

INSPECTION REPORT

ST HELEN AUCKLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bishop Auckland

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114104

Headteacher: Mr T. Violet

Reporting inspector: Mrs M. R. Shepherd
11328

Dates of inspection: 30 April – 3 May 2001

Inspection number: 195936

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 category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manor Road St Helen Auckland Bishop Auckland County Durham
Postcode:	DL14 9EN
Telephone number:	01388 604168
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G. Bainbridge
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs M. Shepherd 11328	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr R. Watts 9399	Lay inspector		How high are standards? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr M. Mayhew 21534	Team inspector	English Religious education History Geography Art Music Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are curricular opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Helen Auckland is a well-established nursery, infant and junior school. It predominantly serves two main council estates where houses are being demolished. This is having a negative effect on pupil numbers. The area is designated as having severe social deprivation. There is a small amount of new private housing being built. The school has just begun to work with 'Surestart', a project designed to support children from birth until entry to the nursery based in the school. The school admits children to the nursery in the year they are three. There are 25 part-time children and one full-time child in the nursery. The older children attend the morning session and the younger children attend the afternoon session. There are 119 pupils on the school roll, with the number of boys and girls being roughly equal. Fifty-two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average. Fifty-three per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, with 7 per cent having full statements. Both these figures are well above the national average. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities. Many children enter the school with exceptionally low attainment in language. Attainment in other areas of learning is very low. However, there is a wide spread of attainment, with a very small number of children entering at above the expected level.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Attainment on entry is very low. By the time pupils leave the school attainment is average in mathematics and science and below average in English. The school has a government School Achievement Award.¹ Consistent systems throughout the school ensure some very good progress. Teaching is good with some excellent features. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, co-ordinators and governors work effectively together to lead a well-organised and efficient team of staff with a good capacity to succeed. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Progress in mathematics and science is very good; progress in English is good; progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Standards of reception children in movement are well above expectations.
- Attitudes are very good and behaviour is good; there are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and very good relationships throughout the school.
- Leadership and management are good and ensure that the staff are united in their determination to raise standards.
- Teaching is good; there is a strong and very effective partnership between teachers and classroom assistants.
- There is good provision for moral and social development.
- The school knows its pupils well and caters for their individual needs very effectively.

What could be improved

- Standards in speaking, listening, reading, information and communication technology and religious education are too low.
- Boys consistently score lower than girls in English, mathematics and science.
- The provision for spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory.
- Rates of attendance are unsatisfactory.
- There is not enough involvement of parents in their children's learning.

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

¹ [The School Achievement Award is given to schools that have made substantial improvement in standards.](#)

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997. There has been a good level of improvement since then. By the end of Year 6 standards have risen significantly in mathematics and science. Standards have improved in English throughout the school and attainment in physical education for pupils aged 7 is higher. Standards for 11-year-olds in information and communication technology and religious education have fallen. Rates of attendance have increased considerably. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are better. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. The proportion of good or better teaching has doubled; there is now four times more very good teaching. Fifteen per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and now there is none. There was no excellent teaching and now there are excellent features in mathematics and physical education. Leadership and management have improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils aged 11, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E*	E*	E*	D
Mathematics	E*	E	A	A*
Science	E*	E	D	B

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Standards of pupils aged 11 over the past four years have risen faster than the national rate. Over the past two years standards have risen in English and improved considerably in mathematics and science because the school concentrated on raising standards in these subjects. Standards in the 2000 national tests were in the bottom 5 per cent in English. In mathematics, standards were well above average and in science they were above average. Compared with that in similar schools, attainment is in the top 5 per cent nationally in mathematics, above average in science and below average in English. Attainment in the 2000 national tests for pupils aged 7 was well below average in reading and mathematics and in the bottom five per cent in writing. Compared with similar schools, attainment was average in mathematics, below average in reading and well below average in writing.

Children enter the school with exceptionally low attainment in language. Attainment overall on entry is very low. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception and, by the end of reception, children's attainment is below expectations in all areas of learning² except communication, language and literacy, where attainment is well below average. Attainment in movement is well above expected levels. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the infants and very good progress in the juniors. Pupils achieve well, including the more able pupils. Girls' attainment is higher than that of boys. This difference follows the national trend.

The inspection evidence judges attainment of pupils aged 7 at the expected level in writing, listening, mathematics and science. Standards are below average in reading and speaking. The attainment of pupils aged 11 in writing, mathematics and science is average. Standards in speaking and reading are below average. Standards of handwriting and presentation are high throughout the school. Attainment in information and communication technology is below expectations for pupils aged 7 and well below expectations for pupils aged 11 years. Standards in religious education for pupils aged 11 are below expectations. Standards of pupils aged 7 in physical education are above expectations. The school sets challenging targets and exceeded them significantly last year in mathematics.

² The areas of learning are the equivalent curriculum to the National Curriculum for children in nursery and reception classes. They have been produced by the government.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes towards school. They are proud of their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. They behave well in lessons. Behaviour around the school and in the playground is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Relationships are very good. Pupils work and play co-operatively together.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory. Punctuality is good. There have been four temporary exclusions this year. This is a reduction from the 11 exclusions last year.

Children in the nursery and reception are eager to learn. Pupils expect to work hard during lessons and are interested in the activities. Pupils are polite to each other and to adults. They are willing to share and take turns with resources.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
29 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.

Sixty-nine per cent of teaching is good or better; 17 per cent is very good or better and 4 per cent is excellent. The excellent teaching features in the Years 5/6 class in mathematics and in movement in the reception class. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good, including literacy and numeracy skills. Subject knowledge in English and mathematics is very good; it is good in science, but it is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology and music.

Teachers and classroom assistants work very effectively together. Teachers are very clear about what they want to teach the pupils. They set clear targets in English, mathematics and science, which gives pupils a good understanding of their own learning. Teachers meet the needs of all pupils well in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-targeted support. More able pupils are challenged to reach their potential.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum in the nursery and reception are very good. In the infants they are good and they are satisfactory in the junior classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The teaching and curriculum for pupils with special educational needs are good in the nursery, reception and infant classes and very good in the junior classes. Classroom assistants support these pupils very well. Individual education plans are thorough and are used effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils receive clear guidance to develop an understanding of right and wrong. The curriculum for social development is good with different opportunities to extend pupils' skills. Spiritual development is not extended across the curriculum. The school does not provide enough opportunities for learning about other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Good systems are in place to ensure that individual needs are met. Procedures for child protection are good.
Partnership with parents.	Parents have a good opinion of the school. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. However, they are not involved enough in helping their children with their work.

Adults are used very effectively in the nursery and reception to assess children's progress. Assessment systems are good and contribute well to planning. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. Pupils receive good personal and educational guidance. Some pupils' annual reports lack sufficient detail and future targets.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are good. The literacy, numeracy, science and art co-ordinators carry out their roles well. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It represents the community well and provides useful feedback to the school on parents' views.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance well. Its development planning is good, and effective action is taken to raise standards in behaviour and in English, mathematics and science.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses resources well, particularly staff and accommodation. The school applies the principle of best value at a satisfactory level.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There is a good match of teachers and support staff to curriculum requirements. The quality of accommodation is good and is kept very clean. Some computer printers are old and do not print pupils' work properly.

The headteacher is calm and purposeful. He works well in partnership with the deputy headteacher. Responsibilities are delegated well; there is a shared commitment to improvement and a good capacity to succeed. The chair and vice-chair of governors work effectively together.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twenty-three per cent of parents returned questionnaires. Twelve parents attended the parents' meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • They can confidently approach the school with questions or problems. • Their children make good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school has high expectations of their children. • Behaviour is good. 	<p>A small number of parents raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow progress in reading and writing. • Children do not have opportunities to play musical instruments. • Poor behaviour of individual children in lessons and inadequate supervision at lunchtime. • Insufficient time for children to eat their packed lunches.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. They judge the progress in mathematics, writing and science as very good. They disagree that there is slow progress in reading and writing. Children have opportunities to play the cello, recorders or ocarinas. They disagree that individual children are badly behaved. They found that the behaviour management systems were very good. Supervision at lunchtime is good with plenty of time for children to eat their packed lunches.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery and reception is very low. There is a wide spread of ability, with far more children than usual lacking confidence in using language. In some cases, children have no words to communicate with adults. A very small proportion of children enter the school with attainment above the expected level. Progress is good in the nursery with all children fulfilling their potential because there is thorough assessment of their progress. The good progress is continued in reception, where the teacher has high expectations of all children. By the end of the reception class attainment is below the expected level in most of the areas of learning. Children develop confidence because there are very good relationships established by the staff. In communication, language and literacy, attainment is well below the expected level. Children's vocabulary has increased, but they lack confidence in speaking independently. Standards in physical development are at the expected level overall and there is excellent progress in movement and the sense of space, with standards well above the expected level. Children move confidently in response to music.
2. The table below shows attainment in English, mathematics and science.

	National tests 2000 Pupils aged 7	Inspection judgements Pupils aged 7	National tests 2000 Pupils aged 11	Inspection judgements Pupils aged 11
English	Reading Well below average Writing Very low	Reading Below the expected level Writing Below the expected level	Very low	Below the expected level
Mathematics	Well below average	At the expected level	Well above average	At the expected level
Science	Teacher assessment Below average	At the expected level	Below average	At the expected level

3. The trend over the past four years in the national tests is above the national average. This includes attainment in 1998, when standards were very low. The substantial improvement in standards was recognised by the government with a School Achievement Award. The school has worked hard to raise standards by analysing pupils' test results and then improving teaching and the curriculum. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented very well and have made a significant contribution to raising standards. National tests show significant improvement over the past two years. Compared with that in similar schools the attainment of 7-year-olds was below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. The attainment of 11-year-olds compared with that in similar schools was below average in English, very high in mathematics and above average in science. The attainment of boys is generally below that of girls. The school has not yet addressed this difference in order to further raise standards. The inspection confirms the continuing improvement in standards. There is a higher proportion of pupils aged 11 on the special educational needs register

this year, with six out of ten pupils on Stage 2³ or above. There are also more pupils with full statements. This reduces the overall standards achieved. However, the inspection judges that pupils reach their potential due to high expectations from teachers.

