

INSPECTION REPORT

LONGMAN'S HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Selby

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121460

Headteacher: Mr V Wright

Reporting inspector: Ms K Manning
No: 20267

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 July 2001

Inspection number: 195889

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Myrtle Avenue
Brayton
Selby
North Yorkshire

Postcode: YO8 9BG

Telephone number: 01757 706841

Fax number: 01757 212650

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R Forster

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20267	Ms K Manning Registered inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning for the foundation stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? How well is the school led and managed?
1165	Mr P Dannheisser Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19041	Mr R Linstead Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	
8420	Mrs V Roberts Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Yorkshire Educational Services Ltd
16 Burn Hall
Darlington Road
Croxdale
DURHAM
DH1 3SR

Tel/Fax: 0191 378 4031

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Longman's Hill is a small primary school in a pleasant area of Selby. It admits pupils aged from three to 11 and serves the local and wider community. A very small number of children come from ethnic minority families and almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The school does not have a nursery but there is a pre-reception class, which children attend part-time. When they start in the reception class their experiences vary but most have the skills and knowledge that are expected of five-year-olds. At present there are 188 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is lower than in most other schools; 35 pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, two pupils have statements of special needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. It is led and managed well and the headteacher, key staff and governors have shown a commitment to improvement. Most of the teaching is good and pupils are learning well. Standards have risen in information and communication technology, design and technology and history and have been maintained at a satisfactory level in all other subjects. Pupils are keen to learn and they behave well. Although it receives an above average-sized income because of its small size, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching in the foundation stage ensures that children get a fine start to their education.
- In lessons, three-quarters of the teaching is now good or better and this is helping to raise standards.
- Standards in English and history are above the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds.
- Good provision for pupils' personal development ensures that pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave in a mature and responsible way.
- A rich and varied curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy school.

What could be improved

- The targets set for pupils with special educational needs are not always specific enough and this prevents them from making faster progress.
- In most subjects, there are no agreed procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment.
- The partnership between parents and the school needs strengthening.
- Governors do not assess possible risks to pupils and staff.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a steady rate since its last inspection in February 1997. Training and better resources have ensured that the provision for information and communication technology and design and technology now meets statutory requirements. This has helped to raise standards in both subjects. While co-ordinators monitor the curriculum and teaching in English and mathematics very thoroughly there is still work to do to extend the same good procedures to all other subjects. It is a similar picture with assessment. The school prioritised literacy and numeracy and there are now good procedures for assessing what pupils can do in both these areas. The guidelines for teaching pupils with special educational needs now include all relevant information and meet the Code of Practice. Classes are now named in a way that makes it easy

to understand the age of pupils. Governors waited too long for training on risk assessment and this remains an issue for the school. As a result of training, the quality of teaching continues to improve. Staff and governors are committed to continuing to raise standards and this puts them in a strong position to be able to succeed.

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

The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were above average in English but well below average in mathematics and below average in science. When compared with schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils had performed poorly. However, the small numbers of pupils in each year group can lead to wide fluctuations in results from year to year. In addition, last year, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs was higher than in most other years. Though extra support helped them gain the level expected for their age in English they did not do as well in mathematics or science. Inspection findings show a different picture. This year, standards are above average in English and average in mathematics and science. This is borne out by teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6, standards are typical in all other subjects except history, in which they are above average. Since the last inspection, standards have risen considerably in information and communication technology and design and technology.

The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. Once again, the small numbers of pupils in the year group means that results fluctuate from one year to the next. Inspection findings are that standards are above average in reading and writing, mathematics and science. All pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable.

By the end of the foundation stage, children have achieved as well as they can in all areas of learning. Most are ready for their work in the National Curriculum and some are already working towards the first levels of attainment in English and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to work and school. In lessons, pupils listen to what teachers say and concentrate on their work. They are always keen to learn and try hard to give their best efforts.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good. Pupils act sensibly and are polite to one another and to adults. At lunchtime and breaks they play together amicably.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities for doing jobs around the school and are proud of the time they spend reading with younger children. They make friends easily and have good relationships with staff.

Attendance	Levels of attendance are very good and reflect the fact that pupils enjoy their time in school.
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Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour are reflected in the fact that there were no exclusions in the last school year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Most is now good or better. Fifty-two per cent is good and a further 21 per cent is very good. Two per cent is excellent and the remainder is satisfactory.

Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy effectively and good teaching of the basic skills in English and mathematics has helped to raise standards in both these areas. The teaching of information and communication technology and design and technology has improved significantly and has also led to higher standards in both subjects.

Meticulous planning ensures that pupils of different ages and abilities are generally given work that meets their needs and all have equal chances to achieve as well as they can. Although pupils with special educational needs get a fair deal from the school, the targets in their individual programmes of work are not always as sharp or specific as they could be. This makes it more difficult to say how well they are learning. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subjects they teach and as a result pupils acquire skills and understanding at a good pace. The activities teachers provide are interesting and often exciting and pupils respond by working hard and being keen to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced and extends it with the addition of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Children in the foundation stage are taught all areas of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is satisfactory but could be better. Although pupils are given good support in small groups the targets in their individual programmes of work are not always specific enough.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for pupils' personal development. Their spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily through lessons and assemblies. Good provision is made for their moral, social and cultural development in many subjects and in the day-to-day work of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes appropriate care of its pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and take care that they are happy in school. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainments in English and mathematics are good. More work needs to be done to improve assessment in other subjects.

The school's partnership with parents is not as close as it would wish it to be. Though most parents have positive views of the school, a small number are dissatisfied with the way the school works with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is strong and conscientious and provides firm educational direction for the work of the school. The leadership and management of co-ordinators are good and have helped to improve the quality of teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil all their responsibilities towards the school. They are very much involved in setting targets for improvement and the continued raising of standards. They have been slow to tackle the issue of risk assessment.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses helps the team of headteacher, staff and governors to continue to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers make best possible use of the school's resources. Plans to cover the outside play area for children in the foundation stage mean that it will be used more often.

Good leadership and management have ensured that the school's provision for design and technology and information and communication technology has improved and that standards have risen. Regular and systematic monitoring of teaching in English and mathematics has led to more effective teaching and learning. The next step is for co-ordinators to apply the same rigorous checks to other subjects.

There are sufficient qualified teachers and support staff to teach the full curriculum. Although there are sufficient resources and accommodation to teach the curriculum for pupils in infant and junior classes, the outside play area for children in the foundation stage is too small.

Governors and staff try to ensure that they spend the school's money wisely and that the school compares favourably with other schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased that their children like school. • They believe that their children are making good progress in school. • Parents think that most of the teaching is good. • They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best. • They are pleased that teachers help their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons. • Parents would welcome more information about how their children are getting on. • A number of parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them and that the headteacher is unapproachable. • A number of parents feel that the school is not managed and led well.

More than a third of parents returned questionnaires and gave their views in letters. Thirteen parents attended the meeting held prior to the inspection. Most of these had positive views about the school and were pleased with the efforts made on behalf of their children. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. The inspection also judged the leadership and management of the school to be good. The headteacher and governors are concerned that parents feel they do not get enough information about their children and that the school does not work closely enough with them. Improving the partnership between home and school and seeking to ensure that the

headteacher is seen to be more approachable is now viewed as an area for development. The school provides an appropriate range of after-school clubs and sports, and educational visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The small numbers of pupils in each year group affect the school's results considerably. One or two pupils can make a tremendous difference to percentages and consequently the school's overall performance. Despite fluctuations in test results over the last four years the overall upward trend in the results achieved by the school's 11-year-olds has been in line with the national trend.

2 During their time in the foundation stage, children learn at a good rate. By the time they start in Year 1 they have achieved more than expected for their age in all areas of learning except physical development, in which their attainment is typical for their age. They do particularly well in reading, writing and mathematics and many are already working towards the first levels of the National Curriculum by the end of the summer term.

3 In the year 2000, the results of National Curriculum tests in reading, and writing were typical for seven-year-olds nationally. They were, however, below the average achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The main weakness lay in reading, in which far fewer pupils than in most other schools achieved a higher level. Inspection findings are that teachers were quick to tackle this issue. Greater emphasis is now given to teaching the basic strategies for learning to read and as a result most seven-year-olds read at levels that are beyond what is expected for their age. The way that teachers use the National Literacy Strategy has also helped raise standards in writing and most seven-year-olds achieve standards that are also beyond what is expected for their age. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year olds were above the national average but again below those achieved by pupils in similar schools. However, national results and the school's own records showed that pupils had made good progress during their time in junior classes. Inspection findings are that most 11-year-olds achieve standards in English that are above what is expected for their age. This is largely because teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects.

4 The results of National Curriculum tests in mathematics in 2000 were below average for seven-year-olds nationally and well below the average achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In the year 2000, the results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds were well below average nationally and when compared with results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Teachers were extremely concerned at these poor results and analysed the tests carefully to identify gaps in teaching and learning. In the last year, teachers began to use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to remedy these gaps in learning and as a result standards have risen. Pupils in infant classes make good progress and most achieve standards that are above what is expected for their age. In junior classes, pupils have also done well and by the end of Year 6, most pupils reach the level expected for their age.

5 Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000 showed that standards in science were below average for seven-year-olds nationally and below the average achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were below average nationally and well below the average achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Inspection findings are that good teaching in infant classes ensures that most seven-year-olds achieve standards that are above what is expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, standards have risen and most 11-year-olds achieve the levels expected for their age. However, the most able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could because the work they are given sometimes lacks challenge.

