor and promote good behaviour. Some lunchtime staff have received training in the best ways to manage children's behaviour. There are clear codes of conduct, rewards and sanctions. The behaviour policy and behaviour incidents are logged and monitored. However the effectiveness of these procedures is only satisfactory due to their inconsistent application. There are procedures for eliminating bullying when it occurs. Class teachers also hold discussions with their class in order that children can express their concerns to them.
46. An effective child protection policy is in place and procedures meet legal requirements. The coordinator has updated her training and ensures staff awareness of child protection issues is kept high. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory. Children are taught about health and safety at appropriate points in the curriculum. The school maintains good levels of supervision of all areas at play and lunchtimes. The new health and safety coordinator is aware of her need for training. While legal requirements have been met, with the new building work, risk assessment, auditing and fire procedures need updating.
47. The procedures for monitoring academic progress are not rigorous enough. The school uses national tests and other forms of assessment to track pupils' achievements. This allows an overview to set targets for groups of children but does not give teachers a clear enough view to plan the next steps for individual children's learning. In some lessons this means that work is not always matched well to pupils' needs.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

48. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall. For the most part, parents are happy with what the school provides for their children. However, a significant minority of them are unhappy with behaviour, particularly in the playground, the amount of homework given in some classes, the small range of extra-curricular activities and the information they receive about what the school teaches and how their child is getting on. Whilst no unacceptable behaviour was noted on the playground during the inspection, the other concerns expressed by parents are around areas where there is scope for improvement.
49. Some parents consider that there is too little information about their children's progress, coming too late in the year to be helpful. However, the school organises two consultation evenings per year, and there are informal opportunities for parents to discuss children's progress with teachers. This is a similar level to that seen in most schools. The end of year reports vary considerably in the details they give on progress made and targets for the next steps of learning. There are good pre school links with parents and the parents of children in the Foundation Stage. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed of their progress.
50. Parents receive good day-to-day information about the school and the monthly bulletin and the school newspaper contain some topic information. A parents' information evening is planned for the beginning of each school year. This is to inform parents of changes to the curriculum or new teaching methods and approaches. The school does make some good



use of homework but the school policy to leave homework up to individual teachers has contributed to parental views that homework is inconsistent between classes and that their involvement in their child's learning could be better.

51. Some parents do help out in school, in the classroom, with extra-curricular activities, on educational visits and with fund raising. These parents make a significant contribution to the work of the school.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

52. The school is managed efficiently, but it is not well led. The governors and headteacher work successfully in managing the school's resources. Together, they ensure that the school is administered well and runs efficiently. All grants and monies, including those for special educational needs are used carefully. However, they do not give a strong enough steer to the work of the school and in this aspect, leadership is unsatisfactory.
53. Much of the time and attention of the governors, headteacher and staff has been rightly given over to the work of raising standards in literacy and numeracy but this has been at the expense of other vital areas of the school's work. As a result, there are weaknesses in the standard of pupils' personal development and in some areas of their achievement. Some of the school's stated aims, particularly in relation to the type and quality of curriculum it provides are not met. The school itself is aware for example, that the curriculum has become narrow and that pupils are missing out on some of the more interesting and enjoyable work. Too much work is aimed at extending pupils knowledge of facts rather than allowing them to use their knowledge in investigating or solving problems. This issue, although recognised by the school, has not been tackled effectively. As a result, although standards are average, they could be higher at Key Stage 2 where some pupils lack motivation in lessons and do not always show the interest they might.
54. Teachers with responsibility for leading subjects (subject leaders), mainly undertake their duties satisfactorily. They support other staff well by providing guidance about what they should teach and how they should do this. In this way, they manage their areas of responsibility well. However, the drive towards higher standards in literacy and numeracy has also meant that much of the school's allocation of time and finance have been directed at these areas. Most of the available time for subject leaders, to monitor work has been used in observing the quality of teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics. There is too little attention paid to checking the outcomes of work and standards achieved in other subjects and this has led to weaknesses in the school's provision not being addressed. In religious education for example, the situation where some Year 6 pupils miss religious education lessons to take part in 'booster classes' over the period of a term, has not been resolved.
55. Management of the school's provision for special educational need is satisfactory. The teacher with responsibility for this area ensures that the school identifies pupils at an early stage and draws up individual education plans for their needs. Their progress is reviewed regularly, but she has too little time to work alongside other teachers in class and gain a more detailed knowledge of how they are coping with their work. Whilst most pupils make good progress in lessons when she withdraws them to teach, their progress in lessons with their own class is not as fast.
56. The headteacher, governors and key staff make a thorough analysis of the school's results in national tests and compare its performance to that of schools with a similar pupil intake. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas in which it needs to improve and plans for improvement take into account the views of the whole

staff. In this respect, the school has common goals. In practice however, some staff do not always follow agreed courses of action and inconsistencies arise. There are, for example, different approaches among the staff to handling matters of pupil behaviour and discipline. Also, homework is not allocated with the same consistency between classes. These are issues rightly raised by parents as matters of concern. The headteacher's leadership in these areas has not been effective enough in ensuring that there is a great enough degree of consistency in the school's work.