4. The inspection evidence shows improving standards among pupils aged 7. Progress is good through the infants' class because teaching is well structured. The literacy and numeracy strategies are carried out very effectively. Standards in English are below average. Attainment in speaking and listening is below the expected level. Pupils lack confidence in speaking, but their listening skills develop well. Standards in reading are below the expected level. Teachers work hard to support pupils in identifying the different letter sounds within words, and pupils have developed this skill effectively. However, most pupils' reading is not fluent. Standards in writing are higher than in reading, speaking and listening. Letters are correctly formed and pupils use punctuation appropriately.
5. Standards among pupils aged 7 in mathematics are at the expected level. Pupils work confidently with tens and units. They have an appropriate understanding of shapes and measures and explain their mathematical thinking. Standards in science are at the expected level. Pupils carry out scientific investigations confidently. They have an appropriate knowledge across the science curriculum because the teacher covers each aspect thoroughly. Pupils use appropriate vocabulary in mathematics and science because the teacher emphasises key vocabulary as she introduces new topics.
6. The inspection judges standards in English for pupils aged 11 to be below the expected level. Most pupils listen confidently. More able pupils respond with clarity of thought and well-structured sentences, but most pupils use more basic language to converse. More able pupils read fluently with good understanding. Average pupils still rely on breaking down the sounds in words to be sufficiently fluent. Pupils produce writing across a range of different forms. For example, they write stories, descriptions and debating arguments. Spelling is usually accurate and pupils redraft confidently. Standards in handwriting and presentation are high.
7. Standards among pupils aged 11 are at the expected level in mathematics. Pupils use mental mathematics confidently to solve number problems. More able pupils use decimals to two places with confidence. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of shape, space and handling data. Standards in science are at the expected level. Pupils carry out and record scientific investigations effectively because they get regular opportunities to develop these skills. They have an appropriate understanding of the different aspects of the science curriculum because they are covered thoroughly by teachers.
8. The following table shows standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

	By the age of 7 years	By the age of 11 years
Information and communication technology	Below the expected level	Well below the expected level
Religious education	Not possible to make a judgement	Below the expected level
Design and technology	Not possible to make a judgement	At the expected level

³ There are five stages on the special educational needs register, 1 being the lowest.

Art	Not possible to make a judgement	Not possible to make a judgement
Music	Not possible to make a judgement	Not possible to make a judgement
Geography	Not possible to make a judgement	Not possible to make a judgement
History	Not possible to make a judgement	Not possible to make a judgement
Physical education	Above the expected level	At the expected level

9. The school introduced the government schemes of work for these subjects in September. The school plans to evaluate pupils' progress at the end of this year. Standards in information and communication technology are below expected levels because pupils have not developed sufficient skills as they have moved through the school. Teachers do not organise the use of computers across lessons effectively to ensure that pupils have enough time to develop and consolidate their skills. Standards in physical education are above expected levels for pupils aged 7 because children get a thorough grounding in the reception and nursery classes and the infants teacher continues to challenge pupils and set a fast pace to lessons.
10. Standards in literacy are below expectations in reading. Adults give pupils good support to read texts in order to carry out tasks across the curriculum. Writing is at the expected level. Teachers provide key words in lessons to extend pupils' use of vocabulary. For example, in science in the Years 1/2 class the teacher used cards for the words 'push', 'pull', 'twist' and 'squash' to support work on forces. Standards in numeracy are at the expected level. Pupils use measurements accurately in science and design and technology. For example, pupils in the Years 5/6 class drew angles accurately in science to show the reflection of the beams of light.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through the school. Their needs are identified thoroughly in their individual education plans. Classroom assistants and additional teachers are organised very effectively to support their needs. Any group work carried out by these pupils is closely related to the work of the other pupils in the class.
12. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. Standards in mathematics and science have improved significantly. Attainment in physical education for pupils aged 7 has improved. Standards for pupils aged 11 in information and communication technology is lower because pupils have not had enough time to develop their skills on computers. Standards in religious education are now lower.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school. Children in the nursery become engrossed in the well-planned activities and respond well to adults, although the majority have very poor communication skills. When staff are running a particular activity, the children are eager to participate and learn. In the reception class, most children listen carefully to the teacher and are keen to answer questions. For example, they maintained very good interest and excitement in a numeracy lesson as the teacher skilfully switched between teaching resources to get the point across. Their evident enjoyment in a song and dance 'boogie' session, vigorously led by the adults, was a joy to behold and contributed well to their physical development. At the parents' meeting before the inspection, a few parents of children in the reception class expressed reservations about

how well their children enjoyed school. Although one or two were evidently not completely settled, the rest were clearly happy and at ease.

14. In the rest of the school, almost all pupils are keen to get to their classrooms in the morning or after break times. Parents who responded to the questionnaire, and those spoken to during the inspection, were all positive that their children liked school. Older pupils, when asked what they liked best about school, mentioned a wide range of subjects, but particularly mathematics and writing. During lesson introductions they are attentive and keen to answer questions. Most pupils move quickly to start their individual or group work because they enjoy it and are keen to learn more. They are proud of their work. In general pupils concentrate well, but because they are not always sufficiently encouraged, they do not often work independently to solve problems encountered. They are enthusiastic about doing things outside the classroom and take part in the extra-curricular activities offered.
15. Pupils' behaviour is good and this is the result of an improvement which was starting to be seen at the previous inspection and has continued since. Most parents agreed with this, although there were again a few concerned about the behaviour of younger children. During the inspection no examples of poor or violent behaviour were observed. In a very few cases younger children were uncooperative, but this did not disrupt the learning of others. Too many pupils call out in some lessons, but this is through over-excitement rather than naughtiness; it sometimes prevents the teacher from finding out what pupils know. In most lessons, however, pupils behave very well and a quiet word is all that is necessary to keep them focused on their activity. Teachers can concentrate fully on their teaching and hence good behaviour has a positive impact on the good rate of learning seen in many lessons. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies and around the school is very good. They are polite to each other and to adults. At dinner times their calmness and good manners at the tables help to make this a valuable social occasion. Because pupils have had the opportunity to discuss the reasons behind school rules, they fully accept their validity. They respond well to the rewards offered for good behaviour. At the time of the previous inspection the number of exclusions was very high, with 55 temporary and two permanent exclusions in the preceding year. Last year there were 11 temporary and no permanent exclusions and there have only been four temporary ones this year so far. Although the level is still higher than average, this is a greatly improving pattern. Most exclusions are for serious behaviour problems.
16. The personal development of pupils within the school is good and relationships are very good. The productive rapport between adults and pupils is a noticeable feature of most lessons. Children in the nursery and reception classes treat each other with care and respect and are confident with staff; they respond by giving of their best. Within lessons, pupils work well to support each other and discuss problems. For example, in a Years 3/4 design and technology lesson pupils helped each other to make their 'pop-up' models work. In the playground, pupils of all ages play well together and no incidents of bullying or social exclusion were observed during the inspection. Pupils said that, although there were some incidents of bullying, these were largely dealt with satisfactorily. They recognise that there are other ways of life and different faiths and that they should be tolerant. However, this tolerance is not sufficiently supported by knowledge of others' cultures.
17. Attendance overall is unsatisfactory. There has been a dramatic improvement since the previous inspection, however, and last year attendance was only 2.1 per cent below the national average. Unauthorised absence was broadly average. The great majority of pupils are punctual. The few who have poor attendance records adversely affect the overall rate of attendance. Their absence prevents them from taking advantage of the good education offered.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching is good, with over two thirds of lessons inspected judged to be of this quality. Nearly a fifth of teaching is very good or better, including excellent features in movement in reception and mathematics in the Years 5/6 class. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. At that time 15 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory and now there are none. Only a quarter of lessons were judged good or better and that proportion has more than doubled. There were no excellent features identified in the previous inspection and the proportion of very good teaching is now four times greater than it was. The improvement in teaching has made a significant contribution to the raising of standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
19. The partnership between teachers and classroom assistants is of a very high quality throughout the school. All adults have a very good understanding of their role in each lesson and the expectations of the pupils they are supporting. In whole-class sessions, the classroom assistants extend the teachers' explanations very effectively, particularly supporting pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and classroom assistants interact enthusiastically with each other to make the tasks more interesting and to celebrate pupils' efforts. This increases the pupils' interest in the tasks and ensures an enthusiastic response. For example, in a science investigation in the Years 5/6 class both the teacher and the classroom assistant supported pupils in identifying where the discolouring tablets had shown the plaque on their teeth. The whole class thoroughly enjoyed the experiment. Teachers organise the group work very carefully to make full use of classroom assistants. Accommodation is used well to ensure that different adults' interactions with their groups do not disturb nearby pupils. This increases pupils' levels of concentration.
20. The planning for the Foundation Stage is very good. It is thorough and detailed and covers all the areas of the curriculum very effectively. The planning for the work of each adult is of high quality. Every adult has daily instructions for the tasks they are supporting, together with a focus for assessing specific children. These plans are produced for both permanent staff and for visitors. Planning for independent activities is very thorough. Planning for literacy and numeracy throughout the school is very good. Teachers plan in detail and use evaluations and assessments from the previous week to ensure that each week's work builds carefully on previous learning. There are useful categories included across these subjects. For example, in numeracy teachers identify key words to be used through the lesson and key questions for the whole-class session at the end of the lesson. This ensures a high level of consistency through the lesson and supports pupils well in the development of the use of technical vocabulary. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are well organised and ensure that these pupils' work closely matches their needs.
21. Teachers use learning objectives very effectively. They record them on the whiteboards at the beginning of the lesson, explain them clearly to the pupils, refer to them during the lesson and review them at the end of the lesson. Pupils have targets in their English, mathematics and science books linked carefully to the National Curriculum. Teachers review them regularly and pupils identify their own targets each term. The combination of all these strategies gives pupils a good understanding of their own learning and stimulates them to try hard to achieve their next goal.
22. Teaching of basic skills is very good. In reading and writing, pupils are given clear guidance to improve their skills. For example, pupils in the Years 3/4 class were supported in improving the quality of sentences by increasing the amount of adverbs and using a conjunction in the style of Roald Dahl. In numeracy, pupils are taught the best way of carrying out operations with numbers and practise them regularly to achieve

accuracy. Teachers ensure that they learn their multiplication tables to allow them to respond to mental mathematics quickly.

23. Teachers have very good subject knowledge in English and mathematics and good subject knowledge in science. They have a very good understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which ensures a high level of consistency across the school. The Years 5/6 teacher has particularly good subject knowledge in mathematics. This allows him to take every opportunity for developing understanding in his pupils because he takes all of their answers and follows them up skilfully to extend their thinking. For example, in a lesson relating percentages to fractions or decimals he moved smoothly between each of these aspects depending on the responses of each pupil. The Foundation Stage teachers have a very good understanding of the Early Learning Goals. They understand the learning needs of the children and match the work effectively to extend the more able children's learning and to support the less able children. Subject knowledge of information and communication technology and music is unsatisfactory. Teachers lack confidence in developing the full breadth of these subjects in lessons.
24. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work rate, both in whole-class discussions and in carrying out the tasks in groups. Pupils concentrate hard through lessons and produce a good amount of written work, which consolidates their skills effectively and increases progress. Teachers expect pupils to produce neat, tidy work with careful handwriting. Pupils respond well to these expectations and take pride in their written tasks. Teachers and classroom assistants use praise very effectively to boost pupils' confidence and to celebrate effort, presentation or achievement. For example, in numeracy in the Years 1/2 class the work of a pupil with special educational needs was shared with the class at the end of the session, with everyone joining in the praise for his efforts.
25. Teachers organise lessons well. They balance whole-class discussion effectively with group work and use the end of the lesson well to summarise the learning. This regular structure to lessons increases pupils' confidence because they know what to expect. Teachers do not organise the use of computers in lessons effectively. Many opportunities are missed to develop skills either within the different subjects or in using computers. Teachers carry out lessons at a fast pace and pupils respond well, maintaining a good level of productivity. For example, in the Years 1/2 class in physical education the teacher included several activities in the warm up, moved in to a range of different tasks for the main lesson and then included two parts to the cool down. Pupils left the lesson exhausted, but happy. Teachers use questioning effectively, both to pose problems for the whole class and to probe individual pupils' thinking. Resources are used well to stimulate learning. For example, in each class, as pupils get older, the number square is used in increasingly sophisticated ways as a tool for extending numeracy skills.
26. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. They implement the school systems very effectively. They explain the rules firmly, remind pupils of how they are expected to behave and quickly identify any pupils ready to behave inappropriately. Good behaviour is commended regularly and pupils strive to earn adults' approval. Individual education plans for pupils with behavioural problems are used well to support the development of positive behaviour.
27. Teachers establish good homework systems. Pupils know which subject they are expected to do each night. There are consistent reward systems throughout the school and pupils value the house points and certificates. Pupils take homework seriously. However, in many cases they are unable to complete the work because of difficulties at

home. The school plans to extend opportunities for individuals by organising a homework club.