6 With the exception of the most able pupils in science, pupils generally achieve the levels of which they are capable. Those with special educational needs do not always reach the levels expected for their age but they make steady progress. The school's own records show that pupils make at least steady progress from one year to the next and many make good progress.

7 Over the last five years seven-year-old girls have performed better than boys in National Curriculum tests in reading, writing and mathematics. Eleven-year-old girls also do better than boys in English tests. There is no pattern in who does better in mathematics or science. In some years girls do better than boys but this is not always the case. The school's own analysis of test results indicates that girls often do better at reading because they are more interested than boys in reading books. The co-ordinator for mathematics could find no reason why girls in Year 2 have outperformed boys and the gap has closed by the time they are in junior classes.

8 Standards in information technology have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now typical for seven and 11-year-olds. They are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection because the school has improved the resources and because training has given teachers the expertise they need to teach the subject more confidently. Younger pupils are becoming familiar with many of the programs on the school's computers and those in junior classes have a sound understanding of information and communication technology.

9 Standards have also risen in design and technology. Teachers are more confident and knowledgeable and this has ensured that standards are now typical of seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils have a thorough understanding of each of the steps necessary to design, make and evaluate a successful product.

10 One of the things the school does well is to ensure that pupils gain high standards in history. Pupils are very knowledgeable about the periods they have studied and are good at researching facts. They talk enthusiastically about the subject and their written work is of high quality.

11 In religious education, standards meet those prescribed by the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. In all other subjects standards match the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In art and design pupils use a wide range of materials and techniques to produce work that is lively and interesting. In geography, they have a firm understanding of the local area and the countries they study. In music, pupils benefit from the opportunities they have to listen to and play musical instruments and to sing in concerts and assemblies. In physical education, many pupils are good at games and swimming by the time they are in Year 6. They are competent gymnasts and enjoy athletics and dancing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 The picture remains similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils respond well to what the school provides. The attitudes they have towards learning and to one another and the way they behave are strengths of the school.

13 Pupils' positive attitudes to learning help them to achieve their full potential in their work. From the time they join the pre-reception class children enjoy their time in school and as a result, attendance is above average. The youngest children are happy to wave goodbye to parents and get on with the activities of the day. Their natural inquisitiveness was obvious as they peeped through the wooden fence and romped off to look for foxes in the hedges at the side of the school field. The children in the reception class particularly enjoyed practical activities, such as measuring volume with water. Pupils in Year 5 were equally excited when conducting a science experiment that involved testing materials for water resistance. That same enthusiasm was seen

in a stimulating history lesson on the ancient Greeks. Pupils rose to their teachers' challenges and bubbled with ideas, which were given thoughtfully and in considerable detail. Older pupils are keen to get involved in the after-school clubs and sports that are led by teachers, parents and governors. They talk enthusiastically about school trips and about their favourite subjects.

14 The school has been successful in maintaining the same good standards of behaviour that it had at the time of the last inspection and has had no occasion to exclude any pupils for poor behaviour. In lessons, pupils listen to what their teachers say and settle down and concentrate on their work. Right from the reception class, pupils are responsible enough to get on quietly by themselves, which means that teachers can either work with a small group or give help to those who need it. Lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions with happy chatter between pupils and the ladies who supervise them. During breaks, pupils of all ages mix and play in a friendly way. The relationships that pupils have with teachers and other adults in the school are very good and are characterised by respect and liking. Children are keen to say how much they like their teachers.

15 Pupils' personal development remains good. The maturity of pupils is apparent from a first visit to the school. They are helpful to visitors and willing to take on responsibility for much of the day-to-day running of the school. For example, they spend a day being on duty, which means that they are ready to take on errands and help out. Pupils enjoy the responsibility and are given work to do so that they do not fall behind with their work. In lessons, pupils organise themselves sensibly, getting the equipment they need to finish a task and tidying away when their work is complete. At lunchtime and at playtimes older pupils are mindful that there are much younger children in the yard and during the inspection there was no bullying or bad behaviour. Pupils are confident about moving from one key stage to the next because they mix so often with children of other ages. This was very evident from a conversation with pupils in Year 6 who said they are looking forward to starting secondary school and are not worried about making the move from a small to a much larger school.

16 The level of pupils' attendance remains very high. Most absence is caused by illness and there is no unauthorised absence. However, an increasing number of parents are taking their children out of school for holidays during term time, which disrupts their education.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17 Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Most is now good or better. Fifty-two per cent is good and a further 21 per cent is very good. Two per cent is excellent and the remainder is satisfactory. The teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and religious education. It is sound in all other subjects.

18 A strength of the teaching for children in the foundation stage, which underlies the good progress they make, is the thorough knowledge that teachers have of the areas of learning. Planning is good and staff ensure that activities are exciting and interesting. For instance, pupils in the pre-reception class had great fun waving and hiding under a parachute and those in reception class were thrilled with the results of their baking. Children are often absorbed in activities such as playing in the slime or smelling and looking at the inside of fruits. Because staff expect them to try hard, children put a lot of effort into work such as reading, writing and number and they are pleased when they get things right.

19 Throughout the school, teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of reading and writing and use the National Literacy Strategy to good effect. In literacy lessons, children in the foundation stage and pupils in infant classes are taught to use pictures or to sound out letters to help them read unfamiliar words. This gives them the confidence to have a go at quite difficult texts. Teachers emphasise the importance of punctuation and spelling in written

work and provide many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. This is one of the reasons why pupils do as well as they can.

20 Teachers also use the National Numeracy Strategy to good effect. In numeracy lessons, they give considerable attention to mental mathematics and the emphasis on number work is paying dividends as pupils get older and are more confident in handling numbers. As a result, standards have improved considerably in the last year.

21 As a response to key issues in the previous report, teachers have had training in information and communication technology and design and technology. Consequently, they are far more confident and in these subjects the quality of teaching has improved. Teachers plan projects in design and technology and ensure that pupils get plenty of opportunities to use computers in all subjects. These changes have ensured that pupils now learn at a steady rate and standards are now typical for seven and 11-year-olds.

22 Throughout the school, teachers try hard to ensure that pupils of different abilities are given work that matches their needs. It is only in science where work does not always match pupils' differing abilities. Sound provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make steady progress. In many lessons they are given extra support and help from teachers and classroom assistants and they benefit from working in small groups within the classroom. Although the work is always pitched at the right level the targets in their individual programmes of work are not always sharp or specific enough to help them to learn at a faster rate. Higher attaining pupils are given work that is challenging. Teachers expect them to do well and often set work at a higher level. For example, in a good English lesson, higher attaining pupils in Year 3 were expected to read a more difficult text, extract the relevant information as notes and then write sequences of sentences that extended the ideas from the notes. Because it was challenging, pupils tried hard with their task and achieved well.

23 Teachers have maintained the features of teaching that were identified as good in the previous inspection. They continue to manage pupils well, mostly through the good relationships they have with pupils, which ensure that they want to please their teachers. Lessons generally move along at a brisk pace so there is little time for pupils to become bored and this has a significant effect on the physical and intellectual effort that pupils put into their work. For example, in a very good physical education lesson, pupils in Year 4 worked extremely hard to improve their skills in long-jump and were helped by the fact that the lesson was well organised and no time was wasted.

24 The weaknesses identified in the way teachers used assessment to help them to plan work have mostly been ironed out. Teachers are good at questioning pupils to find out what they know and they often use the time at the end of lessons to do this. In addition, teachers' marking is helpful and lets pupils know what they need to do to improve. They are beginning to keep useful records and checklists of what pupils can do in most subjects and in the last year teachers have become far more alert to the need to track pupils' learning.

25 Homework is set regularly and pupils are given a range of work in English, mathematics and research to do at home. Although some parents feel that there is too much homework and others feel that there is too little, with few exceptions, homework is provided at a satisfactory level and is sufficient to extend pupils' learning in school.

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

26 Since the previous inspection there have been several improvements to the curriculum, which ensure that it now meets statutory requirements and promotes pupils' academic and physical development successfully. The curricula for information and communication technology

and design and technology are much improved and ensure that all aspects of these subjects are now taught and the school now meets the recommendations of the Code of Practice for supporting pupils with special educational needs. Children in the foundation stage are taught all of the areas of learning through an interesting and lively curriculum. Sex education and topics about healthy lifestyles and the misuse of drugs help to promote pupils' personal development, and a well planned programme ensures that this aspect of the curriculum reflects the school's aim that pupils are prepared for life outside of school. A good range of after-school sports and clubs enrich the curriculum and help to promote pupils' social development. They gain a good sense of fair play and a strong competitive spirit that helps the school to do well in local tournaments, competitions and sports events. Educational visits in the area and to a residential field study centre extend the range of pupils' experiences and contribute well to their learning and personal development.

27 The strategies used to teach literacy and numeracy are effective and ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. More time is devoted to teaching English and mathematics than other subjects and the curriculum includes *booster* classes for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and additional support for pupils who struggle with reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to plan work and this is one of the reasons why standards are rising in line with the national trend.

28 All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress. Girls and boys play football and other sports. Except in some science lessons, pupils of different ages and abilities are generally given work at the right level. Pupils with special educational needs get a fair deal from the school and make steady progress. Their work is planned carefully and they are given help in most lessons. When necessary, they get additional help from specialists, such as speech therapists and parents are given the guidance they need to help their children at home.