57. The school is currently undertaking a building programme that will expand its accommodation and result in improved facilities such as the hall. Some aspects of the current accommodation are drab and whilst there are bright and stimulating displays in classrooms, some of the furniture is in very poor repair and the décor of the building is shabby. This does not provide pupils with attractive surroundings or a focus for pride in their school.
58. In most subject areas, the school has sufficient resources to teach subjects to a satisfactory extent. In information and communication technology though, there are too few computers to allow pupils enough time to develop their skills. Pupils in the Foundation Stage do not have the fullest curriculum range they should because there is no facility for them to have access to large climbing apparatus or wheeled vehicles.
59. Melling School receives an average amount of money compared to most schools. It enables the majority of pupils to achieve average standards by the time they leave in most aspects of their learning, although not in their personal development. In all, the school has addressed the issues raised by the last inspection to a satisfactory extent, but because of weaknesses in the leadership in implementing its agreed aims, it has not improved as rapidly as it could have done. Taking these factors into account, on balance the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

60. **Following the inspection of the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should strive to maintain the school's performance in test results but should seek to balance this with improvements to the following areas of work:**

- (1) Standards in Religious education at both key stages by:**

- ensuring that all pupils receive their full entitlement to lessons
- teachers follow the agreed scheme of work closely
- recording more work in the subject, particularly at Key Stage 2
- monitoring the outcomes of pupils' work more closely

(Paragraph references 06, 22, 32, 54, 171-177)

**(2) Standards in information and communication technology at both key stages by:**

- allowing pupils sufficient access to computers to develop their skills
- planning for opportunities within other subjects where pupils could develop their skills

(Paragraph references: 05, 07, 28, 58, 114, 124, 146-151)

**(3) Challenge for higher attainers in Key Stage 2 by:**

- improving the school's systems for assessing pupils' progress and identifying areas for improvement
- providing a better match of work for these pupils in lessons
- providing more opportunities for them to extend their work through homework

(Paragraph references: 02, 03, 24, 47, 98, 100, 102, 108, 117, 123)

**(4) Pupils' personal development at both key stages and their attitudes to school at Key Stage 2 by:**

- giving pupils more opportunities to engage in practical tasks during lessons
- creating more chances for pupils to use their own initiative through solving problems or setting up investigations in mathematics and science work
- using a greater variety of teaching styles which allow for children to work together on tasks and develop team work and co-operation
- giving pupils more opportunities to record work in different ways , using less worksheets
- creating more chances for older pupils to take responsibility and contribute to the school community

(Paragraph references: 17, 19, 22, 27, 35, 36)

**(5) The quality of the curriculum and entitlement for all pupils by:**

- ensuring a better balance between the school's work in reading, writing, mathematics and science and the other subjects of the curriculum
- arranging support or 'booster classes' at times which do not prevent pupils from receiving their full curriculum entitlement

(Paragraph references: 30-37, 53)

**(6) The leadership of the school and the steer it gives to the direction of the school's work by:**

- undertaking a review of the school aims
- regularly monitoring the work of the school to ensure that its aims are met in practice
- ensuring that school policies are followed consistently by all staff
- keeping a close eye on the outcomes of pupils' work and the standards achieved in all subjects

(Paragraph references: 52-58, 116, 125, 136, 141, 145, 160, 177)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	48	34	7	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	209
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	28

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	15	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	26	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	96 (100)	93 (100)
	National	82 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	25	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	86 (96)	89 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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
		199/00	10	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	8
	Girls	22	22	26
	Total	28	29	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (71)	81 (71)	94 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	8
	Girls	22	22	26
	Total	28	29	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (71)	79 (71)	94 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	209
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/00[ ]
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	£
Total income	379,482
Total expenditure	369,029
Expenditure per pupil	1,670
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,756
Balance carried forward to next year	29,367

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	209
Number of questionnaires returned	50

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	36	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	38	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	52	12	6	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	44	18	8	0
The teaching is good.	66	20	6	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	44	14	8	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	40	8	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	32	52	6	8	2
The school is well led and managed.	32	54	4	10	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	48	4	6	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	44	26	6	8



## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

61. Children start school in the academic year in which they are five. Most children have either attended a nursery or had some pre school experience. Overall, their attainment on entry to the reception class is average.
62. The school has established effective procedures for admitting children into the reception class. Parents visit the school in the summer term. They are asked to complete a booklet with their child, which they give to the reception teacher. This enables her to gain a valuable insight into her pupils before they start full time. At the beginning of the school year the children are admitted in small groups of eight over a period of four weeks. During their first two weeks children go home at lunchtime. These systems help the children to gain confidence and settle quickly into the reception class.
63. Relationships between staff and parents are good. Parents are very pleased with the education their children receive in the Foundation Stage. They are given opportunities to learn how they can best support their child's learning' for example when they are invited into school to discuss the results of the initial assessments the teacher completes on their child. During this meeting staff explain to parents how their children have got on. They explain what the child is doing well in and what areas they need to focus on. Parents are then given advice on how they might best support their child's learning at home. This is an effective way of involving the parents in their child's education.
64. The overall provision for the foundation stage is satisfactory. It has some very good features and some shortcomings. It supports children really well in becoming confident, happy and secure. It enables children to develop their reading, writing and number skills and achieve beyond the national standards (Early Learning Goals). However it does not provide as effectively for some aspects within a number of areas of learning, for example in children's personal and emotional development and physical development. This is because of a number of reasons. Not enough opportunities are provided for children to extend their learning through play and adults do not make best use of opportunities to support children's learning in play-based situations. There are also resource shortages that limit the opportunities children can have to improve in aspects of physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

65. By the end of the reception year most children are likely to achieve the standard expected for their age. They make best progress in learning to co-operate, look after themselves and become independent because adults expect them to look after their own needs. However, their progress in developing their imagination and extending their learning through play though satisfactory, is slower. This is because teaching in this aspect is satisfactory overall with some good features.
66. A particular strength of the teaching is seen in the way children are helped to develop very positive attitudes to school. They are happy, confident and secure. They are well behaved and are able to concentrate for sustained periods of time. They listen carefully during class and group sessions. All the adults working with the children demonstrate a warm and supportive approach to which pupils respond really well. They are consistent and caring in

the way they organise and manage the children. As a result children have very good relationships with adults and one another.