28. Features of the excellent mathematics teaching include the skilful use of questioning to probe pupils' thinking and extend their understanding, and a subtle pace matching a fast rate to the majority of the lesson with a slower pace when new learning takes place. The teacher targets all pupils to maintain their attention, behaviour management is sensitive but firm and there are very high expectations that all pupils will reach their potential. The excellent features in movement include a furious pace to lessons, which covers a great deal of learning, high quality demonstrations, very high expectations, clear sequences of work building from previous lessons and a high level of enthusiasm for the subject.

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

29. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good for children in the Foundation Stage and promote their learning very well. Planning is very good and ensures that the curriculum is covered thoroughly. Very good systems are in place to challenge more able children and to support lower attainers. The school meets its statutory requirements to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education.
30. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for all its pupils, through a broad and interesting curriculum that takes account of pupils' needs. There is a satisfactory range of out-of-school activities. There is enrichment of the curriculum through the good range of visits made by pupils to places of educational interest, and from visitors to the school. In effect, the curriculum promotes a good learning environment, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers' planning and other school documentation show that there are appropriate amounts of time given to the teaching of each subject. However, the school rightly gives more than the average amount of time to the teaching of literacy, particularly to the infants. This is necessary because most pupils enter the school with such low levels of linguistic attainment, and the school has to work so hard to bring their literacy skills to a level that will support their achievement in other subjects. Indeed, the way the school finds strategies for pupils to develop these skills in subjects other than English is laudable, for example in science, history and design and technology. There are plans to extend further this way of working. However, the school has yet to consider how it intends for pupils to better acquire and practise information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.
31. There are now schemes of work for most subjects, which is an improvement on the judgement made at the previous inspection, although a suitable scheme for music is at an early stage of development. Relevant subject co-ordinators are in the process of adapting National Curriculum guidelines in the foundation subjects to match the needs of the school, for instance in history and art.
32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and is very good in the juniors, where there is good use of specialist teachers and outside agencies to advise on curriculum matters and to employ the most effective techniques. Precise targets identified in their individual education plans help to meet these pupils' needs. Class teachers regularly review plans in close consultation with the special educational needs support teacher and other relevant adults. All teachers follow closely the recommendations of the plans.

33. The school has introduced well the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and pupils make good progress in both infants and juniors as a result. Planning and monitoring of the teaching of literacy and numeracy are effective.
34. The school pays good attention to the educational needs of each of its pupils, including, at times, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs in small groups. Teachers plan very well for these sessions and make very good use of the skilled classroom assistants, who often take charge of the groups under the close guidance of the teachers. The work done by these pupils away from their own class is usually of a similar nature to that being done by their higher attaining classmates, but at a level of difficulty appropriate to their levels of attainment. Consequently, all pupils have equality of access and opportunity with regard to the curriculum. The school is anxious that all pupils should benefit equally from what it has to offer. To this end it is substantially successful. However, there are times when some pupils miss small parts of some lessons to do work in small groups; for example, when some pupils in the juniors miss parts of their religious education lessons.
35. The planning of the curriculum is very carefully carried out to meet the needs of all pupils. The standard of planning makes a very positive impact on the quality of teaching. Under the guidance of subject leaders, teachers regularly discuss the work done, the plans for the coming week and the individual achievements of pupils. The homework policy is followed consistently. Homework substantially reinforces and extends learning in school for the pupils who have the opportunities to carry it out at home. There is a satisfactory range of out-of-school clubs, mainly for pupils in the juniors, which attract a good number of pupils. Activities include cross-country running, football, athletics, chess and recorders. There are very good opportunities for reception children to take part in out-of-school activities. They take part in gymnastics competitions. This is most unusual for children of this age. Visits outside the school range from walks within the local community to a residential visit to Middleton in Teesdale. A recent visit by juniors to a local discovery centre enhanced their art and design skills, and a visit to a restored Tudor building and the Castle Museum in York gave pupils insight into the life and times of the Tudors. The school has good links with some local churches and with local schools through sporting activities. There is good use made of a few available parents, visiting theatre groups and religious leaders, including a Buddhist monk who visited the Years 3/4 class during the week of the inspection.
36. Personal development is satisfactory. The school is increasing its use of circle time⁴ to extend pupils' confidence in communicating their opinions. Drugs and sex education fulfils statutory requirements.
37. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. It is good for their moral and social development, but unsatisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development. This judgement reflects that made at the previous inspection.
38. Spirituality is not planned as part of the curriculum, although there are occasions when pupils consider the wonders of the world and their own place in it. For example, assemblies, which fulfil the school's requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship, contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. During the inspection week the theme of the beauty of flowers and their impact on the world set pupils thinking about the need to appreciate and conserve the natural environment. In music lessons, pupils occasionally think about how pieces convey emotions and feelings, such as the *Planet Suite* by Gustav Holst. However, the potential for developing in pupils an understanding of and

⁴ This is an activity that is organised by pupils sitting in a circle and taking turns to express their feelings.

ability to reflect on life around them is not promoted consistently throughout the curriculum, particularly in subjects such as art, music and religious education.

39. There is good attention paid to promoting in pupils a moral understanding, and this is reflected in their good behaviour and the very positive attitudes displayed by most of them. All pupils clearly understand and distinguish between right and wrong. They can do this because staff apply the easily understood code of conduct through consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and through their own very good role models of friendliness and respect for each other for the pupils. Staff make rewards clearly known to pupils, who understand what they need to do to achieve them. Older pupils know that taking the right moral stance is something that does not require a reward, but is simply the acceptable way of life. For example, there was a clear moral message in a mathematics lesson when pupils understood the need to work as a team for the benefit of all, despite some disagreement at the individual level.
40. There is a suitably high priority placed on pupils' social development. Teachers consistently teach pupils to adopt positive attitudes to those around them. For example, they explain clearly how pupils are to work together in group activities and teach pupils to take turns when answering questions and when sharing equipment. Photographs displayed around the school celebrate pupils' achievements, for example in a reception class games lesson. Good opportunities are taken in lessons to discuss social experiences. Pupils' wider social awareness is well promoted. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 interviewed a resident of a local housing estate, which was undergoing demolition, to see how the situation affected her life. The school regularly supports national charities for animals and children, thus giving pupils insight into social responsibilities.
41. There are sound opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures through the means of local and national history studies and through a range of visits; for example, to the Edwardian and Victorian industrial museum at Beamish. Religious education studies focus on the beliefs, customs and values of religions such as Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism. However, there is not enough attention given to the rich variety of cultures brought about by the changes in our society. Similarly, there are missed opportunities for pupils to consider the influences and portrayal of a range of cultures in music and art in this and other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school has good procedures for ensuring that its pupils are well cared for. Staff give sensitive help to pupils who are ill or have accidents at school and carry out systematic health and safety risk assessments. Equipment is regularly checked for safe operation and precautions to be taken in lessons and on educational visits identified. No specific hazards were noted during the inspection. The designated teacher for child protection has been trained in the use of procedures that meet local guidelines. Welfare agencies provide good support in the few cases encountered. The school teaches pupils about the effect of their actions on others and this limits bullying. Where there have been cases, the school attempts reconciliation, involving parents appropriately. However, some incidents have causes beyond the school's control and some pupils felt that longstanding problems are only solved when the bully leaves.
43. Behaviour has improved because of a consistent application throughout the school of a very good, structured system of rewards and sanctions, with clear and simple rules. Staff insist on the principle that all pupils have the right to learn and that they have the right to teach. Exclusions have dropped as pupils and parents have become aware of this firm but fair philosophy. Where children have been excluded, the action has been appropriate

and correct procedures have been followed. The school has arranged good support for the pupils when they return to minimise the likelihood of re-occurrence. Attendance has been improved greatly by the good use of monitoring, using computer software. Good attendance is rewarded and parents are contacted where there are problems. Registers are completed appropriately at the start of each session. However, the school does not meet official guidelines on accounting for pupils who come or go during a session, or what has happened to pupils who are unexpectedly absent. The practice of allowing pupils, instead of parents, to give reasons for absence is unsatisfactory.

44. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. The previous inspection report pointed to the need for teachers to use the results of assessments to help them to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. The school has fully addressed this issue with regard to English, mathematics and science. However, there are no strategies to formally assess pupils' progress in the other subjects, although most subject co-ordinators are considering this aspect as they undertake subject reviews.
45. Teachers formally assess children when they enter the Foundation Stage and quickly use the results to give focused attention to the children, including those identified as having special educational needs. Assessment is identified clearly in the termly planning. Adults are used very effectively to assess children's progress, with specific children identified for targeting for assessment each week.
46. All pupils take the statutory National Curriculum tests and assessments at the ages of 7 and 11 years. Teachers use data from these tests well to help them plan future work and to ensure that they address the needs of individual pupils. In addition, pupils complete the optional National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers regularly use other nationally acceptable assessment materials to assess pupils' reading progress and their acquisition of scientific knowledge, understanding and skills.
47. As pupils progress through the school, teachers collate the results of formal tests and build up an academic profile of each child. Pupils' performance in the statutory tests at the age of 7 is used effectively to predict what level they may reach at the age of 11 years. The use of this and other assessment data to guide curriculum planning is good. For example, an analysis of the 2000 National Curriculum test results in English for pupils aged 11 confirmed that pupils were lacking in their knowledge of aspects of the writing programme of study. This led to adjustments in planning and subsequent teaching, designed to improve pupils' writing skills.
48. Of note is the fact that juniors are kept up to date with their own learning targets in English, mathematics and science. Workbooks in these subjects contain targets at the front and, importantly, evaluations at the back, with the result that pupils can see how successful they have been in working towards their targets
49. Teachers regularly update individual reading, writing and mathematics records. These provide information to set future targets in order to raise standards. The information gained from assessment is used very successfully to highlight attainment and the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and groups of pupils.
50. Very good attention is given to pupils with special educational needs, on an individual basis by classroom assistants, in small 'additional literacy' groups and in larger groups by a qualified specialist teacher or a temporarily appointed teacher. The school is well equipped for access by disabled pupils. The school uses assessment well to identify these pupils' progress and to determine what needs to be done to extend their learning.