29 Good links have been maintained with the local community, and these continue to enrich the range of pupils' experiences and contribute to their learning and personal development. Visits to places of interest are used effectively to support the work pupils do in class, particularly in history, and visitors provide a good range of first-hand experiences for them. Pupils' awareness of the needs of others is raised through generous support for charity. The school works in close partnership with local secondary schools, which helps the oldest pupils make the transition to Year 7 confidently. As part of the school's initiative to improve provision for information technology pupils benefit from links with a local primary and secondary school.

30 The school makes good provision overall for pupils' personal development. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are good arrangements to promote pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

31 Provision for pupils' spiritual development continues to be satisfactory. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to think about the nature of the world. For example, in a science lesson in Year 2, the teacher enabled the children to marvel when sounds from a radio vibrated rice grains on a diaphragm. Further up the school, pupils in Year 4 discussed thoughtfully the meanings and effects of the miracle at the wedding at Cana in their religious education lesson. The school meets the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. Daily assemblies also include times for prayer and reflection.

32 Pupils' moral and social development is promoted well. In lessons and assemblies, teachers emphasise the difference between right and wrong and the need to consider others. Teachers' good relationships with staff and pupils make them good role models. The school is particularly strong in its development of pupils' personal confidence and self-esteem. They do this through after-school activities, opportunities for speech, role-play and drama work and residential visits. There are also appropriate opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility or use their initiative for the benefit of the school community. For example, teachers have arranged

very successful reading partnerships. Pupil from different year groups read together each week and share their discoveries. The older pupils give the younger ones sensitive help. Pupils have the chance to support charitable work. For example, in an assembly they were very interested to hear from a parent who was organising help for children in Romania. They wanted to know more about the project and to contribute to it. Inspection evidence agrees with the view of almost all the parents that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.

33 The study of literature, art and music increases pupils' knowledge of their own and other cultures. This is supplemented by visits to cultural centres such as York, and visitors who share their art and craft skills with groups of pupils. Religious education lessons introduce pupils to some of the essential teachings and cultures of major world faiths. There are also some effective new initiatives, which actively recognise the multi-cultural diversity of society, for example a display in the hall on Hinduism.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 The school has maintained appropriate arrangements for child protection. The headteacher has responsibility for this, and the school follows the local area guidelines. However, not all staff are aware of the formal procedures and there has been no recent training or meetings on this subject. The school's policy provides suitable guidance for staff, and pupils are taught about keeping safe in their programme of personal, social and health education. This includes a memorable visit to the *Crucial Crew* at a centre set up by the local emergency services.

35 Staff care about the pupils and look after their welfare. A suitable health and safety policy is in place and the day-to-day working practices adopted by all staff are good. Standards of cleaning and maintenance are high. Pupils are supervised carefully throughout the day and lunchtime routines are managed well. As a result the school functions smoothly. There are clear procedures for dealing with accidents, illness and the administration of medicines, and these are followed closely. The only weakness is that governors do not carry out regular assessments of any risks in and around the school. This was highlighted in the previous report and because governors have been slow to act it remains an issue that needs urgent attention.

36 Provision for the welfare of pupils with special education needs is also appropriate. Teachers and classroom assistants provide help and support in lessons. Specialists, such as speech therapists and educational psychologists give further help when this is necessary. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly to check progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

37 Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are mainly informal, but effective. Teachers know their pupils well and work hard to develop their confidence and self-esteem in all areas of school life. Written comments are included on end-of-year reports and, when it is considered necessary to do so, formal diaries are maintained for pupils exhibiting behavioural problems. Praise and rewards are used well to encourage effort, and significant achievements are celebrated during *sharing* assemblies. There are good procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour. Pupils are praised when they do well and quietly but firmly reminded of the expectations of behaviour when they misbehave. Standards are clear and consistent, so that pupils know what to expect. Rewards and sanctions are fair, and pupils understand the systems. There is an appropriate policy for dealing with bullying. However, this has not been shared with parents and one or two are concerned that procedures are not always operated consistently.

38 The school continues to monitor and promotes attendance satisfactorily. Office staff keep a careful check on absence, and any concerns are followed up with parents and when

appropriate referred to the education welfare officer. Parents are reminded of the importance of good attendance and discouraged from taking their children on holiday in term time.

39 The procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. In English, mathematics and science they are very thorough. Pupils are tested regularly and teachers have begun to keep a computerised checklist of attainment in each subject. A strength of the school's procedures for assessment is the way that teachers are beginning to use their judgements about what level pupils have achieved to predict where they will be at the end of each year and key stage. This is helping them to set realistic targets in English and mathematics and identify when pupils are not making the progress they should. Furthermore, they use the results of standardised tests to set a starting point for work and to ensure that it is pitched at the right level.

40 In other subjects, the procedures are not as good. Teachers do not systematically plan opportunities for assessment and they are not always linked closely with the objectives of the lesson. In some subjects there are no agreed systems in place although in others co-ordinators have begun to trial systems that are linked to the programmes of work used by the school. This puts them in a good position to ensure that the assessment is purposeful and gives them the information they need. The headteacher has recently introduced a good, computerised system of recording what pupils can do. However, at present staff are not making sufficient use of this to track progress or predict attainment from one year to the next. Co-ordinators see this as being the next step in managing their subjects and have identified this as a priority for development in the coming year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 Most parents have positive views of the school and are pleased with the efforts made on behalf of their children. However, a significant number are dissatisfied with some aspects of the school's work and this weakens the partnership between home and school.

42 Almost all parents said that their children enjoy school and this is borne out by conversations with pupils when they talk enthusiastically of what they like best about lessons and activities. Parents have mixed views about how well their children do in school. Most are happy that their children make steady progress but a small number feel that the most able children are not given the push they need to help them achieve their full potential. This is not the case. With the exception of science, pupils are helped to achieve as well as they can. The school's own detailed records show that pupils make at least steady progress from one year to the next and that some come along in leaps and bounds in one year and slow down a little in others. Inspection findings confirm that learning is good and that parents are right to believe that most of the teaching is good. Almost all of the parents who gave their opinions said that the school helps their children to become mature and expects them to work hard. This was evident during the inspection, during lessons and in the day-to-day life of the school.

43 Although the information sent out by the school is satisfactory a significant number of parents said that they would welcome more information in general. At present, the school sends out letters about events and activities. At the end of each year parents are given a written report that contains useful information about what their children can do in each subject of the National Curriculum. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to meetings to review their children's progress and all parents have an opportunity to meet with their children's teacher once a year. All of this is satisfactory. However, a significant number of parents are unhappy with the timing and quality of what they receive. Some feel that letters are very formal and would prefer something less directive, such as newsletters. They feel that these would also give them more notice of events and more time to arrange their own schedules. This is done very well in the foundation stage where parents of children in the pre-reception class are given weekly letters informing them of what their children will be learning and suggesting how they can help. In the

rest of the school it is done to a satisfactory extent.

44 The school recently sent parents a questionnaire but there is a perception among some parents that the school does not meet parents half way and is not as welcoming as it might be. Attendance at open mornings and meetings about literacy or numeracy is poor and a small number of parents do not value highly the written material they receive. There is evidence both from the meeting with parents before the inspection and from views expressed during the inspection that there is room for the school to reconsider how it communicates with parents.

45 Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning at school and at home. The school's policy on homework is freely available to parents and it provides helpful guidelines about the amount of time to be spent on homework and when it is given. A small number of parents regularly give up their time to assist with various jobs around school, and others help with clubs and outings. They are briefed well by teachers and their efforts have a positive effect on pupils' learning. For example, children in the reception class practised weighing and measuring and gained social skills as they baked a cake with a parent. Parents are encouraged to support their children's work at home, particularly in reading, and many do so. Several parents support the school by being governors or as members of the parent-teacher association, which has a large committee and organises a number of social and fund raising events. During the inspection a parent came into school to raise support for an overseas charity.

46 Parents feel that teachers take the time to speak to them at the start and end of the day. During the inspection a number of teachers were observed chatting informally with parents. A small number of parents feel that the headteacher is unapproachable and that their suggestions and complaints are not taken seriously enough or dealt with appropriately. Though the school has policies for dealing with issues such as bullying it does not have a clear policy for how it will respond to parents' complaints. The headteacher and governors have reacted quickly by targeting this is an area for further development in the next year.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47 The leadership and management of the school are clear about its strengths and weaknesses and know what needs to be done to continue to raise standards. The leadership of the headteacher is strong and conscientious and provides firm educational direction for the work of the school. In delegating responsibility for the curriculum and all aspects of the life of the school thoughtfully to make best use of the expertise and enthusiasm of staff the headteacher has built a strong and supportive team.

48 Staff with leadership and managerial roles have a good understanding of their responsibilities and contribute to the effective management of the school. A clear indication of good leadership is that the school's provision for information and communication technology and design and technology is far better than it was at the time of the previous inspection and, as a result, standards in both subjects have risen. Subject co-ordinators provide informal advice for colleagues and more formal training in their subjects. As a response to issues raised in the previous report co-ordinators now monitor the curriculum more closely through looking at teachers' planning. They analyse the results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science and are involved in consultations about setting targets and identifying gaps in teaching or learning. In English and mathematics, co-ordinators have taken full advantage of help from the local education authority and have monitored the quality of teaching rigorously and regularly. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning in both subjects. Heartened by this success, co-ordinators intend to monitor other subjects in the same way and see this as a priority for development.