67. Children respond well to opportunities to do everyday jobs such as taking the register to the secretary's office. They are expected to look after their own needs and respond well to these expectations. Most of them are able to get themselves ready for physical education lessons.
68. They will take turns and share equipment and work well together. For example, during role-play in the 'café,' they co-operate well, serving each other with meals and taking turns.
69. Whilst they are given opportunities to plan what they want to do some of the activities are not well used by the adults to support children's imagination or extend their learning through play. Some of the activities need more interesting and stimulating resources to enable children to get the best benefits from the activity.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

70. Most of the children are already exceeding the standards expected of them by the time they are six.
71. They make good progress in all aspects of this area of learning because the teaching is consistently good. The staff have high expectations and children respond really well to these. As a result, children make very good progress in developing their writing skills.
72. When they start in reception they are taught to form their letters correctly and copy work written for them. As the children gain confidence and improve their letter formation staff encourage them to have a go on their own. As a result most of them are able to produce recognisable words and are starting to form sentences. Higher attainers move on quickly and are able to write independently using capital letters and full stops correctly.
73. Staff expect children to use their own word dictionaries to help them with their writing. If they are not sure how to spell a word they will see if it is in their word dictionary and if not they will attempt to write it without adult support. Higher attainers are using their own word dictionaries well to help them write their independent pieces. Children learn to write for different purposes. Many of them for example, had written their own postcards as part of the 'holiday topic.'
74. The teaching of reading is good. A strong emphasis is given to teaching children to know letter names and sounds. Children use this knowledge well to help them with their reading. They are confident enough to try to sound out a word if they are stuck. Most can already recognise the majority of the key words they are expected to know by the end of reception. Higher attainers are already reading books independently at home and in school.
75. The staff are good at telling stories in a lively and interesting way which helps children to recall the story well. This is helping them to develop an enjoyment and love of books.
76. They know how to handle books correctly because they are shown how to do it. They are learning that there are different types of books and how they can use them. In one lesson for example, the teacher showed them a non-fiction book. They knew what title means and what the contents page tells them. The teacher then introduced a new term, 'glossary' and asked the children to predict what this might mean. Whilst they struggled with this the teacher showed them where to find it in the book and explained carefully how they could use it. To reinforce this difficult idea she used the large display of words beginning with,

'Ch sound,' She asked a child to say one and then asked them how could they describe what the word meant to someone in Year 1 who didn't understand it. One child selected the word chopstick and explained to the class what it was made of and how it was used. The children soon grasped this idea and this helped them to learn how to use a glossary and find information for themselves.

77. Children achieve well in their speaking and listening skills because the teacher has established very good relationships with the class. This gives the children confidence to speak out and ask questions. They are listened to carefully and their contributions are valued. They are taught to listen to one another and this they do well.

### **Mathematical development**

78. Most children are already meeting and some are exceeding the standards expected of them by the time they are six. Although too much emphasis is given to children recording maths work on worksheets and in workbooks this is the only shortcoming in the teaching that is good overall.
79. Children are well motivated by enthusiastic teaching and activities, which capture their imagination. A good example of this was when the children came into class one day the teacher told them that all the numbers had fallen off the number line. She asked them if they could help her to put them back. They enjoyed the task and set about it with enthusiasm. It was an effective strategy that helped them to further their understanding of how to order numbers.
80. Another good strategy involves the children playing games with 'teddy.' In one such game, the children were shown the number 6 and asked to clap the correct number of times so that teddy could find it on the number line. The children enjoyed this particularly when teddy was asked to point to the correct number on the number line. The teacher also made good use of the activity to help children develop an understanding of more and less by asking them, 'Is this number more or less than this one?'
81. When working as part of a small group of children they receive good quality teaching and support. As a result all children including those with special educational needs are making good progress. They achieve really well in their recognition of numbers and counting skills. Most of the children can count to 10 and higher attainers are going well beyond this with some of them counting and recognising numbers beyond 20. They are able to add numbers together and use appropriate strategies such as using a number line and adding on. As they become confident the teacher challenges them further by getting them to start to solve problems using what they know and can do.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

82. The provision and teaching for this aspect are satisfactory with some good features. It enables most children to meet the expected standard by the time they are six and some to exceed them. Staff are good at developing children's understanding of scientific concepts, for example, of growth. They make good use of illustrations to help children understand how things grow and change. The teacher drew their attention to large illustrations on the windows that showed how a caterpillar changes into a butterfly. Children's learning is further supported through the opportunities they are given to observe changes such as frogspawn into tadpoles and tadpoles into frogs. Children are fascinated by these and will often go to the tank in the classroom to see how the tadpoles are doing.

83. Weaknesses in the provision occur because there is too much teacher direction and not enough opportunities for children to initiate their own ideas or select and use a variety of tools. Whilst they make satisfactory progress in developing an awareness of the use of technology through listening to tapes and playing with calculators and tills in the 'Class café,' they do not have access to a computer in the classroom to further support their learning and understanding.
84. Opportunities to develop children's understanding of other cultures are rather limited and as a result children's progress in this aspect is satisfactory.

### **Physical development**

85. There is a weakness in this area of learning because the provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory. The school does not have a designated outdoor play area for children under six. There are no resources to support large-scale movements such as climbing or wheeled vehicles to help children develop gross motor control skills. As a result they can not offer children sufficient opportunities or challenge them to further improve in this area of their development.
86. Whilst the children have a weekly outdoor physical education lesson, weather permitting, they do not have opportunities for short periods of physical play on a daily basis. In the one outdoor lesson seen the teaching was good. Resources were well used to support children's learning. Each child was given a ball and encouraged to throw and catch it. As they became more successful the teacher increased the level of challenge by asking them to work in pairs to throw and catch to one another. By the end of the lesson some children were catching the ball more often than they were dropping it.
87. The teachers provide sufficient opportunities for children to practise and improve their fine control skills. They are able to handle and work with smaller objects and equipment. This enables them to make good progress and learn through practising. For example they are able to handle and manipulate small jigsaw pieces and use scissors, pens and glue with increasing skill. They are able to use these fine control skills well, for example when they get ready for physical education to manipulate buttons and zips.

### **Creative development**

88. By the time they are six most children will meet the standards expected of them. They have average skills when they enter reception and they make satisfactory progress.
89. Teaching is satisfactory, but there is for improvement for example, in the way that adults support and extend children's imaginative play. Whilst there are good examples of this, they are too infrequent and the value of play is not sufficiently recognised. Children would benefit from more frequent opportunities for creative and imaginative play and from adult support when they are engaged in it. Whilst children are given opportunities to paint, draw and make models it is too directed by adults. This approach reduces opportunities for children to experiment for themselves and use their imaginations.