Reviews of all pupils' progress take place regularly and involve all relevant adults in setting new targets and organising action plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Evidence gathered on parents' views of the school was contradictory, but overall they have a good opinion of the school. The 27 parents who responded to the questionnaire were very positive. They had no significant concerns. The strongest points were that their children liked school and they felt comfortable raising questions or problems. Their children make good progress through good teaching. The details are given in Part C. Parents spoken to during the inspection shared these positive views. However, at the meeting held before the inspection, attended by 12 parents, largely of younger children, there was considerable dissatisfaction with behaviour management and teaching methods. Whilst the inspection supports the positive views, the misconceptions of parents of younger children about the school represent a weakness in the links between them and the school.
52. Overall, the school's links with parents are satisfactory, but there are, as indicated above, weaknesses as well as strengths. The school keeps parents informed about day-to-day school life with regular letters and has recently restarted an attractive half-termly newsletter. Teachers write to parents about which topics are being taught each term, which enables them to give help at home. Parents of new children have several opportunities to talk to the staff before their children start and are given some relevant literature on the learning process. However, despite this, there are areas where parents do not understand school systems. For example, there is a lack of awareness of how their children will be taught to read. The reports on pupil progress, which parents receive at the end of each school year, meet statutory requirements. However, comments are often far too brief to give parents sufficient information about how much the children have achieved in the year. In some cases, no targets are identified which communicate what a pupil needs to do to improve further. Parents can, however, attend formal meetings with the teacher each term and discuss their children's work. Many parents also feel confident about informal contacts. In the past the school has run courses for parents, which encourage them as educators, but recently these courses have been poorly attended. Although the governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements, it is published almost a year after the school year to which it refers and hence does not allow parents adequate opportunity for meaningful discussion. The school intends to change the timing of the report.
53. Parents have satisfactory involvement in the work of the school overall and many give good support. However, on the whole, parents make insufficient contribution to their children's learning. Many parents support their children's learning by hearing them read at home. However, although there is an opportunity to comment in the reading record or homework diary, there is little dialogue between parents and teachers that would support learning by both parties. Many other parents do not hear their children read regularly and, in a few cases, books taken home are lost or damaged. Very few parents volunteer to help in school and thus miss the opportunity to increase their own confidence in helping their own children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. He is calm and purposeful, which produces a positive working context to enable the staff and pupils to carry out effective teaching and learning. He sets clear priorities for improving and maintaining behaviour and raising standards, establishing effective systems in order to achieve these priorities. For example, the analysis of the national tests at the end of Key

Stage 2 led to changes in the teaching and curriculum in that key stage. This produced an improvement in standards better than the national trend, which was recognised by the government in a School Achievement Award. He establishes very good relationships with staff and pupils and ensures that the school is united in striving to improve the provision for all its pupils. The headteacher delegates responsibilities well. He ensures that staff have a good understanding of their roles. There are well-organised systems across the school with teachers, classroom assistants, external personnel and support staff working efficiently together. The headteacher knows the pupils well and celebrates their successes. For example, a pupil with special educational needs was sufficiently confident in receiving a positive response from the headteacher to show him his work when passing him in the library.

55. The headteacher works effectively in partnership with the deputy headteacher. They have well-defined roles and responsibilities and work hard to carry the management load between them. The deputy headteacher has a very good understanding of the responsibilities of the headteacher because she was acting headteacher for two terms and developed the skills of leadership well during this time. She combines the workload of her management and teaching responsibilities well. For example, she has been instrumental in raising standards in English by the introduction of the literacy strategy in her role as English co-ordinator, as well as setting good standards of teaching, with some excellent features in the reception class. The mathematics, science and art co-ordinators are all effective. They have a good understanding of the developments needed to raise standards further in their subjects. The leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator is very good. She has a very clear understanding of the work throughout the school and ensures that all the requirements of the Code of Practice⁵ are fully met.
56. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It understands the different potential for each class because the headteacher keeps governors well informed about progress through Key Stage 2. They take this into account when agreeing targets for the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. They have a good understanding of the needs and opinions of the community and feed this back to the school. For example, they reported the higher confidence of parents in the school in recent years due to the improvements in behaviour. The chair and vice-chair work effectively together and monitor some developments in the school. For example, the vice-chair identified improvements in reading skills because she hears pupils read regularly. Governors support the school in the developments identified by the school staff. However, they do not play an active contribution in producing the school development plan. They have produced their own separate draft governor development plan to extend their own roles in the school. It is well organised, but has yet to identify deadlines for time or ways of measuring their success in achieving the objectives. Governors are now in a good position to take a fuller role in shaping the direction of the school.
57. School development planning is good, with appropriate priorities established, costs included and well-focused action identified to carry out the targets set. For example, the concentration on raising standards in behaviour, literacy, numeracy and science has resulted in improved standards and prepared these pupils well for their future lives. The school development plan is well structured with all co-ordinators contributing to future objectives. It is presented clearly with targets set for measuring achievement and general time scales identified. There are detailed action plans for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. However, they are not included in the main part of the development plan, which reduces their impact within the school community. The school takes effective action to carry out the targets within the school development plan. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and Year 6 teacher have carried out a

⁵ The Code of Practice is a government requirement for identifying pupils with special educational needs.

thorough analysis of the pupils' individual responses to the annual national tests. They have all worked hard together to improve the curriculum and teaching throughout the school on the basis of this analysis. Monitoring of classroom teaching is satisfactory. There are different styles of monitoring forms, which reduce the consistency of the monitoring strategies by the headteacher and co-ordinators. The targets for improving the quality of teaching ranges from good to satisfactory. There is a clear commitment to improvement among all the staff of the school and a good capacity to succeed. This is evident in the significant improvements in standards over the past two years.

58. Overall, the school makes good strategic use of its financial resources. At the time of the previous inspection the school was carrying a large surplus and this has now been reduced to an acceptable level by judicious spending on both staff and resources. The reduction in pupil numbers has also been well managed financially, with an emphasis on keeping class sizes small and with age ranges that allow efficient teaching. Additional funds that have been received recently have been spent on meeting the school's priorities to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. The school currently receives few direct funds for pupils with special educational needs, but spends these appropriately and to good effect. It uses staff provided by the local education authority well to support these pupils. Once funds have been allocated, financial control is good and effective use is made of information and communication technology for this purpose. The school has acted on the recommendations of the last audit report.
59. The school has made a satisfactory start in the use of the principles of best value. Governors are aware of comparisons in academic performance between St Helen's and similar schools. The school has campaigned to have the 'Surestart' centre based at the school. It has identified that early development of children coming to the school is vital in order to build a foundation for learning as the pupils progress through the school. The school ensures value for money in its purchases of resources. Delegated funds for educational services have generally been reinvested in the authority, but not before due consideration of the burden of managing such funds, alternative suppliers and their comparative quality. For example, the school has recently identified that money can be saved by managing its own cleaning.
60. The schools resources, in terms of the number and quality of staff, accommodation and other learning resources, are good. The building is a mixture of old and new, but is completely self-contained, thus making the movement of pupils and staff efficient. Although in some places the old building shows signs of wear, for example flaking plaster caused by roof leaks, these do not impose any limitations on teaching. The building is kept spotlessly clean by the caretaker and cleaning staff, which encourages all to take a pride in their school. The classrooms released by the reduction in pupil numbers have been used well to provide space for practical activities or learning support groups. The library is spacious and has an atmosphere conducive to study, although it is not used effectively to develop study skills. The field, which was out of use at the time of the previous inspection, is now fully operational for games. The playground is large and equipped with benches where pupils can relax.
61. Expenditure per pupil on teachers is higher than average and hence the pupil-to-teacher ratio is lower than average. All teachers are appropriately qualified and well experienced. Each subject of the National Curriculum has a co-ordinator. There are also a large number of support staff for the exceptionally high percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register. These staff work very well in partnership with class teachers and their efficient deployment is a notable feature of virtually all lessons. All staff are well trained, particularly in teaching the main subjects, and new teachers are quickly and effectively introduced to school systems.

62. Teaching resources are now generally adequate; the school has invested heavily in the past two years. The only weakness is the unreliability of the computer printers, which sometimes limits learning in information and communication technology lessons.
63. Attainment on entry to the school is very low. Attainment by the time pupils leave the school is average in mathematics and science and below average in English. Behaviour is good. Teaching is good. Management and leadership are good. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The cost per pupil is higher than average. Taking all this into account the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further improve the school's provision the governors, headteacher and staff should:-

- (1) raise standards in speaking, listening and reading in both infants and junior classes by:-
 - giving pupils more opportunities to speak in detail and at length in formal and informal situations;
 - including role play in lessons through the use of drama;
 - widening the range of reading opportunities and experiences, particularly by independent research and library skills, reading stories, poems and factual information aloud to a wide audience and discussing the meaning of what they have read;

Paragraphs 2-4, 6, 10, 73, 79, 82-83

- (2) raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by:-
 - implementing the planned training to improve teachers' subject knowledge and confidence;
 - planning and organising ICT tasks in the majority of literacy and numeracy lessons;
 - using ICT more effectively across the curriculum;
 - implementing assessment systems to track pupils' progress and build on previous learning more effectively;

Paragraphs 8-9, 23, 25, 30, 89, 97, 110, 123-128

- (3) raise boys' attainment by:-
 - analysing the curriculum for opportunities to increase the progress of the boys;
 - identifying resources that stimulate boys' interests to further increase their levels of concentration;

Paragraphs 3, 74, 91, 99

- (4) raise standards in religious education in the junior classes and improve spiritual and cultural development by:-
 - improving the religious education curriculum in the junior classes;
 - embedding in the subject policies the need to promote spiritual and cultural development consistently and on a daily basis to all pupils;
 - giving pupils more opportunities to reflect, explore and respond to their own and others' beliefs and values and their own place in the world through art, music and religious education;
 - increasing pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of their immediate and wider communities;

Paragraphs 37-38, 41, 110, 140, 142

- (5) take steps to increase parents' involvement in their children's learning by:-
- extending the strategies for communicating with parents, particularly for explaining the teaching methods used in the school and the way parents can support their children at home;
 - extending opportunities for parents to work in the school;
 - improving the consistency and individual targets in the annual pupil reports;

Paragraphs 27, 51-53, 59, 96

- (6) extend the existing very good strategies for improving the rates of attendance by:-
- widening the strategies for obtaining explanations from parents about their children's absences;
 - continuing to analyse attendance patterns and targeting and supporting pupils whose attendance is poor.

