

INSPECTION REPORT

Balladen Community Primary School

Rossendale, Lancs

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119280

Headteacher: Mr Graham Porter

Reporting inspector: Sheila Pemberton
20810

Dates of inspection: 17-21 January 2000

Inspection number: 196961

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Linden Lea Rawtenstall Rossendale Lancashire
Postcode:	BB4 6DX
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Coun. Nicholas Pilling
Date of previous inspection:	4 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sheila Pemberton	Registered inspector	Science Art Physical education Under-fives	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school. The school's results and pupils' achievements. Teaching and learning. Leadership and management.
Trevor Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety. Partnership with parents and carers Equal opportunities
Ann Welch	Team inspector	English Information Technology Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Special educational needs English as an additional language
George Halliday	Team inspector	Geography Mathematics Design and technology History	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an average sized primary school with 212 pupils; boys and girls aged four to 11-years-old. Most pupils live in council-owned property close to the school, while others travel to school from nearby villages. All pupils are of white ethnic origin. English is the first language of nearly every pupil. A high proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. An above average number of pupils, 66, have special educational needs and two pupils have statements of their special educational needs. More children in the reception class have limited experiences of early reading, writing and mathematics than in most schools. There were 13 children under five in the reception class during the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Standards at Key Stage 2 are as good as they should be in most subjects with the exception of information technology where they have deteriorated. In science, standards are better than in most schools. Apart from writing, standards are gradually improving at Key Stage 1. Much of the teaching is good. At a time when the headteacher is new to the school, the senior management team and governors provide satisfactory leadership and management. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in science and religious education are above those reached by most pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their relationships, behaviour and personal development are very good. They are a strength of the school.
- Most of the teaching is good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. It is very good for their moral and social development.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' behaviour is very good.
- Arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are very good,
- The school has good links with parents and the local community.
- The school's aims and values are clear in all its work.

What could be improved

- Pupils' writing, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Attainment in information technology in Key Stage 2.
- How the school checks the quality of teaching and learning.
- How governors are involved in checking whether spending has a good effect on learning.
- The way teachers record and track pupils' achievements at Key Stage 1.
- The curriculum for children under five.
- Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a satisfactory rate since the inspection of 1996. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved for more able pupils. Co-ordinators now have enough responsibility to improve teaching and learning. Development planning has been extended sufficiently and pupils' skill in mental mathematics is gradually increasing during numeracy sessions. At a time when schools are working hard on literacy and numeracy, an issue to raise attainment in design and technology is no longer in place.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	C	A
Mathematics	C	C	C	A
Science	C	C	A	A

Key

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

A change has been made to the grade given to science in comparison with all schools, as the original figure provided does not match that produced by the school.

The school achieved and passed its targets for English, mathematics and science in National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 1999. In English and mathematics, standards are rising with the national trend. Standards are high and have risen recently in science and religious education. They are improving gradually in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1. Standards in writing are not high enough at Key Stage 1. Standards in information technology are low in Key Stage 2. The standards pupils reach in art, geography, music and physical education are typical for their age. At a time when schools are emphasising the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, insufficient work in design and technology and history means that standards have fallen in both subjects to an unsatisfactory level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' have good positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils show very high levels of initiative and willingness to take responsibility.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are similar to those in most other primary schools.

Pupils' behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good. They are a strength of their life in school. Most pupils get as much benefit as they can out of their work and other activities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in English is satisfactory for the under-fives, good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In mathematics, it is good for the under-fives, satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught to a satisfactory level with the exception of spelling. Most teaching, 60 per cent, is good, two per cent is excellent, four per cent is very good and 33 per cent satisfactory.

Strengths in teaching and learning : very positive relationships with pupils – very good management of pupils' behaviour – good planning - interesting activities – challenges more able pupils at Key Stage 2 – enthusiasm for reading – good variety of methods – the sharing of objectives of learning with pupils – good use of the skills of non-teaching staff. All these factors promote good learning.