### **ENGLISH**

90. Standards seen at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and writing have improved since the last inspection. Pupils attain above the expected level for their age in reading and writing and have maintained high standards over time. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory.

91. Standards seen at the end of Key Stage 2 are similar to those previously reported and are consistent with those expected of eleven year olds.
92. The results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2000 show that pupils attained above the national average in reading whilst their performance in writing was very high.
93. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 2000 attainment was above average, because of the level of extra support and training given following a dip in standards the previous year. Taking the results over time, standards have been maintained at the national average.
94. Over time girls attain slightly higher standards than boys. However the improved strategies for teaching basic literacy skills has been effective in that no noticeable difference in standards of girls and boys is now discernible. The school's results are on a par with those schools whose pupils come from similar backgrounds,.
95. Reading and writing skills are taught well. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of letter sounds in the early years so pupils approach their reading and writing confidently. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are given appropriate emphasis throughout Key Stage 2.
96. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are fluent and confident readers. Pupils read accurately and understand what they read. All pupils enjoy books and speak enthusiastically about their favourite stories. Pupils recognise most words and demonstrate their understanding by accurately predicting what might happen next in the story. They know the differences between fiction and non-fiction books and know how to use contents and index pages to find information. Reading skills are developed well throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils enjoy an increasing range of texts and become competent and confident readers. Pupils can talk about plot recognising themes such as suspense or humour and about differences in how the characters are presented. All pupils enjoy reading and some higher attainers list their favourite series of books, which span a broad range of interest.
97. Pupils' writing skills are developed well throughout the Foundation Stage and in Year 1. Spelling and handwriting are taught well, so pupils apply those skills confidently. Consequently by the end of Year 1, most pupils write sentences independently in a clear legible style. By the end of the key stage, pupils write in well-constructed sentences, correctly punctuated with capital letters and full stops. They use speech marks accurately to denote dialogue. The standard of presentation and handwriting is good. Pupils practise effective strategies to help them gain a better understanding of language such as changing the emphasis on particular words in order to change the underlying meaning of the sentence.
98. Although pupils' achievement in writing is good in relation to national expectations, they are not given sufficient opportunity to apply their writing skills to express their ideas in depth in other curriculum subjects. Opportunities for example, to write creatively about their 'Island Home' in geography were missed in Year 2, and science work is recorded too frequently on work sheets. Opportunities for writing in all subjects of the curriculum are limited in Key Stage 2. The writing skills, which pupils learn well by the end of the previous key stage, are not sufficiently applied in order to help pupils become good all-round writers. In history for example, pupils are too often required only to record in pictures and are not expected to use appropriate historical language in context. There is an over-use of work sheets to record science and very little written work for religious education. The result of these

weaknesses is that pupils attain average standards, when given their starting point, some could achieve more.

99. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 1, pupils are attentive and eager to take part in discussion. They answer questions confidently and express clear views when talking about things that interest them. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils generally respond well in small group discussion and confidently talk about their work and other interests. This is not always evident in some lessons however where there is a reluctance to volunteer answers and a lack of enthusiasm for discussion. There was a well planned opportunity in Year 5 to promote speaking skills when a pupil gave a short presentation to the class about his interest in golf. His peers listened with interest and asked relevant questions afterwards. Such examples are not a feature of the English curriculum. Drama, role-play and debate are not regularly planned so pupils do not develop the personal skills of speaking to an audience confidently.
100. The quality of teaching in literacy lessons is good overall, with a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have embraced the National Literacy strategy well. Recent support from the local education authority and focused in-service training has led to more consistent approach and enabled the school to maintain standards at Key Stage 1 whilst reversing a decline in attainment over the past two years at Key Stage 2. Most teachers plan lessons well with a clear outline of what pupils will learn. These objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson so they know what is expected of them. Where teaching is unsatisfactory there is not enough focus on what pupils will know by the end of the lesson. Tasks do not always challenge pupils sufficiently and higher attainers mark time.
101. The pace of most teaching is generally brisk. This keeps pupils alert and interested. A good example of this was in a Year 1 lesson. The teacher used good resources to maintain pupils' interest, and these gave clear examples for learning. Good questioning, with time for pupils to demonstrate using the resources, kept them on task. The teacher skilfully assessed pupils' knowledge before moving on to the next skill. Good learning in a Year 6 lesson also resulted from the teacher's effective use of resources, enabling a shared analysis of the text which had the added interest of having been written by an eleven year old. Pupils applied their earlier knowledge of explanatory texts well in their critical analysis. The use of transparent sheets which were shown to the class on the overhead projector was a successful strategy. It enabled the whole group to share in the evaluation of each other's work. A similar opportunity to share ideas was missed in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were not encouraged to check each other's re-drafted work on punctuation. Consequently pupils' personal development as well as their writing skills were not promoted as well as they might have been. The quality of marking is inconsistent. The best practice is seen in Year 6 books where marking attempts to help pupils identify how well they are meeting their targets. Overall, most marking does not sufficiently indicate to pupils how work can be improved.
102. The leadership and management of English are satisfactory. Effective strategies such as the monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator and local authority advisers have helped to maintain standards. The school exceeded the targets it set in the 2000 national curriculum tests for eleven year olds. The co-ordinator clearly identifies areas for development such as more effective analyses and use of assessments to set individual and group targets. Currently, weaknesses in this area mean that higher attaining pupils are not always challenged well enough in some lessons. Whilst there is a stronger focus on basic literacy skills, there is not an agreed approach to the planning and delivery of a broader English curriculum encompassing a wider variety of speaking and writing experiences.