Paragraphs 17, 43

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4	13	52	31	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)	14	106
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	62

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	63

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	7	12	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	* ⁶	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	68 (62)	68 (38)	79 (62)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	12	16
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	63 (62)	63 (62)	84 (62)
	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	10	9	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	9	16	15
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	47 (39)	84 (44)	79 (44)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	8	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	42 (33)	68 (44)	68 (33)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

⁶ Results of boys' and girls' attainment are not reported when there are fewer than 10 pupils in either category.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	119
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR –Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	26.3

Education support staff: YR –Y6

Total number of education support staff	2.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	11	11
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	342,260
Total expenditure	356,415
Expenditure per pupil	2,602
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,462
Balance carried forward to next year	17,307

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 14%

Number of questionnaires sent out	119
Number of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	26	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	42	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	46	0	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	32	8	5	0
The teaching is good.	65	31	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	38	4	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	35	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	40	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	26	4	8	0
The school is well led and managed.	40	44	0	8	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	37	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	34	0	8	4

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

64. Children enter the nursery when they are three years old. One child attends full-time and all other children attend part-time. Older children work in the morning session and younger children work in the afternoon session. All children have one full year in the nursery and some children benefit from part of an additional year depending on the time of year that they are three. There is a purpose-built nursery unit with good facilities adjoining a well-organised and attractive outdoor play area. The school has considered the needs of the new Surestart⁷ project carefully and has located the room for the children between the nursery and reception classes to ensure effective communication between the younger and older children.
65. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low. There is a very wide range of attainment. Several children do not have any vocabulary to communicate with adults, whereas a small number of children enter the school with attainment levels higher than expected. Teaching is good in the nursery and children make good progress. Individual children's progress is monitored very carefully. The planning takes each child's needs into account and adults are very well organised to extend each child's potential. The good teaching is continued in reception and children continue to make good progress. By the end of reception children's attainment is below the expected level in most of the areas of learning. Standards are well below the expected level in communication, language and literacy because of the high proportion of children with restricted vocabulary and experiences on entry to the school. Standards in physical development are at the expected level overall and there is excellent progress in movement and the sense of space, with standards well above the expected level. This high standard is the result of regular experience of movement in the hall and the outdoor play area in both the nursery and reception, combined with excellent features in the teaching in reception.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Progress is good in personal, social and emotional development both in the nursery and in reception. Relationships between all adults are very good and provide a clear model for the children. Teachers organise adults very effectively to provide children with support across a good range of activities. This support ensures that children are given direct guidance for developing these skills. For example, in the nursery when a child threw the building blocks on the floor the adult explained that it was dangerous, persuaded the child to replace the bricks and reinforced the rules of the classroom. Children are learning to work in different sized groups because teachers vary their classroom organisation very well. Children in the nursery are also beginning to choose their own tasks, often with guidance from an adult. They are learning to concentrate for longer periods of time because adults work with them so effectively. The nursery organises morning and afternoon sessions very effectively to ensure that children gain confidence in making choices. In the reception class, children have simple skills of explaining how they feel. The time they spend on activities is longer than the nursery, although several children lose concentration at some point during the task. Children gain an understanding of respect and trust. For example, they handle the guinea pigs very gently and know that they need food, water and shelter to live.

⁷ The Surestart project is to support families with children from birth to three years old.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Teachers organise a good balance of experiences for children to develop these skills. In both classes there are good role-play areas. Adults work sensitively with children in these areas, which develops their communication skills well. In reception, the teacher provides good opportunities for formal speaking. For example, children repeat the beginning of a sentence they have been given, "I feel happy because..." and then complete it in relation to their experiences at playtime. However, most children's speaking skills are well below expected levels. Children's vocabulary has increased, but they lack confidence in speaking independently. In the nursery, adults provide children with good sequences of questions and explanations. They provide good examples of correctly formed sentences. Teachers tell stories regularly to small, medium and whole-class groups. In the nursery, the teacher also works well with individual children to extend their understanding of books. Half of the children in the nursery explain the sequence of stories correctly and identify the main characters. For example, a child was delighted to see the wolf fall into the cooking pot at the end of the *Three Little Pigs*. Lower attaining children are unsure how to hold a book correctly. More able children's progress is very good. They know all the letters of the alphabet and recognise several words by sight. Children's reading skills are developed well in the reception class through the good implementation of the literacy strategy. Children write confidently in both classes because the teachers value any mark making and encourage children to write for different purposes. For example, children wrote about old and new teddy bears in the reception. Children are introduced to different letters of the alphabet and enjoy recognising the initial sounds in letters. This work is extended effectively in reception.

Mathematical development

68. Children have a good range of mathematical experiences in the nursery. Opportunities are seized to extend learning through play. For example, when a child had completed building a tower from large blocks, the adult counted them slowly. More able children are challenged to extend their learning and count to 10 confidently; for example, after they have completed a number jigsaw. Skills continue to develop in reception, where children are already confident in working through the format of the numeracy strategy. Children learn mathematical language both in mathematics sessions and through carefully chosen stories such as *The Enormous Turnip*.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Teachers provide a balanced range of activities in this area of learning. Children are encouraged to investigate different materials in the nursery. For example, they thoroughly enjoyed pushing different objects into clay and observed the different effects with interest. They take part in making food such as pizza and sandwiches and follow instructions with care. In reception, children extend their understanding well in this area. They develop their observational skills appropriately. For example, they consider the differences between seeds that have been watered and those that have not. They are interested in the differences, but many children have difficulty in expressing themselves. They develop a simple understanding of the differences between the past and the present through interesting tasks such as comparing old and new teddy bears. Children develop a good understanding of mechanisms because they carry out different sequences of tasks. For example, they produced different two-dimensional puppets with hinged limbs and then transferred this understanding of how hinges work as pupils got older to a whole-class project where an enormous turnip was levered out of the ground using the same mechanism. Children in both classes are developing confidence in using different programs on computers. In the reception class, there are well-organised records to track pupils' progress in computer skills.

Physical development

70. Children have regular opportunities to develop physical skills from the beginning of nursery to the end of reception. Teaching is good in the nursery. Children develop skills in using large and small apparatus in the outdoor play area. They develop an awareness of space as they ride their vehicles around one another. They become confident in balancing and throwing in the more formal context of the sessions in the hall. They develop smaller movements through the use of tools. For example, they carefully fill a spoon with flour when making the pizzas. The teaching of simple movement in the reception class has excellent features. The teacher has very high expectations. She demonstrates the movements extremely well, which gives the children a very good understanding of the subtlety of the different movements. For example, she demonstrated the movement of the root from a seed seeking water, using only one arm. Children respond enthusiastically and strive to match the quality of the teacher's work. They move confidently in response to the music and produce sequences of movements. Concentration levels are very high and standards are well above expectations for their age.

Creative development

71. Children experience a good range of creative activities in both classes. They explore different textures and colours and paint confidently. Children lack confidence in singing in the nursery, although they enjoy listening to nursery rhymes. They develop more confidence in the reception class. Children that are more able play confidently in the role-play areas, adopting different characters such as the shopkeeper. However, many children have difficulty in using appropriate vocabulary, although they enjoy using the good resources available.
72. Teachers organise the adults very effectively to track the progress of individual children. Careful records are kept to ensure that children's individual needs are well met. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Adults are fully briefed and no time is wasted between the different activities. Accommodation is used well, with activities set out in different corners of the teaching areas. The space created between the different activities ensures that children concentrate well on the different tasks.

ENGLISH

73. Standards are judged in different ways. The tables below show the main judgements about English for the school.

At age 7	National tests 2000	Inspection judgement	Comments
Reading			
Percentage at Level 2, the expected level	Well below average	Below the expected level	Standards improving. Pupils make good progress from a very low starting point.
Percentage at Level 3, above the expected level	Below average	Below the expected level	
Writing			
Percentage at Level 2, the expected level	Well below average	In line with expectations	Significant improvement brought about by the impact of the well-taught National Literacy Strategy
Percentage at Level 3, above the average	Below average	Below the expected level	
Speaking and listening			
Percentage at Level 2, the expected level	Well below average	Below the expected level	Most pupils have limited skills in speaking, but their listening skills develop well
Percentage at Level 3, above the expected level	Well below average	Below the expected level	

At age 11	National tests 2000	Inspection judgement	Comments
English			
Level 4, the expected level	Well below average	Below the expected level	Standards are improving, with the best improvement made in writing
Level 5, above the expected level	Well below average	Well below the expected level	

74. The results of last year's statutory assessment tests for pupils aged 7 showed that standards in English had improved on those of the two previous years. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 and above in reading and writing was well below the national average. On the basis of teacher assessments, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening was also well below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher than nationally expected Level 3 was below the average in reading, and no pupils scored Level 3 in writing. When compared with schools nationally that have pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance in writing was well below the national average, and below average in reading. There has been a slight upward trend overall in results since 1998, when there was a considerable dip. The difference in attainment between boys and girls varies from year to year, a factor that needs addressing not only in English but also in mathematics and science at both key stages. It was particularly wide last year, when the average score for boys was about seven terms behind that for girls in reading, and five terms in writing. Part of the reason for the variation in results is that the school has relatively few pupils in each year group (13 this year), and caution should be exercised when drawing national comparisons. Additionally, the proportion of

pupils in each year group with special educational needs varies from year to year, but is usually high in comparison with what is normally found. For example, six out of ten pupils in the current Year 6 are at Stage 2⁷ and above of the school's special educational needs register.

75. Inspection evidence shows that most current pupils aged 7 reach national expectations in writing, although very few achieve above them. This judgement reflects improvement on last year's result and also on the findings of the previous inspection. In reading, speaking and listening, most pupils achieve below expectations. The judgement about reading matches that made at the previous inspection, but the judgement about speaking and listening reflects a decline.
76. In the year 2000 national tests taken by pupils aged 11, the proportion reaching the expected Level 4 and above was well below the average for all schools. Similarly, the proportion reaching the higher than expected Level 5 was well below the average. When compared with those in similar schools nationally, pupils scored below the average, and made below average progress from when they took the tests at age 7. There was little difference between the performance of boys and girls, in contrast to previous years, but girls scored slightly higher than boys.
77. Inspection findings show that current 11-year-olds attain below national expectations in English, matching the previous inspection's findings. However, this overall judgement hides some variations in attainment. The majority of pupils reach the expected level in writing, but very few, if any, attain above this level. Reading, speaking and listening are below the expected level, although attainment in listening is better than in speaking.
78. The proportion of pupils who enter the school with exceptionally low levels of attainment in all elements of English, including literacy, is very high. Across the school, over 50 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, mainly to do with linguistic and moderate or severe learning difficulties. These factors have considerable impact in comparison with national averages on the overall standards attained by pupils by the time they leave the school at 11. Attainment is below average despite the good progress made by most pupils in the infants and the juniors and the good teaching. For example, the improvement in writing at ages 7 and 11 is a direct result of the successful implementation and extension into other lessons of the National Literacy Strategy, in which teachers are very competent. The school fully recognises the needs of all its pupils, including the high proportion with special educational needs. These pupils receive good, often very good, attention and make good progress over their time in the school.
79. Teachers generally have high expectations that pupils should listen carefully and follow their instructions. At age 7, most pupils usually listen carefully to their teacher and to each other in lessons and make suitably relevant responses, although these are often in simple phrases or single words. Nevertheless, pupils do develop the confidence to ask questions and they enjoy answering teachers' questions. By the age of 11, most pupils listen confidently and with understanding in lessons about a wide range of topics, for example about Sikh temples or Victorian life. Higher attaining pupils respond with clarity of thought and well-structured sentences, but most pupils use more basic language to converse. They have difficulty in adapting their speech to the listener's needs. Throughout the infants, and occasionally in the lower juniors, many pupils are so eager to answer their teacher's questions that they do so out of turn and with little regard to others talking around them. As happens nearly always in the upper juniors, there is a need for all teachers to ensure consistently that all pupils have the time to think and to respond clearly, thus improving their confidence and competence in the use of words orally.