Weaknesses in teaching and learning : information technology at Key Stage 2 - spelling at Key Stage 1 and assessment at Key Stage 1. These factors contribute to weaknesses in learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum in most subjects. The curriculum in information technology is limited by a lack of equipment at Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is difficult to check individual pupils' progress when several of them share the same education plan.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good support is provided for bi-lingual pupils both in the classroom and when working with a specialist teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural education. Provision for their moral, social and personal development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good, There are weaknesses in the way pupils' learning is monitored in Key Stage 1. Teachers work in close partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The senior management team plays a good role in leading the school. Existing systems to check the quality of teaching and learning are limited and are in need of improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil all statutory responsibilities. Although governors work hard and are very interested in the school, they are not involved closely enough on checking that changes to the curriculum and spending on resources improve pupils' learning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a satisfactory view of what needs to be done to improve its performance.
The strategic use of resources	There are sufficient qualified teachers and support staff to teach the full curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory. Resources are mostly good and are used effectively in teaching and learning. A lack of up-to-date computers limits pupils' learning in information technology in Key Stage 2. Good care is taken to ensure that the school gets the best value from its spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased that their children like school. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • Parents believe that their children are making good progress in school. • They think that the school is well-led and managed. • Parents think that pupils behave well in school. • They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • They are pleased that teachers help their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like more information about how their children get on in school. • Other parents would like the school to work more closely with them. • Several parents would like more homework for their children.

The inspection team agrees with the views of parents about the positive things they like about the school. Inspection findings agree with the views of parents who would like better information about their children's learning. However, plenty of opportunities are available for parents and the school to work together closely and the school has shown its willingness to listen to parents who want more homework for their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 The school maintained satisfactory standards in National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 1999. Standards were similar to those attained by pupils nationally and to those reported at the time of the last inspection. The school successfully improved standards in science. Pupils' performance was well above the national average and better than at the last inspection. The school compares well with similar schools in all three subjects. About a quarter of pupils in Year 6 reached a higher than average level in English, mathematics and science. This represents a satisfactory improvement in attainment since the last inspection. In the last four years, attainment in English fell in 1997 but returned to satisfactory levels in 1998 and 1999. Standards in mathematics and science rose with the national trend and exceeded it in science in 1999. Girls did better than boys over the four years in all three subjects. The school reached and exceeded the realistic targets set for all three subjects in 1999. As a result, targets have been raised to an even more challenging level for 2000.
- 2 At Key Stage 1 in 1999, standards were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with those of all seven-year-olds nationally. However, standards in reading and mathematics compared more favourably with similar schools. Too few more able pupils reached a high enough standard in reading or mathematics. Their achievements were below average in mathematics and well below average in reading. More able pupils did considerably better in writing, where their achievements showed improvement and were above the national average. Standards were still too low in writing for most seven-year-olds. They were unsatisfactory and below the average of pupils in similar schools. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science showed that standards were very high at the expected level, but average at a higher level.
- 3 For the past four years, boys and girls at Key Stage 1 performed at a low level in reading and writing. In mathematics, boys' performance was well below average and that of girls was below average. Trends show a decline in standards in all three subjects in 1997. They rose sharply in reading in 1998 and dipped again slightly in 1999. Standards have also risen slightly in writing and mathematics since 1997. They were still not high enough in National Curriculum tests in 1999 to bring any of the three subjects into line with the national average.
- 4 Varying standards at Key Stage 1 are attributable to variations in the experiences of four-year-olds on entry into school. As many four-year-olds as nationally are high attainers in mathematics. More children's attainment is low for their age. Fewer four-year-olds have above average experiences of reading and considerably more in the last two years have lower mathematical understanding.
- 5 After a term in school, four-year-olds' learning is good and their attainment is close to expectations for five-year-olds in personal and social development, physical and creative development. Learning in information technology is also good and many children are able to tackle work in the National Curriculum. Aspects of physical development reach the standards achieved in the first level of the National Curriculum. Through good teaching, learning is good and attainment in reading is typical for most four-year-olds. Most children's independent writing is unsatisfactory

as few use letters or words to improve their work. Although progress is satisfactory and standards have improved, attainment in mathematics is still low for four-year-olds.