## MATHEMATICS

103. The standards attained by children aged 7 in the national tests taken in the Year 2000 were well above average when compared with all schools. At age 7 the school has maintained consistently high standards in the national tests over the last four years. Inspection findings indicate that the present Year 2 is likely to achieve, once again, well above average standards. The standards attained by pupils' aged 11 have fluctuated over the past four years. In the most recent tests in 2000 they were average when compared with all schools but below average when compared with those of a similar kind. Inspection findings are that the standards in the present Year 6 are average. When compared with the last inspection, standards are now much higher in the infants moving from average to well above average. Standards in the juniors have remained the same.
104. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are given additional adult support to help them develop numeracy skills.
105. Throughout the school pupils make best progress in their number work and understanding about shapes and their properties and how to measure. They develop a good understanding of place value as they move through the school. In the infants they experience working with numbers up to a thousand and learn the value of each digit. By the time they are in Year 6 they extend their understanding and are able to identify the value of each digit in a six-figure number. Higher attainers are able to apply their understanding of place value to decimal numbers. In the infants and juniors most children have a good recall of their times tables and number bonds. Children are taught well in how to round numbers for example, to the nearest ten and use this as a method for estimating answers or checking the reasonableness of their answer.
106. There are inconsistencies in the teaching quality because it ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Overall it is better in the infants where all lessons were judged to be good. In the juniors it is satisfactory. This picture is different from that found during the last inspection. Teaching is now better in the infants but in the juniors it is now satisfactory compared with being good last time.
107. Whilst all groups of children make satisfactory progress, higher attainers could achieve more. Often teachers set the whole class the same activity requiring all of them to complete the same set number of pages from the commercially published scheme or photocopied worksheets. As a result of this work is often too easy for higher attainers. Extension activities are planned for those who finish the set pages and often higher attainers would have been better challenged by doing these straight away rather than plodding through the other work.
108. There are weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures. These occur because the system is not effective enough in helping teachers to know what small steps children need to take to improve further. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan work that is matched well to pupils' abilities. This affects higher attaining pupils in particular.
109. All children, but particularly those in Key Stage 2 do not do as well in using and applying their knowledge. This is because insufficient emphasis is given to problem solving and investigative activities. Progress is no more than satisfactory and once again higher attainers would benefit from more opportunities to undertake investigations.
110. Pupils' response to mathematics is not as good as was noted at the time of the last inspection because there is a narrow approach to teaching and learning which is not

supporting children's personal development or fostering positive attitudes to the subject. There is an over emphasis on one style of teaching which is mainly by the teacher doing most of the talking and giving too little chance for pupils to work things out for themselves. They are not given enough opportunities to record answers in their own format or to use and apply skills they learn to solve problems or engage in mathematical investigations. There is too much recording of mathematics on worksheets or pages of a workbook throughout the school. As a result, pupils do not derive satisfaction or take enough pride in their work. There are some who are not well motivated and are bored by the work. Overall, these are factors which restrict opportunities for children's personal development and independence. In lessons where the teacher encourages pupils to participate in practical activities, they make much better progress. In a Year 1 lesson for example, the children were given the opportunity to undertake practical activities that supported their learning well. They used a mirror to see if the letters of the alphabet had or didn't have a line of symmetry. As the lesson progressed they were able to identify correctly if the letter was or was not symmetrical. Some of them began to realise that some letter shapes have more than one line of symmetry.

111. In some lessons children sit in friendship groups. Unfortunately in some junior classes this does not work well because some children distract others from their work and they lose concentration
112. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they use and emphasise the correct mathematical terms. As a result, children have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. The teaching is successful in helping children to develop different strategies to work out answers in their heads. They learn how to use what they already know to work out what they do not know. In a Year 3 lesson, the children were being introduced to the four times table for the first time and the teacher explained how they could use their knowledge of the 2 times table to work out answers. In Year 5, when adding number pairs children used rounding and knowledge of doubles and near doubles to answer the questions. They are taught the importance of estimating an answer to check the reasonableness of their calculation. Whilst older children can do this successfully when adding and subtracting numbers they are less successful when applying this strategy to estimating answers to sums, such as 46 times 51.
113. The numeracy strategy is being used in each class and this has helped teachers to develop children's mental arithmetic skills and their confidence in dealing with numbers. However teachers are often too concerned over making sure that the recommended time for each part of the lesson is strictly adhered to. This over adherence sometimes has a negative impact upon the quality of teaching and learning, as there is little flexibility in the lesson to allow for ideas to be consolidated or for practice on more difficult areas.
114. Information technology is not generally used well to support learning in mathematics. There are some good examples of it being used to help children's learning and speedy recall of tables. However, overall, children have very little opportunity to make use of computers to develop their work in handling data in graphs or tables.
115. The school has set challenging target for its Year 6 pupils in the national tests. It is providing effective support for pupils who are close to achieving the expected Level 4, in Year 6, through opportunities to attend a booster class where the subject leader teaches the lessons.



116. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has observed teachers teaching, talked to them about what worked well and how they could make other parts of their teaching better. The school has analysed children's test papers to identify weaknesses in children's learning. Analysis showed, for example, that children's interpretation of graphs was insecure and so more emphasis has been given to this aspect of mathematics this year. The subject leader has a good overview of standards at the end of Year 2 and 6. However, he does not have a clear view on the progress children make in the different year groups or where children experience difficulties. One reason for this is because insufficient emphasis is given for checking and evaluating standards for example, through the scrutiny of pupils' work samples.