80. By the time they are 7, most pupils make good progress in writing because teachers ask them to do work in a variety of contexts that is planned in small, achievable steps, according to each pupil's level of attainment. Teachers affirm, and regularly reaffirm, the need for pupils to use consistently previously taught skills. Written work by pupils in Year 2 shows that letters are always correctly formed and that there is good use of punctuation in sentences. For example, good use of punctuation in a piece about the worry of living on a sheep farm helped the reader to fully understand the writer's intention because the pupil presented ideas sequentially.
81. Pupils in the juniors continue to make good progress in their writing and often produce good work in a variety of forms. For example, they write complex and well-structured stories about 'The Luckiest Day', describe past events, such as a recent visit by a theatre group, and produce argumentative pieces for and against keeping animals in zoos. Teachers pay good attention to the way pupils create impact in their writing. Beginnings such as, 'Thump! The red fox landed at the foot of the wall...' seen in one higher attaining pupil's work, excite the reader to pursue the text. By age 11, spelling in finished pieces is usually accurate because teachers ask pupils to draft and then redraft their work as a matter of course. Most pupils of this age write in a fluent, joined and legible style. Indeed, the standard of presentation of both draft and finished work is of a high standard.
82. Progress in reading is good in both the infants and juniors because teachers give high priority through effective strategies to developing pupils' reading skills. They use the National Literacy Strategy very well in this respect, aided by the very good use and help of classroom support assistants and special educational needs support teachers. Teachers emphasise strongly the need for pupils to recognise words by the sounds their letters make so that, by Year 2, most pupils, even the least able, can break down words into their constituent sounds (phonemes). Even so, by this age, many pupils are still not able to decode unfamiliar words well enough to meet normal expectations. Consequently, their reading is not fluent and is often slow, and they do not understand sufficiently what they read.
83. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils read fluently and often with good understanding of some quite complex texts, such as the *Harry Potter* books. Average-attaining pupils are competent in most aspects, but still rely too heavily on having to decode words rather than recognising immediately the words they see. Additionally, too many pupils are unsure about researching information from library texts to meet the normally expected standard. The lowest attaining pupils in this age group have significant difficulties in their reading, and this holds them back from making progress in the other aspects of English and in some of the foundation subjects.
84. Pupils enjoy their English lessons; several Year 6 pupils say that this is their favourite subject. In literacy lessons, pupils of all ages take part eagerly and with a desire to do their best. They behave very well and carefully listen to their teachers so that they know what they have to do in their work. Levels of concentration increase as pupils grow older, so that it is noticeable by Year 6 how well pupils settle and work quietly on their writing, for example.
85. The quality of teaching is never less than good. In one of the five English lessons seen, the teaching was very good. Teachers know their pupils' capabilities well because they regularly assess them. The results of assessments are used well when teachers plan their lessons. Teachers take into account the need for each pupil to be given work that is pitched at the right level of difficulty to take their learning forward. In this the teachers are substantially successful. There is good management of pupils and teachers use resources well to exemplify what they teach, for example 'flip' charts and 'flash' cards. All teachers have high expectations that pupils should behave and achieve well. They do

this by ensuring that pupils know what the lessons are about and that they understand what they have to do, and, at the end of the lesson, identifying with pupils what they have learned.

86. Of particular note is the way that teachers give pupils good opportunities to practise their writing and reading skills both in English and in other subjects. For example, pupils write careful accounts in design technology of how to make a good cup of coffee and, in science, they write clearly and knowledgeably about the fundamentals of the 'water cycle'. Teachers make very good use of the classroom support assistants to work with small groups and individuals, particularly with those pupils who have special educational needs. In the lesson for Years 1 and 2, the obvious very good relationships between adults and the skills of both the teacher and the support assistants ensured that group activities were very successful.
87. In the best lesson, in Years 5 and 6 for average and above average attaining pupils, the teacher had a calm but enthusiastic approach that transferred to the pupils. He gave time for each pupil to contribute to the discussion about narrative writing, responded with appropriate praise and expanded on pupils' ideas, thus raising their self-esteem. His expectations of the pupils to do well was clearly apparent, and he promoted well their learning through such ideas as 'improving an ordinary sentence to premiership level by the use of effective ingredients', such as good adjectives, adverbs and a defined structure. The pupils responded very well to this in their subsequent writing and learned very well.
88. A recent initiative to focus support on the lower-attaining pupils is having the desired effect. Since the beginning of this academic year, some pupils in Years 5 and 6 work on literacy each morning with a qualified teacher, and other pupils in Years 3 and 4 work with a special educational needs support teacher on several occasions each week. From regular assessments of these pupils, it is certain that their rate of progress in reading has improved.
89. The English co-ordinator manages the subject well. She is very knowledgeable about the subject and has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards. Some of her strategies, discussed and planned with the whole teaching staff, have already borne fruit. For example, giving pupils more opportunities to write extensively, in a range of subjects, has raised standards. The co-ordinator has made very close analyses of statutory and optional assessments of pupils' reading and writing, the results of which give clear pointers to where teachers need to focus their efforts. Staff work closely together and attach great importance to developing pupils' English skills. Much good and effective work takes place. However, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is not effective. These aspects, and the development of pupils' speaking skills, are not promoted enough in English, particularly in the juniors; for example, through poetry, role-play in drama and the discussion of more complex ideas as a result of pupils' reading. The use of computers, especially in literacy lessons, to help pupils develop their reading and writing skills is not organised effectively.

MATHEMATICS

90. Standards are judged in different ways. The tables below show the main judgements about mathematics for the school.

AT AGE 7	National tests 2000	Inspection judgement	Comments
Level 2, the expected level	Well below average	At the expected level	Thorough implementation of the numeracy strategy has increased the rate of progress in Years 1 and 2.
Level 3, above the expected level	Average	At the expected level	

AT AGE 11	National tests 2000	Inspection judgement	Comments
Level 4, the expected level	Above average	At the expected level	Good support for pupils with special educational needs produces a good rate of achievement for these pupils. High expectations from teachers produce better rates of progress than expected in the junior classes.
Level 5, above the expected level	Well above average	Above expectations	

91. Standards in mathematics have risen faster than average over the past four years in both key stages. In 1998, attainment was very low in Key Stage 2. The school identified the raising of standards as a top priority. The national test results were analysed in detail and key mathematical themes for improvement were identified by the headteacher and the Year 6 teacher. The schemes of work were refined to ensure a more systematic development of skills throughout the junior school. The numeracy strategy was implemented very carefully with considerable changes in teaching styles. For example, teachers spend longer in quick fire mental mathematics at the beginning of lessons. The mathematics co-ordinator worked hard to support teachers in implementing the changes and carried out effective monitoring to identify further improvements. The combination of strategies has been very successful in raising standards. Consequently, in last year's national tests in Key Stage 2 attainment was well above average overall. Compared with that in similar schools, it was very high. This represents very good progress because children enter the school with very low attainment in mathematics. Over the past three years boys' attainment has been lower than the girls in mathematics in the national tests.
92. Standards in mathematics of pupils aged 7 in the 2000 national tests were well below average. Compared with that in similar schools, attainment was below average. There has been significant improvement over the past two years from very low attainment in the 1998 national tests. The improvements to the schemes of work and to the teaching are continuing to raise standards. The inspection judges attainment to be at the expected level. Pupils are benefiting from their second year of the numeracy strategy. The current Year 2 pupils are also benefiting from remaining with the same teacher because she is able to build on her very good knowledge of each pupil's progress to set challenging individual targets.
93. The teaching of the infants is very good. These pupils enjoy their mathematics because the teacher uses interesting tasks to develop their skills and knowledge and makes the learning fun. She conducts the lesson at a fast pace, supporting the younger pupils and

giving responsibility to the older pupils. Pupils respond to the mental mathematics session at the expected speed. She gives Year 2 pupils the opportunity to record pupils' answers on the flip chart. They take this responsibility seriously and do their best to produce a well-written record, using their own initiative. For example, a pupil wrote a simple number line in order to help the class produce the sum of or difference between two numbers. Pupils are expected to give reasons why their answers are correct. The very good adult-to-pupil ratio gives them regular opportunities to develop this skill, both in whole-class sessions and in group work. Pupils choose appropriate ways of calculating addition and subtraction with tens and units because the teacher gives them specific strategies to produce the answers. She extends the more able pupils by including more difficult questions during whole-class sessions. For example, she extended their understanding of the reversibility of addition and subtraction sums whilst other pupils concentrated on producing the answer to the equations. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of two-dimensional shapes, recognise right angles and use simple standard measurements because the class carries out interesting tasks to develop this knowledge.

94. The teaching of the junior pupils is very good with excellent features in the Years 5/6 class. The very good subject knowledge of the Years 5/6 teacher enables him to use every opportunity to extend pupils' understanding during the lesson. He encourages pupils to 'think aloud' and supports them very sensitively when they make mistakes, using questioning to help them to identify their error. He has high expectations of all pupils and challenges them to extend their thinking. A quarter of pupils explain their mathematical processes confidently, using correct mathematical vocabulary at a higher level than expected for their age. For example, they explain how to reduce a fraction to its simplest form and then use that fraction to solve simple problems. Pupils carry out mental mathematics with confidence, solving number problems at the expected level. More able pupils carry out sums to two decimal places in mental mathematics sessions. Pupils make good progress because the teacher builds on what pupils have learnt in the previous lesson. For example, in a lesson on percentages and fractions he used the learning from the previous lesson on fractions and also reminded pupils of features of probability covered in the previous term. By the age of 11, pupils use measuring instruments accurately; for example, in measuring angles in two-dimensional shapes. They understand key features of probability and use graphs effectively to record simple data.
95. Pupils make very good progress in the Years 3/4 class. The teacher has a very good understanding of individual pupils and challenges them to extend their learning. She demonstrates mathematical strategies and tasks clearly, which gives pupils confidence when tackling new skills. For example, she used a number square very effectively to show how to add or subtract numbers in the whole-class lesson and then provided miniature number squares for pupils to carry out the same strategy in their group work.
96. Teachers carry out the numeracy lessons at a fast pace in both key stages. Resources are used very effectively to support learning. Pupils are keen to answer questions in the whole-class sessions because the teachers celebrate their successes and extend their thinking through series of questions. The end of the lesson is used very well to reinforce what the pupils have learnt, find out what needs to be done next and to set homework. Pupils take homework very seriously, even when they receive little support at home. Teachers set interesting homework tasks and the set pattern and regularity of homework does much to develop good homework habits. Reward points and certificates encourage more pupils to complete the work, which has a positive impact on raising standards.
97. Teachers set clear targets directly related to the National Curriculum for pupils each term and pupils also identify their own targets. These are clearly recorded in the front of each

pupil's book, with an attractive format for the younger pupils. This strategy ensures that pupils have a good understanding of their own learning and their rate of progress. These termly targets are supplemented very effectively by the use of learning objectives in every lesson. Teachers discuss these objectives throughout the lesson, which focuses pupils' attention very effectively on the main learning taking place.

98. Weekly planning is detailed and identifies key vocabulary to be used in lessons. Teachers balance the work carefully each term to ensure that pupils cover all the aspects of the mathematical curriculum. However, teachers do not use information and communication technology sufficiently during lessons. They have not identified programs to support the different content of their lessons. Teachers all work very effectively with classroom assistants. Support for pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective and ensures that these pupils make good progress. During whole-class sessions the classroom assistants support individuals well by giving extra explanations about the tasks. They join in the mental mathematics sessions enthusiastically. For example, in the Years 3/4 class the classroom assistant suggested different numbers to add together. The partnership of the teachers and classroom assistants is particularly good during the group work, where pupils get additional individual support to complete their tasks. Teachers throughout the school emphasise the importance of producing neatly presented work. Pupils try hard to write their work carefully and take a pride in the finished product. There are high expectations of the amount of work pupils produce during group tasks and they settle quickly to their tasks and produce a large amount of work each lesson. This ensures a good rate of progress in developing and consolidating skills.