49 Governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities towards the school. They have set

targets for the work of the headteacher and for raising standards in English and mathematics in National Curriculum tests. Following the previous inspection governors drew up an appropriate plan of action to show how they would tackle each of the issues highlighted in the report. As a result, over the next four years the school made steady progress in dealing with most of these. However, they were slow to tackle the issue of risk assessment and this remains an area that needs further attention. Though governors report to parents at the end of each year, they had not previously realised that a small number of parents are dissatisfied with some aspects of the school's work. They recognise that this is an area that needs urgent attention in order to strengthen the partnership between parents and the school.

50 Staff and governors have worked together to iron out the weaknesses in planning that existed at the time of the previous inspection. The school has identified the right tasks for the future and each priority is followed by a clear plan of what needs to be done and what resources, time and money are needed to achieve success. This puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve.

How efficiently the school is managed

51 Financial planning and control continue to be efficient. Through the conscientious work of the school's secretary, financial administration is efficient and unobtrusive. Administrative systems are computerised and used well. All points raised for improvement at the last audit have been addressed. Governors discuss budget proposals and make regular checks on spending. They ensure that all additional funding is used for its intended purpose and that funding for special educational needs is spent appropriately on resources.

52 Governors and the headteacher are rapidly coming to terms with the principles of best value and are well aware of the need to make the best use of finances. They use information from analysing the results of National Curriculum tests and comparisons with other schools to guide financial decisions. Spending is beginning to be targeted to where it will have the best impact on standards. In the term prior to the inspection, parents were consulted about their views of the school and because it was not as positive as the headteacher and governors would have wished there are now plans to improve the partnership between home and school.

53 There are enough teachers and support staff to teach all subjects of the curriculum. They are suitably qualified and continue to improve their knowledge and keep abreast of developments in primary education through regular training. Newly appointed staff are given support and this has helped a recently qualified teacher to do well in her first year of teaching.

54 Teachers make best possible use of the adequate accommodation and resources. The grounds are spacious but some classrooms are small and the play area for children in the foundation stage is too small to enable them to run around or play on climbing apparatus or with wheeled toys. There are plans to cover the area in September and to give children access to the space on rainy days. Visitors to the school and educational outings enrich the curriculum and bring subjects to life for pupils, all of which helps to raise standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55 Governors, headteacher and staff should

(i) Increase the rate of learning for pupils with special educational needs by;

- ◆ ensuring that the targets in their individual education plans are specific about each step of learning.

(Paragraph 22 of the main report)

(ii) Improve procedures for assessment by;

- ◆ agreeing and implementing procedures for assessing skills and knowledge in subjects where these do not already exist;
- ◆ ensuring that teachers plan opportunities for assessment;
- ◆ keeping effective records that are linked to the learning objectives set out in planning;
- ◆ using the school's computerised system to track and predict pupils' progress from one year to the next;
- ◆ linking assessment with learning objectives.

(Paragraphs 24, 39 and 40 of the main report)

(iii) Strengthen the partnership between parents and the school by;

- ◆ ensuring that parents are given the sort of information they have asked for;
- ◆ raising the profile of the headteacher so that parents view him as being more accessible;
- ◆ determining clear procedures for dealing with parents' complaints and suggestions.

(Paragraphs 41 and 46 of the main report)

(iv) Ensure that governors conduct regular and systematic risk assessments.

(Paragraph 49 of the main report)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	21	52	25	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		188
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
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	13	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	11
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	88 (95)	92 (95)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	22	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (100)	92 (95)	92 (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
	2000	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	11	14
	Girls	14	10	14
	Total	28	21	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (77)	60 (74)	80 (90)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	11	14
	Girls	15	12	15
	Total	29	23	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (77)	66 (68)	83 (87)
	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	1
White	174
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	26.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	335,398
Total expenditure	347,336
Expenditure per pupil	1,670
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,692
Balance carried forward to next year	27,754 ¹

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	194
Number of questionnaires returned	72

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	35	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	6	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	49	3	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	49	17	7	3
The teaching is good.	32	63	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	15	58	11	13	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	33	46	8	11	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	51	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	17	53	11	15	4
The school is well led and managed.	22	49	11	15	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	65	3	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	34	18	7	15

¹ Governors have set this aside to maintain low class sizes.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56 The provision for children in the foundation stage is a strength of the school. Most of the teaching is good and some of it is excellent. Children join a pre-reception class when they are four years old. They attend part-time to begin with and are taught by a nursery nurse. In the year in which they are five they transfer to the reception class, where they attend full-time and are taught by a teacher. The school's assessments show that when children start in the pre-reception class, their experiences and knowledge vary widely but that on the whole they are typical for their age. Good teaching ensures that by the time they leave the reception class, children have achieved as well as they can and have exceeded many of the goals expected for their age in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In communication, language and literacy and mathematics, most children are ready for their work in the National Curriculum and some are already working towards the first levels of attainment. Children's have the physical skills expected for their age. They are not higher because the small play area for these children restricts opportunities for climbing, running and using wheeled toys.

Personal, social and emotional development

57 This area of learning is promoted very well by staff. Starting in the pre-reception class, children are encouraged to do things for themselves, for example they know to put on a sunhat before going outside to play. In the reception class, their confidence and independence grows and they take responsibility for putting equipment away at the end of each session.

58 Teachers ensure that the activities provided for children are exciting and encourage them to explore and talk about new experiences. As a result, children in the pre-reception class were eager to talk about their holidays and days out and those in reception class spoke enthusiastically about the work they were doing.

59 There are many opportunities for children to work with and help one another. As a result, they form friendships with other boys and girls easily and it is common to see children choosing to engage in activities with their special friends. This was evident when two girls decided that they would write for a while until there was room for both of them to play in the *slime* tray.

60 Because they have such good relationships with the adults who teach them, children are sensitive to the views and needs of others. For example, they help one another with their work and when two children bumped into one another when they were playing outside others ran to check that they were unhurt.

Communication, language and literacy

61 Good teaching ensures that children do well. By the time they leave the reception class most children are working towards the first levels of the National Curriculum in reading and writing, they speak clearly and confidently and listen attentively to what others say.

62 A strength of the teaching in the foundation stage is the way that staff constantly talk with children. Every activity involves asking questions and emphasising words and names. As a

result of their efforts, most children have a wide vocabulary that includes words and phrases such as *I'd better put my thinking hat on now*. Teachers foster children's enjoyment of spoken language by planning many opportunities for them to listen to stories and to talk about their work. This helped children in the reception class to spot rhyming words in a story about bugs and during the remainder of the session one or two continued to come up with further rhymes.

63 Some time is set aside each day for children to read a story with an adult. Consequently, children understand how text works. They know that pictures and words tell the story and they talk about their favourite books. Staff ensure that children learn the sounds of letters and teach them a range of strategies for working out unfamiliar words. Children respond well to the way that letters are taught and like the characters represented by each letter. By the time they leave the reception class, lower attaining children use pictures to retell a story and read some familiar words. Higher attaining children know about authors and illustrators and point to the title on books. They read simple books easily and know about full stops and question marks.

64 In both the pre-reception and reception classes children are given many opportunities to write. As a result, most write independently by the time they leave the reception class and the brightest children write short stories about their news or something they have done.

Mathematical development

65 The teaching is very good and helps children to learn to use numbers and mathematical language competently. By the time they leave the reception class, most children have exceeded the early goals and are working in the first level of the National Curriculum.

66 One of the strengths of teaching is that mathematics is part of everyday life in the foundation stage. Children in the pre-reception class learn to count and use numbers and the language of measurement as they engage in activities, such as filling containers with sand and water or measuring the flowers that they grow in pots in the yard. This is continued in the reception class, where children include what they know of number, shape and measurement in their everyday conversation. For example, children used the words *round*, *pointed* and *big* to describe fruits and counted the number of seeds.

67 A good feature of the teaching is that children's work is planned meticulously, so that each child is challenged to do as well as possible. For instance, in one lesson, the most able children were expected to tell the time on a clock, sequence a series of events from a story and write the time as words. Lower attaining children worked with a classroom assistant and became more accurate in telling the time through playing games. Because children were working at their own level, they all succeeded and were pleased with their efforts.

68 Much of the teaching is based on practical activities, in which children use their mathematics to work out problems. These are fun to do and children enjoy them, particularly when they involve stories and cutting and pasting. As a result, children add and subtract groups of objects confidently and the brightest children record their work as sums, using the symbols for add, take away and equals. All children are confident when working with numbers to ten and the most able work with numbers to twenty and beyond. For example, they order numbers in tens to 100.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69 The teaching is good and helps children develop many of the basic skills that help them to make sense of the world. By the time they leave the reception class, children have exceeded many of the early goals. They explore why things happen and start to understand more about the place where they live and their own families and history.

70 One of the strengths of teaching in this area of learning is that children are encouraged to talk about what they know. This was evident in a good geography-based activity, when children considered why a mouse from the country might want to visit the town. They had previously used computers to create a picture of a town and because the teacher used this as a starting point for discussions, children talked about the facilities on offer in the town. They spoke of going to the cinema or swimming pool and having more buses and taxis to get around.

71 Teachers provide lots of opportunities for children to explore nature and science. Children talked excitedly about frogs and tadpoles and were quick to explain that the frogs needed a stone to sit on. They plant and grow seeds and flowers and were looking forward to eating the strawberries they had grown in a pot.

72 Children are taught about the Christian faith in a sensitive way. They learn about important events in the church calendar and their own life; for example, Christmas and baptism. Discussions about special events, such as birthdays and weddings help them to understand about their own culture. Aside from lessons, the warm ethos of the school is also evident in the day-to-day running of the foundation stage classes and in children's attitudes to one another.