## **SCIENCE**

117. Pupils' standards in their knowledge and understanding of scientific facts at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above average. These good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Over the last four years in the national tests results have been average for pupils aged 11. The school is successful in getting more of its children to reach the national Level 4 than other schools but its results in achieving the higher Level 5 are more average. One reason for this is because children's standards in the using and applying of science are no more than satisfactory. Too little emphasis is given to this element of the subject because much of the time is spent on getting children to learn facts.
118. Teaching is satisfactory in both the infants and the juniors. Teachers are more successful in getting children to improve their knowledge of science and less successful in helping children to improve their scientific skills.
119. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Explanations are clear and all teachers use good questioning techniques to draw out information from children. As a result pupils make good gains in their knowledge of scientific facts. Pupils in Year 1 for example, are able to sort materials into those that would or would not be attracted to a magnet. Through good questioning by the teacher, the children began to realise that for the object to be magnetic it had to contain iron. This knowledge is built on well as they progress through the school. By Year 6 children are able to show a good understanding of the properties of different materials and classify them as solids, liquids or gases. They know for example, that helium is a gas, it is lighter than air and they can name some of its uses.
120. Children show a good understanding of scientific vocabulary because the teachers place a good emphasis on this aspect. Teachers also ensure children are aware of safety issues for example, when handling substances or learning about electrical circuits.
121. The content of the curriculum and the teaching is focused on ensuring children learn and remember scientific knowledge and facts. As a result children make good gains in their learning, for example, about living things, physical science and materials. There are weaknesses in the teaching however, which result in children not using their own initiative well enough. For example, in following their own ideas or selecting which equipment they will use. The teachers too closely direct much of the work when an experiment is to be undertaken. It is mostly the teacher who sets the question to be explored. There are too few opportunities to develop their skills through forming a hypothesis, testing it out and reaching and recording their own conclusions.
122. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress mainly because they are well supported by adults during lessons.

123. There are weaknesses in the school's assessment systems because there are no whole school agreed ways for assessing and recording pupils' progress. As a result teachers are not always sure what children already know and can do and this makes it difficult for them to plan work that is well matched to the different ability groups. All of the class follow the same work and at times it is too easy for higher attainers.
124. Teachers make good use of children's knowledge and skills learned in mathematics, such as data handling, to support science teaching and learning. Children are confident and able to interpret information, which they have set out in graph form. However, information technology is not used well to support work in science. Few results of experiments are recorded on computers for example, by using graphs or tables.
125. The subject leader has introduced a scheme of work to guide and support teachers' planning and has identified the need to improve the system for assessment. Although satisfactory overall, a weakness in the leadership is that it does not focus sharply on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

126. Standards in art are similar to those noted during the last inspection as they are average at the end of both key stages. All pupils experience a good range of media and they develop their skills at a steady pace. In both infants and juniors, pupils have opportunities to try out different techniques including 2 and 3-dimensional work, although the range covered is wider in the juniors.
127. The work of infant pupils shows that they are developing drawing skills satisfactorily. They reach average standards in drawing and their illustrations of figures demonstrate a growing appreciation of proportion and an eye for detail. They use pencils, charcoal and chalk to draw and produce different effects.
128. Most pupils are confident to work with different materials and enjoy experimenting with them. Year 2 pupils for example, made coil pots with clay. Some pupils showed better than average dexterity and understanding of the way the clay needed to be moulded and shaped.
129. At Key Stage 2, pupils have more opportunities to look at the differences and similarities in the work of other artists and to try out some of these techniques for themselves. Year 6 pupils for example, produced striking work with silhouettes having first studied the technique of artists famous for this style. Printing techniques are also developed well in the junior classes with pupils using a variety of media including wax and polystyrene. Pupils show steady gains in their understanding of how to mix and use colour to good effect.
130. Pupils drawing skills remain average at 11 years, although good teaching in Year 3 accelerates learning to a faster pace and pupils develop their skills in using tone and shading well.
131. Teaching is satisfactory overall but with some better, more skilled teaching in Year 3 by the subject leader. Most teachers do not have a good knowledge of the techniques they are expected to teach but have gained more confidence to try out new ideas and they are supported well by the subject leader. Standards in the school do not rise above average however, because too little attention is given to helping pupils evaluate and develop their work, for example through better and more continuous use of their sketchbooks or by comparing ideas with others.

132. Good leadership of the subject is resulting in increased confidence and more adventurous lessons. The teacher with responsibility for leading art keeps a close eye on pupils' finished products and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in standards. She identifies areas where teaching and learning could be improved and takes action. At present for example, she is acting to improve the amount of work that pupils do with textiles.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

133. Standards in design and technology are average at the end of both key stages. This is consistent with standards previously reported.
134. Although only one lesson was seen, evidence of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates a satisfactory range of designing and making experiences throughout the school. In Year 1 for example, pupils link their work with science lessons by designing and using construction materials to build habitats for different animals. By the end of the key stage pupils explore simple mechanisms such as axles and wheels when constructing vehicles. 'Movement' is further explored in Year 4 when they build 'pop - up' models. Year 5 pupils improve their marketing skills, by evaluating the taste and packaging of a range of biscuits, before making their own. Technology is linked effectively with history in Year 6 because pupils use their knowledge and skills to build rigid 'shelters'. The challenge becomes more purposeful when they test to see if an egg placed in their shelter survives an impact.
135. In the lesson seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. The teacher provided a good range of packages for pupils to evaluate before deciding on their own design, having first considered materials, style and purpose of the product. Pupils learned for example, that the age of the user is likely to influence the final design,
136. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Whilst the co-ordinator monitors some outcomes, there is not enough analysis of standards to plan improvements. Although the range of work undertaken is satisfactory, it is covered in varying depth by different year groups. Some more technical aspects for example, the exploration of movement, is less challenging than it might be.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

137. Average standards have been maintained since the last inspection at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 standards are average also. This is slightly lower than those previously reported.
138. Pupils gain satisfactory knowledge and understanding by the end of key stage 1. At Key Stage 2 there is not enough emphasis on teaching geographical skills. Older pupils especially have limited experiences of fieldwork.
139. By the end of Year 1 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the locality around their school. They observe the man-made features such as shops and different types of housing and record their ideas about how the environment could be improved. Early mapping skills are developed effectively by drawing routes, for example showing the journey from home to school. Year 2 pupils study areas beyond their own locality. They learn about living on an island linking this well with stories about a character they read about in literacy lessons. Year 3 pupils build satisfactorily on their earlier learning about the locality. They use local maps to identify features such as housing or farmland. In Year 4, pupils learn about the contrasting life style of the people living on the Caribbean island of

St. Lucia. Year 5 pupils undertake a study of the area around Keswick and the effects of tourism as well as human settlement. Year 6 pupils develop their knowledge of physical geographical features such as rivers. Pupils in Year 6 develop demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of European countries and are familiar with the main features of the world map.