- 6 Current standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in Year 2 and are close to expectations for seven-year-olds. In view of the attention the school has given to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies standards at Key Stage 1 are as good as could be expected. In Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are similar to those achieved in 1999 and most pupils' learning in English and mathematics is good. Standards in science remain higher than in most schools and learning is very good.
- 7 High standards in speaking and listening in both key stages result from many opportunities for discussion in most subjects. The small amounts of writing produced by many pupils result in unsatisfactory standards at Key Stage 1. With more emphasis on different forms of writing in Year 6, most pupils' learning improves. The time that some teachers allocate to additional writing is insufficient to make up for the low starting point on entry into school or to increase the quality and quantity of pupils' writing. Work in the literacy hour is improving the strategies used by higher and average attainers in Year 2 to make sense of their reading. It allows lower attainers to cope with simple texts. As a result, standards in reading are now closer to expectations for seven-year-olds. The National Literacy Strategy has increased the fluency and understanding that many pupils in Year 6 now bring to different texts; their knowledge of authors and library classification systems is unsatisfactory. Higher attainers throughout the school achieve good levels of punctuation and spelling. Punctuation is consistently better than spelling. Most pupils' spelling in Year 2 is unsatisfactory and affects their writing in other subjects.
- 8 Because pupils produce little writing of substance in their work in other subjects, wider opportunities to improve the basic skills of reading and writing are restricted. A serious lack of up-to-date equipment restricts the opportunities available for pupils to draft and amend their writing by word processing. Pupils' good progress in handling data is not consolidated and extended by the use of computers. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use dictionaries productively to increase the range of their vocabularies. All pupils produce accounts and stories in history, and label diagrams in science and mathematics. Measurement plays a satisfactory part of work in science and geography.
- 9 Most pupils are confident users of accurate mathematical language. Their achievements are improved by their understanding of the importance of mathematics in real life situations. Good teaching gives most pupils the confidence to calculate and to solve problems without being afraid of getting incorrect answers. This ability has improved the mathematical achievements of many pupils, particularly those of higher attainers in Key Stage 2. Many pupils have good understanding of place value. Pupils' skill in handling data, and working with co-ordinates, area and volume is a strength in Year 6. Although mental calculation has improved since it was an issue at the last inspection, mental mathematics is still an area of weakness for average and lower attaining pupils. A further weakness in many pupils' attainment in Year 6, lies in a lack of accuracy when using fractions, decimals and percentages.
- 10 With good teaching and the maintenance of high standards in science, the same strengths appear in pupils' attainment at both key stages. From teachers' good understanding of the subject, pupils gain a broad body of scientific knowledge and

learn to use accurate scientific language confidently. When conducting investigations and experiments, pupils are particularly good at forming hypotheses and predicting what will happen. Limitations to even better learning at Key Stage 2 rise from a lack of opportunity for pupils to test their own ideas and to select their own equipment. As with other subjects, there are too few opportunities in science at Key Stage 2 for pupils to improve their writing.