73 Staff ensure that resources are always available for children to explore their world. Playing with toy ambulances, fire engines and police cars encourages children to act out the roles of people in these services. Computers are always available for use and are very popular with children in the nursery and reception class. Teachers make sure that children understand how to turn the computer on and off and know how to access the program they want to use. Consequently, children are quite independent and will often have several goes at games they enjoy, such as reading and listening to the sounds of letters.

Physical development

74 The teaching is sound in this area of learning. Teachers do as much as they can and children's achievements are typical for their age by the time they leave the reception class. They are prevented from being higher because of difficulties with the space available for children in the foundation stage. Firstly, the secure yard for these children is very tiny, and though the school grounds are spacious, there is not a secure area where the youngest children can ride or play with wheeled toys or enjoy a run around to let off steam. Staff try to overcome this problem by taking children into the large yard and field several times a week and at these times children run, jump and skip about confidently and safely. They also have the use of the hall for part of each day. Another problem with the outdoor area is that it is inaccessible from the reception class and unless there is a second adult to watch over groups of children it cannot be used.

75 Teachers make sure that children know how to use tools such as pencils, paintbrushes, and scissors properly. Because they have daily opportunities to use all of these, children are adept at using specialist tools for moulding and cutting clay and they manage fiddly jobs well, such as sticking scraps onto their pictures. They move the cursor on the computer with the control needed to operate programs.

Creative development

76 The teaching is good and ensures that by the time children leave the reception class they have exceeded many of the early learning goals.

77 Staff plan a wide range of interesting creative activities in which children can explore colour, texture, shape and music. Children enjoy being creative and concentrate very hard on their work; this was evident in the time they took to choose the right coloured pastels to make their drawings of fruit as accurate as possible. Most children did extremely well and produced pictures that showed how carefully they had looked at the fruits; for example, a picture of the inside of a kiwi

fruit showed the different shades of the fruit's flesh and the shape and colour of the seeds.

78 Teachers ensure that children have regular opportunities for singing and playing percussion instruments. Children are keen to do both but wait patiently for their turn to play an instrument. They sing with more enthusiasm than tune but have a wide repertoire of songs and have very clear favourites. A good feature of the way that music is taught is that staff use recorded music and songs to support singing in class. This works well and helps children to get a feel for rhythm and recognise different instruments.

ENGLISH

The results of national tests in 2000

79 The small number of pupils in each year group affects the school's results and this is the reason why they appear to fluctuate from one year to the next.

80 Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in National Curriculum tests in reading and writing in 2000 were average in national terms but below average when compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds. In reading tests, far fewer pupils achieved a higher level and this brought the school's results down. The standards achieved by 11-year-olds in National Curriculum tests were above average in national terms but below average when compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds. However, comparisons with pupils' prior attainment showed that they had made good progress during their time in junior classes and the school exceeded the target it had set for raising standards.

81 In each of the last five years, girls have performed better than boys in national tests. The co-ordinator has analysed the results of tests in order to find a reason for this and has identified that girls enjoy reading fiction far more than boys do. In order to remedy the situation the school has increased the number of reference books that are more likely to appeal to boys, although it is too early to judge the success of this strategy.

Inspection findings

82 Standards continue to be above average for seven and 11-year-olds. This is a similar picture to that described at the time of the previous inspection and an improvement on last year's test results. Inspection findings show that almost all seven-year-olds reach the level expected for their age in reading and writing and all of them achieve a personal best. By the end of Year 6, pupils continue to do as well as they can, though not all reach the levels expected of 11-year-olds. This is because more than 15 per cent of pupils in the year group have special educational needs.

83 Most of the teaching is good and this ensures that pupils achieve well. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of literacy and put this to good effect in lessons that are lively and interesting. As a result, pupils of all ages enjoy English lessons and put their literacy skills to good use in other subjects. For example, they write detailed accounts of the topics they study in geography and history.

84 A strength of the teaching comes from well-planned opportunities for speaking and listening. Teachers generally plan some time at the end of lessons when pupils are encouraged to talk to the class or small group about their work. This happens in many lessons, not just in English. As a result, pupils learn to listen attentively to what others have to say, though some of the infant pupils are so keen to add their comments that they call out answers. As they get older, pupils talk confidently about their work and use a widening and more adventurous vocabulary. For example, in a good lesson, pupils in Year 4 used very persuasive phrases such as *best in the galaxy* and *yummy* in their choice of advertising slogans for soap and other products.

85 The National Literacy Strategy has helped to improve the quality of teaching in the past few years and teachers are now good at teaching the basic skills of reading and writing. Direct class teaching during the literacy hour has a good effect on pupils' reading and writing throughout the school. Pupils in the infant classes are taught to use a range of strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words. As a result, average attaining seven-year-olds read fluently and make few mistakes. When they cannot read a word they sound out the letters or look at the pictures and in this way manage a wide range of texts. The most able pupils are fluent readers, who put expression into their reading and have a firm understanding of the main points of the stories they read. Because they were disappointed with the results of last year's national tests, teachers have this year devoted more time to reading. This has paid off in infant classes, and has resulted in many more pupils achieving a higher level. Teachers in junior classes continue to teach techniques that help pupils with their reading and writing. For example, because the teacher gave pupils in Year 3 clear, step-by-step guidance about how to take notes from texts, pupils of all abilities succeeded in highlighting the main points from the text and the most able pupils went on to draft sentences that expanded on these points.

86 A good feature of the teaching of writing is that teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to write in English and other subjects. As a result, lower attaining pupils in Year 2 write short accounts and stories that are interesting and where most simple words are spelled correctly. Average attaining pupils write longer stories with complicated plots and the most able pupils write in greater detail and use more adventurous adjectives and descriptions, such as *putting in some power packed turns* to describe a character roller-blading.

87 Teachers are good at planning. They ensure that work is pitched at the right level for pupils of different ages and abilities and this helps all pupils to succeed. For example, in a lesson on skimming and scanning text, the teacher helped pupils with special educational needs to use paragraph headings and bold print to pick out the main points of a short piece of text. Average attaining pupils were expected to do a similar task and answer questions and the most able pupils were given a difficult pamphlet in which information was presented as charts, text and diagrams. Because the work was challenging and interesting, pupils were highly motivated and by the end of the lesson everyone had worked hard.

88 Teachers looked carefully to see why girls are generally better readers than boys and found that boys prefer to read information books rather than stories. In response to this, the school has extended the range of information and reference books available in the library and in classes. The co-ordinator is confident that this is paying off and this year a number of boys have achieved the higher level in reading.

89 Thorough teaching of spelling and grammar is evident in pupils' work. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use full stops and capital letters in their writing and a number are beginning to join their letters. As pupils get older, teachers introduce more complex grammar and by the end of Year 6 pupils punctuate their work with commas, apostrophes and paragraphs. Though their handwriting is satisfactory, the work of a number of pupils in Year 6 is not always of their best. Sometimes work is done in pen and at other times in pencil. This prevents their work from being as attractive or well presented as it could be.

90 The quality of assessment has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Teachers now make appropriate use of assessments and tests to set realistic targets for what pupils should be able to achieve. They are beginning to track how well pupils achieve from one year to the next and this puts them in a good position to be able to spot where pupils are falling behind or when they have not made the expected progress.

91 The co-ordinator provides a strong lead for the subject. By monitoring teachers' planning and analysing the results of tests, the co-ordinator identified gaps in teaching and this led to changes in the way that writing is taught. The quality of teaching has been monitored rigorously by the co-ordinator and by advisers from the local education authority. This has helped to raise the quality of teaching and has allowed teachers to share the methods that work and are most

effective. The co-ordinator rightly sees the next step as being to monitor pupils' work more closely, in order to pick up gaps, such as in the presentation of work in Year 6.

MATHEMATICS

The result of national tests

92 The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, results were well below average because far fewer pupils achieved the higher level. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds showed that standards in mathematics were well below average, both nationally and when compared with those of similar schools. Although the school's results are affected considerably by the small numbers of pupils in each year group, teachers were very concerned at these poor results and analysed the tests carefully to identify gaps in teaching and learning.

Inspection findings

93 In the last year, teachers have become more confident in using the National Numeracy Strategy and this is helping to raise standards. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 2, standards are above average. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with those expected of 11-year-olds.

94 Most of the teaching is good and this helps pupils achieve well. A good feature of the teaching is that all teachers are confident in using the more structured curriculum of the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result there is a good balance between whole-class teaching, practical activities and discussion. Pupils particularly enjoy the mental mathematics sessions because they are fast and they need all their concentration if they are to keep up. For example, in a good lesson, pupils in Year 2 had to be *on alert* to count in tens, fives and twos, forwards and backwards on the counting stick and pick up the pattern outlined by the teacher. During these sessions teachers are good at asking questions that make pupils think and expect them to explain their methods. This helped pupils in Year 5 to explain their theories about odd and squared numbers when looking for patterns and relationships within number.

95 Teachers plan work very thoroughly. They have succeeded in ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged by their work and that pupils with special educational needs get the support they need to do as well as they can. One of the ways they do this is through accurate day-to-day assessment of what pupils can do. This was evident in a very good lesson when the teacher spent more time consolidating number work that one group had not fully grasped the previous day. As a result, they gained the confidence they needed and by the end of the lesson all had succeeded in completing their task.