140. No lessons were seen at key Stage 1 so an overall judgement on teaching quality cannot be made. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the lessons seen in Key Stage 2. Teachers prepare lessons carefully and effectively use the resources which are available. Year 5 pupils for example made good use of atlases to provide the background information for their new study about the water cycle. In a Year 6 lesson pupils used an interactive CD to support their learning. The practical nature of the work provides an enthusiastic response from pupils but recording of geography using mathematical writing or information and communication technology skills is not sufficiently developed.
141. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator has recently assumed responsibility so leadership has not yet had an impact on development. National subject guidance is used as a basis for long term planning but this has not yet been integrated into a scheme of work which fully addresses the systematic learning of geographical skills. There are no agreed systems throughout the school for assessing or recording pupils' progress.

## **HISTORY**

142. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection when they were judged to be average.
143. Pupils at both key stages have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of events of the past. Key Stage 1 pupils learn about changes over time by studying artefacts from the past and comparing them with those of today. Year 2 pupils learn about significant people and events. For example, they hear the story of the Fire of London or find out about Florence Nightingale and her influence on nursing practices. Pupils develop a sense of chronology in Year 3 by studying the invasion and settlement of Britain from the Roman to the end of the Viking eras. Year 4 pupils use their research skills to find out facts about Henry VIII and reasons for his marriages. In Year 5, pupils learn about the ancient Greek civilisation and how Greek influence is still evident today. Year 6 pupils know about life in Britain since the 1930's focusing particularly on the effects of World War II on everyday life.
144. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but generally stronger in Key Stage 1 because pupils are better motivated by good use of interesting resources. In a Year 1 lesson for example, pupils had a wide range of toys from the past to examine and play with. Pupils were particularly enthralled with the top and whip. The Year 2 teacher captured pupils' interest well by producing Braille books for the pupils to examine. This fired their imaginations and they asked questions eagerly to gain more information. Pupils used reference books and CD ROMs effectively in Year 6 when researching facts about life in the 1950s. They were well motivated and some good collaborative work resulted. Occasionally, pupils are expected to spend too long in discussion without the support of visual resources. When this happens pupils become distracted and learning is less effective.
145. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Since the time of the previous inspection the school has incorporated national subject guidance. Information books and CD resources have been enhanced, but there is still a need for more artefacts to support learning. Leadership is not as effective as it should be because teaching and outcomes are not monitored

clearly enough in order to plan for improvement. There is no agreed school system for assessing and recording of pupils' attainment and progress.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

146. Standards in information and communication technology are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection. At the end of both key stages, for the majority of pupils', their attainment is below that expected for their age. A few older junior pupils with access to computers at home are competent users of many aspects of technology.
147. The school's provision in this subject has not kept pace with the rapid developments and changes in the requirements in technology over the last four years. Standards have slipped owing to a variety of other additional reasons, not least of which is the inadequate number of reliable, up-to-date computers available to pupils. The school's drive to raise standards in literacy and numeracy has meant that its pressing priority has been to implement initiatives to improve these aspects. This has meant that the development of information and communication technology has proceeded at too slow a pace.
148. By the time they leave the school, most pupils have had too limited an experience to achieve average standards. Their strongest achievements are in preparing information, for example, by creating a class data base and ensuring that information is correctly entered in different categories. Junior children are also involved in publishing the school newspaper and are able to organise text, move it around and add photo images to the articles. Access to computers in school for most pupils is very limited and currently the teacher with responsibility for leading the subject teaches groups of 8 pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 on a rotation basis.
149. The quality of teaching in these lessons is very good as the subject leader is skilled and knowledgeable. She provides good demonstrations and explanations and the small group size enables her to support pupils very effectively and ensure they make good progress. She explains carefully to each group what it is that she expects them to achieve during the lesson, and pupils concentrate hard and persevere well during lessons because they see the purpose of activities. Year 6 pupils for example, were learning how to make changes to their work by moving it around the screen and altering the order of their paragraphs.
150. Whilst there are limited numbers of computers available for use, those located in classrooms are not used to their full potential. As a result, pupils do not develop skills at a fast enough rate because computer technology is not used often enough in their other work. In mathematics for example, there are too few chances for them to collect, organise and use data in graphs and charts. Few results from science work are recorded or presented on computers and the immense range of information stored on computer programmes is not explored in subjects such as history.
151. The subject leader was absent for a lengthy period and during this time, management and leadership of the subject was ineffective. Since her recent return, the subject leader has identified the weaknesses in the school's provision and is managing a rigorous action plan to address these. This strong influence and leadership, especially through teaching and example is already beginning to boost achievement.

## **MUSIC**

152. Standards in music are not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be above average at the end of both key stages. Some older junior

pupils have musical tuition from visiting teachers and achieve better standards, but for the majority of pupils, their attainment is now more average than above.