SCIENCE

99. Standards are judged in different ways. The tables below show the main judgements about science for the school.

AT AGE 7	Teacher assessment in 2000	Inspection judgement	Comments
Level 2, the expected level	Below average	At the expected level	Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
Level 3, above the expected level	Well below average	Below the expected level	These pupils use scientific language confidently.

AT AGE 11	National tests 2000	Inspection judgement	Comments
Level 4, the expected level	Below the national average	At the expected level	Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The thorough analysis of the national tests and the changes to teaching and the curriculum have raised standards significantly over the past two years.
Level 5, above the expected level	Close to the national average	Below the expected level	

100. Standards in science have risen faster than average over the past four years in both key stages. In 1998, attainment was very low in Key Stage 2. The headteacher and Years

5/6 teacher analysed these national test results in detail across individual pupils and key scientific themes. The schemes of work were then changed to ensure systematic development of skills across the junior school. These strategies were very successful. Compared with that in similar schools, the attainment of pupils aged 11 in the 2000 national tests was above average at Level 4 and above and well above average at Level 5. There has been very good improvement in standards in both key stages since the last inspection, when attainment was well below the expected level. Boys' attainment in the national tests has been lower than that of girls over the past three years.

101. In Years 1 and 2, pupils cover the different aspects of the curriculum thoroughly. They understand basic needs of living animals and plants, know that materials change, for example through heating and cooling, and describe differences in physical processes such as forces. They develop an understanding of scientific enquiry because lessons are organised to give them regular opportunities to carry out investigations. For example, they developed observational skills while investigating the effects of pulling, pushing, twisting and turning brightly-coloured modelling clay. Good whole-class sessions support the development of making suggestions and finding things out through experiments. Teaching is good for this age group. Lessons are well balanced, with stimulating tasks based on the pupils' interests, which maintain their concentration well. For example, pupils investigated the properties of materials by melting ice cubes and chocolate in their hands. Pupils develop an appropriate range of scientific language because the teacher identifies key words in each lesson that she encourages pupils to use in discussion and to explain the outcomes of their investigations. More able pupils use vocabulary confidently. For example, when describing the differences between the growth of plants in different conditions, they used words such as 'limp'. The use of reference skills is developed well, with pupils producing their own reference books, such as their personal encyclopaedias of mini-beasts. The teacher has high expectations of presentation, and pupils record their work regularly in a range of different ways. Pupils take a pride in their completed work, using careful handwriting. Numeracy is developed effectively through the completion of charts and grids.
102. Teaching from Years 3 to 6 is good. Teachers use a similar format to numeracy lessons, with a good balance of activities and discussion. Teachers regularly include investigational work across the different areas of scientific learning. There is explicit teaching of scientific knowledge at the beginning of lessons, which ensures a good acquisition of understanding. For example, in a Years 5/6 lesson on the function of teeth, diagrams were shown on the overhead projector, skulls of animals were used to show the different types of teeth and clear explanations were given of the contrasts between the varying mammals. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of scientific vocabulary and use it correctly in different lessons. For example, in a physical education lesson a pupil identified the micro-organisms in a ray of sunshine. Pupils understand scientific processes because they carry out and record investigations regularly. In the Years 3/4 class, pupils develop their use of grids to record their investigations. For example, they analysed the properties of materials and then recorded how hard, waterproof, flexible or strong the materials were. Pupils develop numeracy skills well through science. For example, in the Years 5/6 class they produced line graphs to show the growth of sunflower seeds over a period of several weeks. In the top class, pupils reinforce their knowledge of angles well through their work based on the reflection of light from mirrors. Visitors are used effectively to supplement lessons. For example, the school nurse worked with pupils in Years 5 and 6 pupils to extend their learning about health and the effects of micro-organisms. The trend for producing neat and well-organised work established in the infant classes is continued across the junior classes. Pupils continue to take a pride in recording their work. Pupils take homework very seriously in the junior school, with regular work provided by teachers each week.

103. Throughout the school, teachers have a very clear focus on the learning expected in each lesson, which focuses pupils' attention on the key features of the lesson. Pupils have a good understanding of their progress because they record their development on target sheets in the front of their exercise books. Teachers work very effectively in partnership with classroom assistants. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from this partnership because they receive well-focused support in class discussions and when carrying out the practical work. Teachers do not use information and communication technology effectively to raise standards in science. They do not identify opportunities for pupils to record their work using computers or extend pupils' skills of retrieving information either from the Internet or from CD-ROMs.
104. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work throughout the school because teachers present the work with enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy taking part in discussions and behave sensibly when carrying out investigations. For example, in the Years 5/6 class when pupils used discolouring tablets to identify the plaque on their teeth, they were fascinated by the effect, but maintained their good behaviour throughout the session. They co-operate well with each other when using equipment or comparing their results.
105. In both key stages, teachers allocate a good proportion of time to science. This ensures sufficient time to carry out investigations and time to reinforce learning from the previous lesson. Over each term there is a good balance between the different aspects of the science curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Only one art lesson was seen in the inspection, in the Years 5 and 6 class. Other evidence was gathered from an observation of pupils' work on display, from a scrutiny of a small amount of previously completed work and from talking to staff and pupils. There is not enough evidence to come to a secure judgement about how well pupils achieve in this subject. It is, therefore, impossible to comment about whether pupils achieve better than at the time of the previous inspection, when attainment was found to be below national expectations at the ages of 7 and 11 years.
107. Evidence shows that pupils experience a suitable range of artistic and designing activities as they move through the school. Infants do many pencil and crayon drawings and paintings both in art and English lessons. They make satisfactory close observational drawings of 'natural' objects and then use their drawings as a basis to design and make collages from coloured papers and a range of textiles. Pupils in the Years 3/4 class construct imaginary animals from 'junk' materials. Some of their finished pieces display a good level of thought and inventiveness and are finished to a high standard. They did this work as a result of a visit to a local discovery centre and worked in groups to produce models with strange, imaginative names, such as a 'Quackshot'.
108. By the age of 11, pupils know how to use pencil, pastel and charcoal for shading drawings to give a three-dimensional effect. Drawings in pencil of a teddy bear, made by pupils from Year 1 to Year 6, show a clear progression in skill and control of the medium.
109. In the one lesson seen, in the Years 5/6 class, some pupils' imaginative, first-draft drawings of Daedalus and Icarus displayed the artists' skill in depicting movement and the ability to distinguish between similar objects. The quality of teaching in the lesson was good. The teacher made clear to the pupils the aim of the lesson. He referred appropriately to previous work about stories told in pictures in history, such as on Egyptian tombs, Greek pottery and tapestries. Relevant teaching points emphasised the need to consider carefully the size, shape and the relative importance of the drawing's

constituent parts. As in many other lessons, the overriding characteristic of the lesson was the teacher's high expectations of pupils producing their best work.

110. Pupils respond very well to their art and design work and, in the lesson seen, maintained a high level of interest throughout. Pupils with special educational needs take part in lessons with equal enthusiasm and receive due attention.
111. Art is a developing subject in the school. The subject co-ordinator rightly intends that it should receive a higher priority in the school curriculum. Pupils have recently started personal sketchbooks, which already contain examples of interesting observational drawings, for example of a local construction site, and techniques to aid the effectiveness of shading. Several initiatives have been set in place to raise standards and increase provision for spiritual and cultural development. These include a recent increase in funding for the purchase of resources, planned training for teachers and more analysis of the work of a wider choice of famous artists from different cultures. Teachers do not use computers effectively to extend pupils' artistic experiences.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. It was only possible to inspect one lesson in design and technology. There is not enough evidence to come to a secure judgement about how well pupils achieve by the time they are 7 years old. Judgements on standards by the age of 11 are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and teachers.
113. By the age of 7, pupils produce interesting designs for a dream playground. They build simple structures from construction toys to interpret their designs, combining the bricks with paper and cardboard. They interpret the tasks in varying ways, but pupils' responses are restricted because there is a restricted range of materials available.
114. By the time pupils are aged 11, attainment is at the expected level. This maintains the standards identified in the previous inspection. Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Pupils understand the design process because teachers give them opportunities to carry it out across a range of different projects. In the Years 3/4 class, the teacher provides a good project based on packaging. Pupils develop understanding of the construction of cuboid shapes by deconstructing commercial boxes. They produce good design sheets including simple sketches for initial ideas, lists of materials needed, drawings and notes to show six stages in the making of the package and diagrams of nets as a guide for making the final product. Pupils are interested in their designs because the function is to present an Easter egg.
115. In the Years 5/6 class, pupils extend their experiences of the design process. Pupils produce designs for different types of bread products. They develop understanding of the use of recipes and learn about the importance of allowing time for the different chemical changes involved in the use of yeast. Pupils use the design process to develop different types of headwear and then extend their skills by using the same process to produce a musical instrument. They use a variety of different materials and take account of features such as waterproofing. They produce some innovative and unusual ideas. Digital cameras are used effectively in this class to record the final products.
116. Pupils enjoy design and technology. They are proud of their final products and enjoy using them. For example, the Years 5/6 pupils played their musical instruments whilst wearing their headwear. Pupils in the junior school produce neatly written or drawn plans, which extends their literacy and numeracy skills effectively.