96 Teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of numeracy. Beginning in the reception class, children are encouraged to work out mathematical problems through a range of practical activities. In Years 1 and 2, teachers ensure that pupils learn the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. A good feature of the teaching at this stage is that teachers help pupils to devise their own methods of calculating. This ensures that by the end of Year 2, pupils use a range of strategies to solve problems. For example, they count on and subtract to find the difference between two numbers and use their knowledge of rounding to ten to help them to add and subtract tens and units. In Years 3 to 6 teachers help pupils to see that addition can be carried out in any order and that addition and subtraction as well as multiplication and division are inverse operations. Consequently, by the time they are in Year 6 pupils use this knowledge to check their work.

97 Teachers are much better at assessing what pupils can do than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The co-ordinator analyses the results of National Curriculum tests very carefully and in doing so identified some gaps in pupils' knowledge. This led to the successful introduction of *springboard* and *booster* classes for lower attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6. Because of these, a number of lower attaining pupils have, this year, achieved the level expected for their age. Although pupils' work is always marked, some teachers provide more helpful comments than others. Similarly, some teachers write more specific targets for pupils with special educational needs. The fact that pupils in Year 6 do not always present their work tidily enough had been identified by the co-ordinator but remains an area for improvement.

98 In all year groups, teachers make sufficient use of information and communication technology to teach mathematics. They plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to use software, spreadsheets, programmable toys and databases. Similarly, pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in a good science lesson pupils in Year 4 used a *tree diagram* to classify mini-beasts. Older pupils use graphs, charts and tables to record their findings in science and geography and plot historical events on a time line.

99 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and knows that raising standards to the same high levels as in English is a key area for improvement. Good use is made of the results of tests and assessments to check whether pupils are learning at a fast enough rate and to predict the levels they will achieve by the time they leave the school. This has only recently started but is already helping teachers to see which pupils are not doing as well as they should be. It has also helped the co-ordinator to set challenging targets for 2001. The school has made a good start at improving standards in mathematics and the co-ordinator's clear understanding of what needs to be done next in relation to keeping a check on pupils' progress puts it in a good position to be able to improve.

SCIENCE

The results of national tests

100 The results of teachers' assessments of seven-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards in science were below average when compared with those from all schools and with results from similar schools. These results were not as high as standards in recent years or as those at the time of the last inspection.

101 The results of national tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 were also below those in most primary schools. Standards at the end of the juniors rose for the second year running and show a picture of improvement over the last four years. Pupils performed well below those in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who achieved higher levels than those expected for their ages by the end of both infants and juniors was lower than in most other schools.

Inspection findings

102 Standards in Year 2 are now above those reached in most schools. All pupils are reaching the standard for seven-year-olds, and many achieve a higher level. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were average. The main reasons for this improvement since last year's tests are the higher ability of this year's pupils and good teaching in both infant classes.

103 Standards in Year 6 are in line with expectations for pupils' ages, as at the time of the last inspection. The main reason for the improvement since last year's tests is the much smaller number of pupils with special educational needs in the class. Rising standards are also due to improving teaching in the juniors and some very good teaching in Year 4. Pupils with special

educational needs make steady progress.

104 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because most of the teaching is good. Above average language skills also speed up learning. Pupils get off to a good start in the reception class with lots of energetic and imaginative practical work. In the next two years, teachers plan effective opportunities for them to experiment and investigate. Their work shows that in most lessons teachers have guided them through the processes of setting up an experiment and predicting what will happen. However, particularly in Year 2, teachers also encourage them to record results in their own ways. As they draw and write, their understanding of what they have observed grows. This was evident in a lesson in Year 2, when the teacher set pupils the task of finding out how sounds are made and travel. Pupils enjoyed watching well-organised experiments with a radio, rice, water and bottles. Their thoughtful notes and pictures showed vibrations in the air entering the ear, and how the length of an air column determined pitch.

105 Good progress continues in the first half of the junior stage. Pupils in Year 3 have made up lost ground to reach the standards expected by the end of the year. By the end of Year 4, standards are above average and about a third of pupils are working at a higher level than that expected for their age. There is steady progress in Years 5 and 6. Pupils in Year 5 made a test fair by altering one or more of the conditions. They worked well together in groups to make sure the experiment went smoothly. Their predictions in a water resistance investigation were sensible and based on what they already knew about the properties of solids and liquids. Sound teaching in classes in Year 6 has brought standards back up again. However, there is not always enough challenge to ensure that by the end of the year, the more able pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable. This is because in the second half of the key stage teachers do not vary the levels of work enough so as to stretch pupils of different abilities. Regular homework, followed by tests at school, ensures that pupils in Year 6 have a thorough knowledge of life processes, materials, physical processes and scientific method. A close analysis of National Curriculum test results enabled the co-ordinator to identify gaps in pupils' investigative learning.

106 Teachers' good knowledge of science shows in their skilled questioning both in leading discussion and helping individual pupils to follow through the steps in new learning. This was evident in a good lesson in a class in Year 5. The teacher used probing questions to enable pupils to discover why the results of each group's tests on materials were slightly different. In a class in Year 2, the teacher's persistent questioning produced a wealth of precise observations of sounds. Teachers plan, prepare and time activities nicely so that pupils finish their tasks and continue to learn in well-managed reviews of their findings at the end of lessons. High quality display reminds pupils of the essentials of new learning as they explore new topics.

107 The teaching was good in nearly all the lessons observed. It is raising standards in both the infants and the juniors. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers are more knowledgeable about the subject now than they were then. As a result teaching is confident, pacy and often exciting. Pupils respond with high levels of interest in the subject and perseverance in solving problems. The quality of pupils' learning is good; they rise to challenges, such as discovering the best design for a mug to keep their teacher's coffee warm. Pupils of all abilities talk enthusiastically about their work. Those in Year 6 recalled very clearly what they had learned from investigations in previous years and the methods they had used.

108 Teachers meet regularly to plan work, to evaluate how well pupils are doing and how successful lessons have been. When possible, they arrange for pupils with special educational needs to get extra support. This helps them to achieve their own personal best and ensures that they have an equal opportunity to take part in lessons and make progress. However, the school has not yet set up a system to track and record in nearly enough detail the progress of pupils' learning. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers are skilled in getting almost all pupils up to the standards expected for their ages, but often do not expect of more able pupils the higher

standards which they are capable of achieving.

109 Sound leadership and management by the co-ordinator have maintained standards this year and are beginning to improve them in the junior classes. The school accepts the need to improve both the quality and use of assessment and to provide time for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The school is all set to make the most of the *Year of Science* to raise standards.

ART AND DESIGN

110 Standards are typical of those expected of seven and 11-year-olds are typical for their age. The picture is much the same as at the time of the previous inspection.

111 Most of the teaching is satisfactory and some very good teaching by the co-ordinator helps pupils in Year 3 to achieve high standards. Teachers give younger pupils a wide range of experiences to develop their knowledge and skills in art. They introduce pupils to paint, pastel, pencil and felt pens, collage and printing and use the works of famous artists to inspire pupils to paint in a similar style. By the time they are seven most pupils produce work of a sound standard and this is displayed very attractively in classrooms and around the school.

112 Teachers give pupils plenty of time to experiment, practise and develop their skills. As a result, by the time they are in Year 6, pupils' drawing and sketching are detailed and show a good eye for perspective and shade. This was evident in detailed pencil drawings and in still-life pictures of flowers and figures using paints and pastels. Pupils blend pastels and mix paints to produce pictures that are expressive and of good quality. Teachers build well on these solid foundations during pupils' later years. They successfully encourage pupils to explore and develop their own ideas and say what they think they could do better. For example, in a very good lesson pupils in Year 3 were encouraged to talk about their first attempts to create a skeleton for a sculpture using chicken wire. Pupils were very honest about the difficulties they encountered on their first attempt and how they intended to change their designs or sculptures in order to improve their models.

113 A good feature of the teaching is the way that teachers establish a good balance between using art to illustrate work in other subjects and providing work that increases pupils' technical skills and knowledge of art itself. Pupils illustrate their work in history and geography with detailed and lively drawings of the periods they study. For example, in a display about the Tudors, pupils incorporated a good deal of detail about dress and style of jewellery into their paintings. They also learned special techniques necessary for printing on textiles and creating the tiles for the millennium display in the school entrance.

114 Teachers make appropriate use of art to promote pupils' cultural development. Much of this is through the opportunities they provide for pupils to look at the work of famous artists. Pupils in junior classes study the work of Mondrian and produce good quality pictures in his style, using paint and textiles. Pupils in Year 3 gained first-hand experience of large-scale sculptures when they visited a local park. They subsequently used many of the styles and shapes they had seen in their own sculptures. As they get older pupils learn about the techniques for applying paint and by copying the techniques used by Van Gogh and Monet they have in the past been able to produce good quality works in similar styles. The large picture in the style of Van Gogh, which is on display in the hall, is of good quality, though it was done some time ago. Pupils who attend the art club widen their experience of techniques and art styles from around the world. They enjoy working on their projects, such as decorating planters with highly colourful mosaics, and are very independent in getting on with their work and making decisions for themselves.

115 Art remains a high profile subject in the school due to good leadership. The co-ordinator

has a clear view of the strengths of the subject and of what needs to be done with regard to closer monitoring of the quality of teaching and keeping track of pupils' progress. This puts the school in a good position to raise standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116 Standards in design and technology are typical of seven and 11-year-olds. Good leadership has ensured that standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection.

117 The quality of teaching has also improved significantly. It is mostly satisfactory and some of it is good. One of the main reasons for this is that teachers have had training in design and technology and are far more confident at teaching the subject. This was evident in a good lesson in Year 6 when pupils were given clear explanations about the pneumatic devices in their models. As a result, by the end of the lesson most pupils had decided how their models could be improved and work faster or more smoothly.