153. Above average standards were achieved in previous years partly because of the good quality teaching in the subject which was undertaken by the subject leader. Since the time of the last inspection, the school's best efforts have been directed at raising standards in literacy and numeracy and the subject leader has been required to spend less time teaching classes throughout Key Stage 2 and more time teaching literacy to pupils in Years 5 and 6. As a result of less skilled input in lessons, pupils do not achieve as well as they did in the younger junior classes.
154. A group of average attainers in Year 6 miss music lessons for the most part of a term while they take part in 'booster' classes to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result they do not receive their full entitlement to music and an enjoyable and enriching part of the curriculum.
155. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can maintain a steady rhythm when playing simple musical accompaniments to songs. They understand how different sounds and musical effects can be used to express a mood or a feeling. Most pupils sing tunefully and can stay together, for example when the music speeds up or slows down.
156. Pupils in Year 6 can follow simple forms of notation and show a good awareness of other performers although they maintain their own part at the same time. A good example of this was seen in a Year 5 music lesson when pupils were developing African drumming rhythms. The class eventually built up a series of rhythms in small groups until the whole class was playing different rhythms at the same time in the finished piece.
157. Pupils enjoy singing in assembly and use good expression in their voices. These events also give a good opportunity for pupils learning musical instruments to perform for others and accompany the singing. The atmosphere and interest levels during assemblies are raised by these performances and there is a strong air of enjoyment in the music.
158. Teaching in the subject has the highest impact on pupils' learning in Years 5 and 6 because it is consistently very good and a great deal is achieved within lessons. The subject leader who takes all these lessons has excellent knowledge and expertise and uses his skills to bring the subject to life for pupils. Much is gained because of the high expectations he places upon pupils to work hard and achieve good performances. He continually encourages the class to evaluate their work, retry and practise parts of the music. This eventually leads to pupils producing good quality work and taking a great pride in their success.
159. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching brings about more satisfactory results. Although teachers have gained enough knowledge to teach competently, their knowledge and skill is not at such a level where it will increase pupils' learning beyond a steady pace.
160. Although leadership of the subject is strong in some respects, it has weaknesses in others and is satisfactory overall. The subject leader supports other teachers well, offers advice and guidance and is a good role model for the way music should be taught. However, he has little opportunity to keep a check on the standards and achievement throughout the rest of the school or influence the quality of teaching.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

161. No overall judgements can be made on standards in the infants or in the juniors for dance or gymnastics because no work was observed. The school is having new classrooms built on the site and the hall is not available for use for physical education lessons. Only games lessons were seen in the juniors during the inspection. Standards in this aspect of the subject at age 11 are average. This is a drop in standards, since the last inspection, when they were judged to be above average. A reason for this has been that the school has focused most of its efforts and given over much of its curriculum time to improve its national tests results in English, mathematics and science at age 11.
162. Based upon discussions with the subject leader and scrutiny of pupils' records virtually all of the present Year 6 pupils have already achieved the national standard of being able to swim 25 metres. There are only three pupils who have not yet achieved their 25-metre certificate. The school makes very good use of a classroom assistant who is well qualified to teach swimming to ensure these pupils are given good support during their swimming lessons.
163. Overall the quality of teaching, for games in the juniors, is satisfactory. Teachers change into tracksuits for the lessons and ensure pupils warm up prior to starting physical activity. Through these actions they provide good examples for the children. As a result all of them wear appropriate kit for their lessons and understand why it is important to prepare for physical activity.
164. In the better lessons good use is made of resources to ensure that every child has sufficient opportunities to practise skills. In a Year 6 lesson for example, pupils were able to spend a good length of time working with a partner practising different types of tennis shots. This enabled them to learn from their mistakes and as the lesson progressed they gradually improved their shot making skills.
165. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. In the better sessions it is well used to enable children to make good gains in their learning. In a Year 3 lesson for example, the teacher was confident in her own knowledge. She was able to give good demonstrations to the class on how to pass and tackle using a hockey stick. As a result by the end of the lesson most of the children had improved their tackling and passing skills using a hockey stick.
166. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, insufficient emphasis was placed upon the teaching of specific skills. Whilst children experienced a number of interesting activities they did not make any improvement to the skills they already had.
167. Whilst assessment is used well in swimming it is not satisfactory in the other aspects of physical education and therefore teachers are not sure how well pupils are doing or what they need to do next to improve. As a result teachers do not always plan well enough to ensure higher attainers are sufficiently challenged during skill practices.
168. Teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on encouraging children to evaluate their own performance and this restricts their opportunities for personal development.
169. There is a limited range of after school clubs sports clubs, which are open to Years 5 and 6. Overall this provision is only having a positive impact upon a minority of pupils.
170. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Good support and advice is given to other staff about different ways of teaching. However, the subject leader also has responsibility for mathematics and much of his attention, because of the school's priorities, are given to this rather than to physical education.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

171. Standards are below those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1 and well below at the end of Key Stage 2. This is an unfavourable picture compared to the findings of the last inspection when standards were judged average at both key stages.
172. At Key Stage 1, pupils show a sound understanding of themes such as caring and sharing and develop an appreciation of the importance of specific objects to other people's religious beliefs. There are however, significant weaknesses in their knowledge of the key practices and beliefs of other religions, such as Judaism.
173. At Key Stage 2, pupils have a very limited knowledge of the themes outlined in the syllabus and show little retention of any facts about other religions or ways in which faith is expressed. In Year 6, some average attaining pupils miss nearly one term of religious education lessons as they attend weekly 'booster' sessions to improve their skills in literacy and numeracy. These lessons are undertaken at the same time each week, which coincides with religious education lessons.
174. There is very little recorded work throughout the junior classes, and the subject is not given sufficient attention overall. Any facts which are taught, are therefore not retained by pupils as they have no reminder of the topics they have studied.
175. The quality of teaching in lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory at both key stages. Over time however, teaching is not resulting in sound standards or achievement and its impact is unsatisfactory. Some lessons are enlivened by the use of artefacts and this helps pupils to gain a better understanding of symbolism and signs in religious practice. In lessons seen in Year 1 and in Year 3, the teachers both brought in their own bibles to show pupils. The infant class teacher used this well to illustrate how the holy book had a special significance to her; the junior class teacher used the bible to show children how different versions of the same book were telling the same story. In other lessons, pupils do not have access to enough resources to arouse their interest or stimulate discussion and the experience for them is dull.
176. The school has recently changed the guidelines given to teachers about what should be taught to different year groups. Teachers are still getting used to the new guidelines and some parts are proving problematic. Some parts of the new guidelines are not being taught as well as they should be and this is causing gaps in pupils' knowledge. In Year 2, for example, some aspects of other religions such as Judaism are missed.
177. The subject leader gives good support to colleagues in explaining aspects of the new guidelines that they are having difficulty with or in suggesting resources and artefacts for them to use. Leadership of the subject however, is unsatisfactory overall, as standards are not systematically monitored. Consequently, the school has gained no clear understanding of the reasons for weaknesses in the subject, which are leading to under-achievement and low standards.