- 11 Teachers' understanding of information technology at Key Stage 1 is sufficient to ensure that seven-year-olds reach the level expected for their age. Out-of-date equipment and limitations to some teachers' knowledge of the subject in Key Stage 2 cause learning to be unsatisfactory for most pupils and results in low standards in control technology. Through thorough coverage of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, teachers have widened pupils' learning and raised standards to an above-average level at both key stages. The amount of work provided for pupils in design and technology and history has been too limited and has caused a deterioration in learning and standards.
- 12 As a result of teachers following schemes of work for both subjects conscientiously, attainment in art and physical education is maintained at a reasonable standard. A particular strength of art lies in pupils' work in the style of a wide variety of well-known artists. Pupils' learning in geography is satisfactory and standards have remained unchanged as a result of teachers' enthusiasm for the subject, which they communicate successfully to pupils. Standards in music are also at the same level as at the time of the last inspection and learning is still satisfactory. Singing is the most outstanding aspect of the subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 13 Pupils' attainment and progress are influenced by their good attitudes to learning. Pupils' attitudes have remained consistently good since the time of the last inspection. They come to school ready to learn and work hard during lessons. From the time they join the reception class, pupils learn to listen carefully and not to call out during discussions with their teacher and to follow instructions readily. They are interested in their work, particularly when it provides them with challenging new ideas. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils show tenacity when exploring interesting ideas. Many pupils are enthusiastic in their approach to practical activities such as, in Year 5, when they investigate the shadows around the building on a sunny day, or when programming a robot in Year 1. In both key stages, pupils get on with their work sensibly when teachers are busy with other groups. When they work alone or use computers without adult supervision, pupils demonstrate clearly that they can be trusted and are able to organise their own work. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning as a result of the confidence they gain from extra support and the successes they gain from activities planned to match their needs.
- 14 Behaviour also remains very good. It is a strength of the school and confirms the views expressed by parents. Pupils display high levels of self-control, clearly know what is expected of them, and usually react accordingly. They behave in an orderly way and act sensibly. Bullying is not a problem. No incidents were observed, or reported during the inspection. Exclusions are very low and dealt with appropriately. Pupils clearly care for their school, and handle its fabric, fittings and resources with respect.

- 15 A further strength lies in pupils' very good personal development. This begins in the reception class when four-year-olds gain increasing independence and confidence as they become familiar with the daily routines of the school. As they get older, pupils take more responsibility for a range of minor but important jobs such as taking registers to the office and tidying class libraries. Most pupils' self-discipline grows steadily. They readily take initiatives by helping one another, their teachers and visitors to the school. For example, pupils in Year 4 made sure that a table in the dining room was clean and that a drink was available before politely inviting a visitor to sit down and eat. Pupils in Year 6 take their responsibilities very seriously. These include selling snacks at break, organising games for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 during wet playtimes and setting up the hall ready for assembly. They also organise an effective *buddy system*, which allows new pupils to be looked after by a friend when they first join the school. They take full responsibility for organising an annual bazaar to raise money for charities. Wherever possible, pupils plan and organise their own work.
- 16 Very good relationships between pupils and teachers are a continuing strength of the school. They are the source of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Because of the respect teachers pay to pupils' opinions, pupils are willing to express their feelings openly and with confidence. This is particularly evident during discussions in circle time when pupils work in awareness of one another's feelings, values and beliefs. Pupils are considerate to one another and friendly and courteous to adults. They work well together in small groups and from the time they are in the reception class, willingly share ideas and resources. In science, for instance, pupils share the findings of their investigations and this helps to produce good results. When investigating the properties of solids, liquids and gases, pupils in Year 3 resolved their differences sensibly and arrived at an agreed conclusion. During lessons in information technology, pupils who are confident with computers help others who are new to the work in a kind and sensitive way. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs are well-integrated into the life of the school and form good relationships with other pupils.
- 17 Attendance is around the average for primary schools nationally and is similar to the level reported at the last inspection. Unauthorised absence, however, remains well above the national norm, but is mainly restricted to a relatively small core of pupils whose parents do not always inform the school when their child is absent, or reply to requests for this information.
- 18 Punctuality is good. Almost all pupils arrive on time and settle in class promptly at the start of sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 19 Most of the teaching, 60 per cent, is good. Of the remainder, two per cent is excellent, four per cent is very good and 33 per cent is satisfactory. This picture of teaching is different from that observed at the time of the last inspection. Although there is less very good or excellent teaching, factors, which contributed to unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 2, are no longer areas of weakness.
- 20 Teachers have good knowledge of most subjects of the curriculum. Their understanding of information technology and design and technology is variable. While teachers at Key Stage 1 have sufficient understanding of information technology to provide a basic curriculum for younger pupils, the training and resultant knowledge of most teachers does not allow them to provide a suitable curriculum for older pupils.