118 A strength of the teaching is that teachers place great emphasis on the importance of design as a preliminary to making models. So, right from Year 1 pupils begin to design models, first of all as pictures that are coloured and labelled. As they get older the amount of detail on pupils' designs increases. They often include labels of parts and list the materials and tools to be used. For example, in Year 2, pupils' initial designs for an invitation to a party showed details of patterns and where the text would be positioned on the card. By the time they are in junior classes, pupils include information about measurement, colour and material. The oldest pupils have a firm understanding of the process and often give clear, step-by-step instructions about how their models will be constructed. One of the reasons why this is taught well is that teachers use a design template that guides pupils through each stage of the process. This works well and helps pupils work in a logical ordered way.

119 Teachers ensure that pupils recognise the need to produce models that resemble the original designs through carefully guided questions that make pupils think about what they are doing. For example, in a Year 2 class one girl was able to identify that her model of Joseph's coat was not going to be like the design because she had got the spacing of the different coloured material wrong. Consequently, she modified her model until it more closely resembled the design.

120 Pupils are taught to use design and technology tools safely and competently. They pick up technical terms and names as they go along and by listening to teachers. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are familiar with terms such as *reinforce*, *assemble* and *pneumatic* and use these when talking about their work. The lighthouses made by pupils in Year 4 show that they are competent at cutting and joining material such as card, paper and textiles. Finished models look like the original designs and pupils pay attention to adding finishing touches that make their models more attractive. This attention to detail was also evident in the chairs made by pupils in Year 3 and the desk tidies made by pupils in Year 2.

121 Teachers provide plenty of time for pupils to make their models and to evaluate their success. Pupils are given opportunities to talk about their work and show it to others and to make helpful and criticisms of the work of others. Because teachers ensure that this is done in a sensitive way pupils value the opinions of their classmates and gain confidence to talk about their work. When asked to talk about their models pupils spoke enthusiastically about their ideas. Pupils from infant classes talked excitedly about the best way to glue and how some designs are too difficult and you can't make them. Older pupils worked collaboratively to make models and talked earnestly about how they would change their plans if they were to be given the same task a second time.

122 The subject is managed well and there is a commitment by all staff to improving standards. There remain only a couple of weaknesses to the leadership and management of the subject; the quality of teaching is not monitored in a systematic way and there is no agreed format for recording what pupils can do. However, there are informal checks on what is happening in other classes. This happened when the co-ordinator worked with a group of reception class children to produce clay models. The design portfolios also provide simple evidence of pupils' achievement, particularly those that include photographic evidence of the final model. The co-ordinator is right to consider a more structured programme of work as being the next step towards improving teaching and learning, which puts the school in a good position to continue to raise standards.

GEOGRAPHY

123 Standards in geography are typical of seven and 11-year-olds, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordinator has successfully adapted the new national scheme of work to suit the particular needs of the school. As a result, the geography curriculum has appropriate relevance and engages pupils' interest.

124 The quality of teaching and learning is good. The standard of lessons in the inspection ranged from good to very good.

125 Teachers in Years 1 and 2 give pupils a good introduction both to the local environment, and to the wider world. A good feature of the teaching is the effective development of mapping skills and the representation of both human and physical features. Pupils in Year 1 are given the opportunity to use a computer map-making programme to create on screen villages with roads and buildings. Pupils accurately plot their routes to school and make maps and models of imaginary islands.

126 Teachers encourage pupils to locate far away countries on maps and globes. As a result, pupils in Year 2 know which countries are passed by aeroplanes flying en-route to far away destinations.

127 Teachers also link geography, reading and writing well. For example *Katie Morag* stories and *Robinson Crusoe* provided inspiration and a starting point for their work on islands. Similarly, learning about countries in their *Passport to the World* work, the most able pupils in Year 2 remembered that Honcho and Hokkaido were the names of Japanese islands, and understood the importance of paddy fields in oriental agriculture. In a good lesson in a class in Year 2, the teacher's detailed subject knowledge developed pupils' awareness of the differences in lifestyle between their own and that of the Chinese people.

128 A strength of the teaching in the junior classes is the work on different environments. Pupils in Year 5 visited and then mapped the centre of a local village, which gave them a better understanding of the likely effects of proposed changes in land use. Pupils in Year 6 visited a local recycling plant and this helped them recognise that human activity can change environments. Pupils in Year 4 wrote diaries as if they were members of an Indian family in Chembakoli. This made them think about different ways of life and how weather and climate affect what people wear and their way of life. Another good feature of the teaching is the way in which teachers support residential visits to places such Ennerdale and Ellerburn to give pupils direct experience of different environments. These visits significantly enhance the geographical and orienteering skills of those pupils who take part.

129 Very good teaching in Year 5 reflected the teacher's high expectations and skill in using speech and role-play to enrich the knowledge and understanding of pupils of all abilities. They enjoyed the challenge of representing in a mock public enquiry the views of different groups in the local community who would be affected by the creation of a new shopping centre. Pupils

sparked each other off as they explained in detail how their lives would be affected and their feelings about the proposal. A measure of the maturity of the debate was that three pupils spoke very persuasively to support views that they personally opposed. This adventurous teaching explored all the key human issues in depth and involved all pupils well so that they made very good progress.

130 The co-ordinator manages the subject effectively and teachers have been successful in maintaining standards since the previous inspection. The school has begun to improve teachers' assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills by teaching to the learning objectives within the latest national guidance. Teachers' planning is checked regularly. However the school has not set up its own system to record and track individual pupils' progress in geography. Nor does the co-ordinator have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in lessons. Resources are good. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 suggest that in practice the school gives greater emphasis to history than geography in junior classes, particularly in their final year.

HISTORY

131 There is a lot of enthusiasm for history in the school. Standards are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment is above expectations for seven and 11-year-olds. This improvement is the result of pupils' above average language skills, teachers' interest in the subject and their effective use of speech and writing to develop pupils' skills and understanding in history. Teachers now use the new national guidelines to take pupils in a structured way through an interesting and challenging programme year by year. Most pupils make good progress through the year in gaining historical knowledge, understanding and skills.

132 Teachers show pupils how to discover the past from a range of sources. The youngest pupils use objects and talk with their families as primary sources in their introduction to historical enquiry. For example they gain an early sense of passing time when they look at changes in letterbox shapes over the years. A good feature of teaching is the use made of artefacts in history lessons. Year 1 pupils examined closely a sampler made by a seven-year-old girl in the 19th Century. They found the object very interesting and realised the patience with which they were expected to work when they wrote their own names on squared paper using only crosses. Teachers give pupils in Year 2 an insight into the importance of eyewitnesses and written records when they study the Great Fire of London. They examined Pepys' coded diary pages, and listened to his words. Teachers introduce pupils in Year 5 to the difficulties of interpreting archaeological finds. Pupils unearth pieces of broken plates from sand trays, reassemble them, draw out the probable pattern of the whole and see if the images carry a message. By the time they are 11, they have a good understanding of the different values of a wide range of historical sources. They understand the importance of pottery as archaeological evidence in the study of the ancient civilisations of Athens and Sparta. Pupils have detailed knowledge of the way of life of these people.

133 Teachers provide activities that are both imaginative and challenging. In the Year 2 class, after pupils had studied contemporary records, the teacher asked them to write their own diaries describing the spread of the Great Fire. Their sentences showed clear understanding of the event: *Everyone pumped like mad but they could not put the fire out. Everyone was getting their precious jewellery. I sailed across the Thames to have a closer look. Some people are trapped in their houses.* Pupils in Year 4 take turns to play the part of settlers at lunchtimes. They don Saxon or Viking costumes and eat food typical of the diet of the times in a Saxon/Viking hut built carefully by the site manager. A *tree of honour* in the Year 5 classroom links understanding of Tudor chivalry with the daily importance for pupils of keeping their promises. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher led a very lively discussion that motivated pupils to get at the reasons why the Greeks developed their military skills.

134 Such lessons and activities really interest pupils, so they behave well, concentrate and enjoy learning. For example, Year 3 pupils made copies of Egyptian cartouches in clay with carefully copied hieroglyphics. Teachers also give them opportunities to deepen their knowledge of history by research and finding things out for themselves. For example, pupils in Year 6 worked on their own using CD ROMs², photographs of Greek art and books to find answers to the question: *Why were the Ancient Greek fighters so powerful?* The new guidelines for teaching the subject now give the school scope to develop standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

135 The school has come a long way since the previous inspection. Resources have been purchased and teachers have had training. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements and as a result standards have risen and are in line with what is expected of seven and 11-year-olds.

136 The teaching is now satisfactory. Staff confidence and competence have been much improved by recent training that has focused on the actual teaching they are required to undertake. Teachers have developed their own skills and knowledge so that they use and discuss the subject with increasing confidence. During the inspection computers were in regular use in classrooms and in many lessons information and communication technology is an integral part of learning. For example, children in the reception class use computers to identify letter sounds, infant pupils practise their reading with the help of computers and pupils in junior classes use computers to research in history and geography lessons. Teachers' increased knowledge means that the explanations they give to pupils are easy to follow and help them grasp new skills easily. This was evident when pupils in Year 4 were able to follow the teacher's instructions for using a branching database and see how they might use it to ask their own questions and store the answers.