117. The school has introduced government schemes of work this year. There are plans to audit the success of this scheme and funds available to buy resources for future projects. There is no portfolio of work to show the range of work produced by different pupils as they move through the school or any strategies to keep the good quality photographs recording the final products. This reduces teachers' knowledge of work carried out in previous classes.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

118. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about pupils' achievements by the time that they are 7 and 11 years. However, from looking at samples of pupils' work, from talking to pupils and staff, and from looking at a range of school documents, it is judged that pupils have a satisfactory range of geographical and historical experiences by the time they leave the school at 11. The one history lesson seen, in the juniors, confirmed that these pupils learned well about life in the time of the Tudors. There were no geography lessons observed.
119. Pupils in the infants walk around the local area and identify special features, such as a church, shops and the position of their own homes relative to the school. By the time they are 7, pupils understand that local buildings and features represent different times in history; for example, that their own school was built a long time ago, but that there are modern houses in the area. Pupils learn about other countries through tracking the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', for example to America. The same pupils know that London is a long way away and that it was burned down during the reign of Charles II. The teacher tells them about famous people of the time, such as the diarist Samuel Pepys. As a result, pupils use and practise their literacy skills to write interesting pieces about the fire, pretending to be a member of the Pepys family, for example 'Stacey' Pepys.
120. Pupils in the Years 3/4 class know that Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were Tudor monarchs. They distinguish between rich and poor people of Tudor times. For example, they recall the expensive clothes used to dress the rich. Most pupils eagerly recall their recent visit to York and the style of the buildings fascinates them. Some describe how the houses were built of a timber frame filled in with daub and wattle. The good teaching in the lesson seen gave pupils opportunities to revisit, discuss and build upon their knowledge about life in Tudor times.
121. By the age of 11, pupils have studied a good range of geographical and historical topics. They talk knowledgeably about the water cycle. The average and above average attaining pupils use correctly scientific words, such as 'evaporation' and 'condensation', to help them with their explanation. Some pupils describe Queen Victoria and say accurately how long she was on the throne. Most know that life in Victorian times was difficult for the majority of the population. The most able talk about life in Ancient Greece and compare education then and now. They know that the Romans came from Italy and that they ruled Britain for a long time. Higher-attaining pupils talk sensibly about how the Romans influenced travel through building roads from the south to the north of the country, and where Hadrian's wall was built for defence. Few can name correctly the countries of the British Isles. Only the more able pupils name any of the countries in Europe; none can name any capital cities. However, they use their mathematical skills to plot points on a map by using four-figure co-ordinates.
122. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress over their time in the school, but, by the time they are 11, their knowledge is fragmented and their understanding of history and geography facts is limited. However, from talking to pupils and observing them in the one history lesson seen, it can be seen that most of them enjoy their work in these subjects. They particularly like the practical aspects of observing from first hand experiences, such

as the change to the local environment brought about by the demolition of some houses and the building of new ones.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. It was only possible to inspect one lesson during the inspection. Judgements are made from discussions with teachers and pupils, the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and observation of the use of computers through the inspection week.
124. Standards in information and communication technology are below expectations for pupils aged 7 and well below expectations for pupils aged 11. Standards are the same as at the time of the last inspection by the time pupils are 7 but lower by the time pupils are 11. The school is aware of its deficiencies in this subject and has been concentrating on raising standards in English, mathematics and science. There is a well-organised action plan to raise standards, but no identification of developing strategies for using information and communication technology across the curriculum to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. The school is about to begin its national training in order to raise teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. This year the school has adopted the government scheme of work for this subject, which has provided a more consistent programme of work through the school.
125. There is a wide spread of attainment in Years 1 and 2. The most confident pupils lead programs confidently and support other pupils in developing skills. However, pupils do not spend sufficient time on computers to develop the level of independence expected for their age. Pupils have simple skills of cutting and pasting shapes, but the programs in use are the same as those in reception. This repeats earlier experiences rather than extending pupils' skills with different programs. Pupils have simple word-processing skills and produce writing based on different areas of the curriculum, such as history.
126. By the age of 11, pupils use graphics software and understand how to produce regular and free shapes and different effects such as spray, colour blocks and erase. Pupils understand how to produce simple spreadsheets and databases. They know how the spell checking facility improves their writing, but are not confident in moving text to redraft their work. They have simple skills of writing programs; for example, to move a turtle on screen. However, all of these skills and knowledge are at a lower level than expected for this age. This low attainment is due to insufficient opportunities to develop their skills. There is a cumulative effect of this lack of time spent developing skills and gaining knowledge as they move through the school from Year 1.
127. Overall, teaching is unsatisfactory in both key stages. However, in the junior classes this subject is timetabled and the teaching in these lessons is satisfactory. Work is combined effectively with other subjects. For example, pupils produce a scale plan of their bedrooms and then record the information on computers using graphics and word-processing to produce a key. Work produced during these lessons is recorded carefully in pupils' books. However, computers are not used regularly across other lessons. Planning for literacy and numeracy does not include the use of computers and for much of the week the computers are not in use. There is no effective organisation or recording of the time spent by individuals on computers to ensure that each pupil has an equal time allocation each week.
128. The school has not identified specific programs across the curriculum in each year group to support learning in other subjects and to further raise standards. It has not yet identified which subjects are best suited to developing skills across the different aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum.
129. There are no effective assessment or recording systems to track pupils' progress in this subject. The well-organised systems in the reception class are not continued through to

the other key stages. This prevents teachers from identifying individual progress and produces repetition of the previous year's work.

MUSIC

130. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about teaching, learning and pupils' achievement in music. Only one lesson was seen in the inspection. Further evidence was drawn from observing singing in assemblies, from talking to pupils and teachers, and from looking at teachers' planning. From this evidence it is clear that pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of musical experiences during their time at the school. However, the curriculum for music does not provide opportunities for the development of skills through the school. Music does not have a prominent enough place in the school's curriculum. The school is aware of this and plans are clearly in place to remedy the situation over the short term. Additionally, the planning for music does not include enough opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
131. Pupils obviously enjoy singing, as seen when they practised hymn singing in a whole-school assembly, and a group of boys and girls from the juniors took the lead in singing *Think of a world without any flowers*. The teacher made the session enjoyable because it moved at a good pace and there was a tangible good-humoured atmosphere. Nearly all pupils took an active part and the improvement in their singing was obvious, in terms of dynamics and pitch. Nevertheless, seating arrangements diminished the quality of the sound and made it difficult for pupils at the rear to hear clearly the musical accompaniment.
132. In the good lesson seen in the Years 3/4 class, the teacher presented the pupils with increasingly challenging tasks and cleverly introduced the concepts of pulse and rhythm. She used the song *Nellie the elephant* well as a tool to develop pupils' understanding of these terms. The addition of simple percussion instruments for pupils to play in small groups gave opportunities for them to practise and refine their playing skills. Suitable praise and the pointing out of key skills successfully raised pupils' esteem and promoted further learning. A good evaluation with the pupils at the end of the lesson, in which the learning intentions for the subsequent lesson were identified, promoted pupils' interest to continue to extend their learning.
133. There are sufficient resources available to teach the full curriculum. The school makes good use of a visiting cellist to teach cello to some juniors. They enjoy their learning and make good progress, sometimes playing their pieces in assemblies. Ten pupils learn to play recorders and 12 play ocarinas, although neither of these activities was seen in the inspection week.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. Standards by the age of 7 are above the expected level because teaching is good and challenges pupils to achieve their potential. Standards by the age of 11 are at the expected level. Swimming standards are at the expected level, with most pupils reaching the required level and several pupils exceeding this level. They swim considerable distances and have won diving awards. Standards by the age of 7 are an improvement since the previous inspection. Standards by the age of 11 remain the same. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because they are well supported by teachers, who explain tasks particularly carefully to them.
135. Pupils in the Years 1/2 class respond quickly to instructions. They stop quickly on command and have good skills of moving around a space without touching other pupils. More able pupils have very good control both in varying their speed and in changing

direction. Pupils understand how to use different types of balances with varying parts of the body. They sustain these balances for longer than expected for their age. Pupils throw more accurately than expected for this age. The teacher organises team games regularly and pupils co-operate well together. Team captains use their initiative in supporting their teams. For example, when throwing bean-bags into hoops, two pupils moved to the other end of the hall to monitor the throws more efficiently. The work on personal development in the classroom is extended effectively to physical education. Pupils are used to working together, taking turns and considering each other's needs and this is used well in paired or team activities. The teacher works at a fast pace and pupils cover a wider range of activities than usual. The warm-up and cool-down sessions are used well to extend skills from previous lessons. For example, pupils moved so slowly and with such control along lines during the cool down that the teacher had to reduce the length of the lines to ensure that they got back to the classroom in time to change their clothes.

136. Teaching is satisfactory in the junior classes. Lessons include series of tasks that extend pupils' skills by increasing distances or beginning work individually and then organising pupils in pairs or small teams. Pupils are used well to demonstrate good work. They are given good levels of responsibility within lessons. For example, a pupil led the warm-up session by demonstrating a sequence of movements that other pupils followed. Pupils throw and catch at the expected level. More able pupils have a good level of accuracy and speed in their throwing and catching.
137. Pupils throughout the school enjoy physical education. They are enthusiastic and concentrate well on the different tasks. Behaviour is good because teachers have effective management strategies.
138. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils, which are well attended. The school has just become involved in a regional Sports Action Zone, which plans to extend opportunities for pupils to develop games skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. There is not enough evidence to make a judgement about pupils' achievement in religious education by the time they are 7 years old. One lesson was observed in each of the junior classes. From these lessons, and from looking at a sample of pupils' work and talking to pupils, it is judged that they do not achieve what is normally expected of them by the age of 11. Their achievement does not meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This judgement matches that made at the previous inspection.
140. Pupils in the Years 3/4 class know that Sikhs have special clothes and customs. Some pupils can name some of the five Ks of Sikhism and say what each represents. For example, they know that the Kara is worn to remind Sikhs that God is everlasting and that the Kirpan is a knife that reminds Sikhs they should fight for God. They know that Sikhs grow their hair long, but cannot say why. Pupils of this age understand that there are a number of different world religions, but they are confused about some of the fundamental beliefs and values.
141. By the time they are 11, most pupils have made very little progress in their knowledge and understanding of religions. They know that each religion has special places of worship, but find difficulty in relating a Christian church, a Sikh temple or a Jewish synagogue to their relative religions. They know that Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus and that Jesus is the Son of God. They know that He was crucified and died on Good Friday, spent three days in a tomb and rose from the dead on Easter Sunday.

Some pupils relate some of the New Testament stories, such as the feeding of the five thousand and the parable of the Good Samaritan, but their knowledge of the bible is generally restricted. Few have sufficient knowledge of biblical facts to give reasons why certain actions took place; for example, about why Jesus was crucified. They do not have enough understanding to make valid comparisons between religious concepts or to relate spiritual meaning to the material world. Their knowledge of various religions, including Christianity, is generally underdeveloped and they are confused.

142. The quality of teaching seen in the two lessons in the juniors was satisfactory, in that it promoted a satisfactory level of learning. Teachers have good control of their pupils and use questioning soundly to draw out from pupils what they know and understand. This successfully raises pupils' confidence in their ability to learn. Both teachers make clear to pupils at the beginning of the lesson what it is about, and then talk with them at the end of the lesson about what they have learned. This approach stimulates pupils' interest and promotes their learning well. Good elements of the teaching include the use that teachers make of artefacts as a focus for learning. For example, in one lesson the teacher used sample Kachs, a Kara, a Kanga and a Kirpan to help the pupils learn about the five Ks of Sikhism.
143. Pupils show interest throughout their lessons and behave well. They usually listen to each other and to their teacher, and take part with enthusiasm in written activities and discussions. However, talking to pupils about the subject confirms that their general lack of knowledge and understanding is a barrier to maintaining interest in the subject beyond lessons. Much of the written work done in lessons comprises the completion of worksheets. Whilst these are acceptable, pupils obviously spend an inordinate amount of time simply colouring in pre-printed outlines rather than giving thought to their writing. Additionally, teachers tend to give the same worksheets for completion by all their pupils, with the result that many pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are preoccupied with the reading and writing tasks.
144. The school does not have a purposeful strategy for assessing pupils' progress in the subject and this inhibits teachers' knowledge of pupils' previous attainment. The subject co-ordinator is aware of this need and has plans to implement the new locally agreed syllabus by training staff and introducing assessment strategies. The school has good relationships with local churches and a vicar regularly visits to meet with the pupils. A recent visit by one class to a Buddhist monastery was a good step towards raising pupils' awareness of the range of religions practised in this country, and towards promoting their awareness of the range and diversity of present day cultures. However, overall, pupils' cultural development is a weakness and this aspect of the curriculum requires development.