- 21 Difficulties arise with the teaching of literacy in the reception class where two distinct groups of pupils are taught together. One group is composed of four-year-olds with birthdays in the spring and summer terms. The other is made up of older pupils who were five in autumn. Since the National Literacy Strategy is taught at the same level to both groups of children, the work provided for most four-year-olds is either beyond their understanding or unsuited to their current stage of development. This situation has arisen since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and was not a feature of teaching in the reception class during the previous inspection. It denies four-year-olds in the school with few early experiences of literacy the opportunity to work towards the recommended learning outcomes for five-year-olds.
- 22 A particular strength of teaching throughout the school lies in the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers treat pupils with respect. Their high expectations of sensible behaviour are reflected in pupils' responsible attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour when carrying out tasks. Most of the work that teachers provide has such strong interest for pupils that they are enabled to develop and share their own ideas and to extend their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were captivated by their teacher's account of visits to predominantly Muslim countries and shrines. They gained a lot of new knowledge about Islam by testing their understanding against their teacher's knowledge in the certainty that their opinions would be received with respect.
- 23 An issue raised during the last inspection about the lack of challenge provided for more able pupils in Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science has been tackled well and shows in good improvement in pupils' work and in the results of National Curriculum tests in 1999. In all three subjects, the work teachers provide now challenges the thinking of these pupils. They are encouraged to take a more effective part in discussions by answering questions targeted specifically at them and they receive much closer attention during individual and group work. This improvement took place in a carefully planned way. It is particularly effective in that teachers involved more able pupils in a survey about how they learn and the attention they receive from teachers during lessons. Teachers used the findings of the survey to modify their approach to these pupils who subsequently achieved the attainment of which they are capable in National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2.
- 24 Teachers have a secure understanding of the framework of the National Literacy Strategy and they maintain a satisfactory balance between the different components of the literacy hour. Although all teachers, especially those at Key Stage 1, place sufficient emphasis on using the sounds of letters to make sense of new words, they are less successful in teaching pupils to use this knowledge to develop the skills of spelling. The outcome of this weakness is that pupils' achievements in writing are low for their age in Key Stage 1. Similarly, there are few instances where pupils produce a wide range of extended writing in Key Stage 2.

- 25 A strength in the teaching of literacy lies in the way that teachers communicate their interest and enthusiasm for reading to pupils. From their reception year, the interesting and fresh array of books that teachers present to pupils captivates and maintains their interest in reading throughout the school. Consequently, by the time they are in Year 6, most pupils' skill in reading is at a level typical for their age. In some classes a significant proportion of pupils are encouraged to extend their reading by becoming members of the local library.
- 26 After a full term of working in the National Numeracy Strategy, teachers use part of each session with growing success to improve the mental calculations of pupils of different prior attainment. Another approach to resolving this issue from the previous inspection is evident when teachers give pupils additional time to answer questions accurately and to explain their reasoning. As at the time of the previous inspection in 1996, teachers' long and medium-term planning is good. It provides a secure foundation for covering most subjects of the National Curriculum in sufficient depth and ensures that literacy and numeracy are taught at the correct level. Short-term planning has improved since 1996. Most teachers are skilful at raising pupils' awareness of the expected outcomes of their work. This ensures that pupils understand what is expected of them and allows them to work at a suitable pace.
- 27 Most teachers use a good range of methods to increase pupils' understanding of the work. Pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing and a bi-lingual pupil make good progress when taught individually or in small groups by specialist teachers. During an excellent lesson in personal and social education in Year 2, the teacher used a very good range of carefully planned activities to boost pupils' confidence. As pupils' imaginations came into play, they explored the importance of following rules, not ridiculing others and listening to instructions. By encouraging pupils in Year 3 to evaluate one another's work with sensitivity, the teacher demonstrated the quality of achievement she expected. Comments from pupils about performances they watched, such as *It moved me...made me feel warm inside*, or, *A nice touch, she kept her arms in the same place through all her actions*, and *Smooth, soft movements*, showed how successfully she raised their awareness of outstanding achievement.
- 28 The use teachers make of information from assessments of pupils' work to plan the next stage of learning is better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Since the previous inspection, considerably more value has been gained from the way in which teachers in Key Stage 2 use the information from the results of National Curriculum and other regular tests in English and mathematics. By recording their achievements in graphic form, teachers effectively track the progress of older pupils. In this way they can judge if pupils are doing their best, or are underachieving in the light of their past attainments.
- 29 The use of assessment to plan pupils' work is not as well-developed at Key Stage 1. The findings of assessments carried out when children enter the reception class place insufficient emphasis on the expected stages of development of pupils of different ages. As a result, the youngest children in the class, whose birthdays are late in the summer term, may find their early achievements compared unfavourably with pupils who are five soon after they enter school. Some of these children are incorrectly categorised as being low attainers.