137 Following criticisms in the previous inspection report the co-ordinator was quick to put a good quality programme of work in place. This provides clear guidelines for teachers and ensures that skills are taught in a logical way. This means that the data-handling skills that pupils learn in infant classes are developed further as they get older. By the time they leave the school most pupils communicate information as databases and spreadsheets.

138 Good teaching of word-processing skills ensures that pupils gain familiarity with the layout of the keyboard and learn to type with two hands. One of the features of teaching is that pupils are taught to build on what they already know. Consequently, after learning to use menus to change the size, colour and style of writing older pupils learn to add borders and pictures to make their work more attractive. By the end of Year 6, pupils combine text, graphics and sound in their work and are confident in using the most widely used programs for word processing.

139 A good feature of the teaching is the way that information and communication technology is taught within many other subjects as well as being a subject in its own right. Pupils in infant classes are encouraged to use computers to draft their writing in English lessons and to key in information about themselves that will build up a mathematical database. In junior classes, pupils experiment with different letter styles, sizes and colours to rewrite work they have drafted in rough. Most pupils know how to use the tool bar, understand the meanings of icons and load, save and print their work. Less capable pupils still use only one hand or even one finger to type words and consequently, it takes them a long time to write out their stories and poems.

140 Teachers expect that pupils will enjoy using information and communication technology as

² Compact discs with a read only memory.

a tool for learning. For example, when learning how to receive and send electronic mail, pupils in Years 3 and 5 sent one another jokes. This made the learning fun and pupils were keen to tell the jokes as well as talk about the technology of how to send them. Pupils enjoy using computers and treat them with respect. They are keen to have their turn and help each other when they get stuck or do something wrong. Many pupils have computers at home and use these to research about the topics they are studying. They often print out pages from the Internet and bring these into school.

141 Good leadership and management have enabled the school to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. The co-ordinator recognises that the next step is to agree and implement procedures for assessment. At present, these are largely informal and do not always reflect the aims of the lessons. With the help of a grant the co-ordinator has plans to develop pupils' skills in information and communication technology through closer links with a local city technology college. This puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve provision and raise standards.

MUSIC

142 Standards in music have been maintained since the previous inspection and are typical of seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils who are taught to play musical instruments do well because of the additional tuition they get from specialist teachers.

143 The teaching is satisfactory overall and some good teaching was seen in lessons. Music is taught in class lessons and in larger groups when the co-ordinator leads singing sessions. In lessons, teachers help pupils to gain an understanding of composing music by linking music and story. They encourage pupils to think about the sounds that instruments make and incorporate these into their own compositions. This helped pupils in an infant class to make sensible choices of bells for *twinkling stars* and soft cymbals for *swaying grass*.

144 Good resources and planning ensure that pupils can think about their choices and give reasons for the sounds they will make in the dance. Teachers pace their instructions well for singing lessons and class music that give pupils opportunities to reflect on the sound or music they want to make. There is good rapport between teachers and pupils, which leads to pupils performing as well as they can. The good management of pupils and relationships shows well in Year 4, where pupils practise simple notation. Pupils' self control whilst listening and good behaviour contribute to good results in the music they make.

145 Infant and junior pupils are good listeners in singing lessons where, each week, the coordinator leads each stage. Infant pupils concentrate carefully on the rhythm chant to *Yellow Square* and the *Green Circle* rhythms with repeated clapping. Pupils copy the rhythm of different sounds well, which are generated from a computer-driven music centre. Junior pupils listen well to correct their pitch in singing lessons. They answer questions thoughtfully on how the music tells them something of the composer's meaning and what sort of sounds would be used to show *calm* and *love*. Overall pitch in their singing is good for junior pupils. When singing *Shalom* their singing is tuneful and robust where appropriate and Year 6 boys make a very good contribution to the singing of this piece. When singing the song in a round all pupils concentrate well on their part in the round and a good result is achieved. Infant pupils continue to use their good listening skills in class music lessons when composing a jungle dance for their story *Giraffes Can't Dance*. They make individual decisions on the sound they will make and what rhythm their composition will take. As pupils link their compositions together they control their sound well to fit the rhyming rhythm of the story. For example, pupils in Year 4 predicted the value of notes (a bee = a minim, a grasshopper = a crotchet and two quavers). They recognise rhythms performed and are creative in inventing new sounds.

146 Both infant and junior pupils enjoy singing and music lessons. They are keen to perform as a group and as individual performers. Although the recorder group is a fairly recent activity pupils are keen to perform the pieces they know for junior pupils. Equally individual pupils with little experience of their instrument are sufficiently confident to perform to large groups. Pupils in Year 5 talked sensitively and humorously about the choices they made for musical appreciation and they enthusiastically record the pieces of music they have listened to, presenting their preferences clearly. Pupils interested in joining the recorder group keep a homework diary conscientiously on the practice they do at home.

147 The subject is managed well. Sound-systems have been purchased and resources are of good quality and are used well. The co-ordinator has planned the scheme of work carefully, making good links with physical education and science in work on sound and dance. Visits from the local high school orchestra and visiting ensembles gathered by peripatetic musicians enrich the subject. Music makes an important contribution to the themes presented in assembly.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148 By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with those expected for seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils achieve well in swimming and swim further than 25 metres. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained.

149 Teachers use a good quality programme of work to plan a broad curriculum that includes sports, athletics, dance, swimming and gymnastics. The curriculum is enriched by coaching from professional sports people and by the after-school sports activities and clubs that are run by teachers and parents.

150 The teaching is satisfactory overall and some good lessons were seen during the inspection. Teachers plan their lessons well and lessons begin appropriately with good stretching and warm up exercises enabling pupils to be ready for the more demanding skills to be practised. Good activities planned for striking and fielding games motivate pupils to consolidate the skills they already have. Teachers demonstrate well the skills to be practised. In Year 3 pupils gradually improved their throwing skills as the teacher demonstrated good practice in arm control and subsequently improved on their posture. Equally, in Year 4, the teacher's good demonstration of the stages of jumping helped pupils improve the style of their standing jumps and enabled them to jump for greater distances. The very good support given to individual pupils to perfect their jumps led to all pupils improving on past performance. Whilst teachers regularly assess pupils' performance during lessons there are no systems yet in place for recording pupils' attainment.

151 The good relationships between teachers and pupils lead to good performance overall. Pupils are keen to work well on the planned activities and become successful in throwing, catching, fielding and striking. Younger juniors are not as skilled in collaborating as those in Year 4 but they do cooperate well once ground rules are established. Pupils in Year 4 organise themselves effectively into small groups to carry out, observe, mark and record their performances. Those practising athletics are motivated well by the teachers' interest in the Amateur Athletics Award scheme. There is a good range of achievement within Year 4 from gold to bronze awards for running, jumping and skills associated with rounders.

152 All junior pupils go swimming and by the end of Year 6 achieve high standards. Pupils take part in competitive games with other schools and four girls represent the town in girls' football matches. The range of resources is good and these have been carefully audited. The school has taken advantage of the opportunities offered by a national scheme and all staff have had training.

153 The management of the subject is good. The coordinator is committed to the school offering opportunities of high quality in physical education. The subject is well represented as a

planned element of residential visits and the commitment to high achievement in swimming is seen as part of the development of survival skills. Whilst planning covers all expectations for different skills, games and dance, a corresponding record of achievement of pupils would enhance provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154 The school has maintained satisfactory standards since the last inspection which continue to meet those prescribed by the locally Agreed Syllabus for seven and 11-year-olds.

155 The teaching is good and as a result pupils learn quickly and thoroughly. By the end of Year 6, pupils have secure knowledge and understanding of several religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. Pupils with special educational needs do as well as others in relation to the knowledge they gain but sometimes recall learning in less detail.

156 Teachers have a good knowledge of religious education. Over half chose to specialise in the subject in their original teacher training. This is evident in both the range of religions studied and the interesting activities planned for pupils. A particular strength of teaching is the good use of discussion as a means of learning. For example, in a very good lesson, pupils in Year 4 gained mature understanding of the work of Jesus in their study of Christianity. This was because they took the roles and discussed the reactions of people such as the host, guests and servants in the miracle of turning water into wine. One group felt: *We would have thought it was a dream. We were drunk.* The class then came up with thoughtful answers to difficult questions such as why Jesus had said: *It's not my time.*

157 Pupils in junior classes visited a local temple to find out how Hindus worship. They learned how both Hindu and Christian rituals create respect and stillness in worship. Teachers also make good use of visitors to talk to pupils about religion in assemblies.

158 A good feature of the teaching is the way pupils are encouraged to make the link between moral teaching in religion and conduct in school. For example, a pupil in Year 6 explained that *hardly anybody gets bullied. Religion is to do with bullying.* Pupils in the class in Year 1 understood how the idea of *family* as a group who enjoy doing things together could grow to include their class and school. Pupils enjoyed talking about special events that their families enjoyed. The teacher's sensitive leadership of this discussion created a family atmosphere in the classroom. This element of teaching also helps to promote pupils' social development. As a result pupils continually learn at the same time both from and about religion. For example, a pupil in Year 6 explained that the Bible was *a guide to life, like a Torah scroll* as well as being *like a piece of history.*

159 Teachers make full and effective use of stories as an important part of religious education. Consequently, they plan many opportunities for pupils to explore how myths and parables explore key teachings about the human situation. For example, pupils in Year 3 study creation stories and those in Year 4 learn about the parables that Jesus told.

160 Sound management has helped the school to maintain standards since the previous inspection. With the scheme of work in place the school is well placed to continue to improve provision, teaching and standards.