- 30 Teachers make good use of time to ensure that pupils gain the maximum benefit from lessons. They also make good use of the skills of classroom assistants to support the work of pupils with special educational needs, children in the reception class and pupils in Key Stage 1. The close attention classroom assistants give to individuals and groups of pupils allows pupils with special educational needs to gain increased understanding of the work and leads to good progress. The homework teachers provide makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning in school.

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

- 31 The school provides a sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum to promote pupils' intellectual, physical and moral development effectively in most subjects. Exceptions to this are limitations to the work planned for information technology in Key Stage 2 and design and technology and history at both key stages. Opportunities to develop control technology at Key Stage 2 are limited by a lack of up-to-date equipment. The school is at present remedying this situation. Insufficient distinction is made in literacy between the curriculum provided to meet the needs of four-year-olds and that for five-year-olds in the reception class.
- 32 Health, drugs and sex education are integrated successfully with the school's effective programme for personal and social education, and with science. Religious education is based securely on the recommendations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has introduced and implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies with reasonable success. This is already making a steady impact on reading at Key Stage 1 and in maintaining standards at Key Stage 2. Through its policies and planning, the school ensures that pupils have equal opportunities to learn and make progress.
- 33 The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs and ensures that they gain full access to the curriculum. It meets all requirements of the national Code of Practice and statutory requirements for pupils with statements of their specific needs. One third of pupils in the school have been identified on the special needs register, a much greater proportion than in most primary schools. The school uses a suitable range of strategies to identify pupils with special educational needs and to assess their progress. Individual educational plans set appropriate and achievable targets, which give direction to teachers' planning, and progress is reviewed formally twice a year. Where a number of pupils share the same individual educational plan, progress for each pupil is not clear and more difficult to monitor. Annual reviews for pupils at higher stages on the register fulfil statutory requirements. A specialist teacher employed by the local education authority provides good extra support for bi-lingual pupils on a weekly basis. The work is planned with care and teachers provide additional help during lessons. Their progress is monitored regularly and this contributes to the good progress they make in English and in most other subjects.
- 34 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The school continues to make good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Provision for moral and social development has improved and is now very good.
- 35 Collective worship takes place in a calm atmosphere. Teachers at both key stages make time for the tuneful singing of hymns, such as, *Peace, perfect peace* and for

quiet prayer. Worship is of a broadly Christian nature, but teachers also provide opportunities that help pupils explore the values and beliefs of others, such as in the celebration of Chinese New Year. In subjects such as English, music, art and religious education, teachers enable pupils to gain good spiritual awareness through thoughtful discussions about their own and other people's lives and beliefs. The teacher in Year 4 replicated a Hindu shrine to give pupils a helpful insight into Hindu beliefs. As a result, they watched a video about Hindu worship with perfect attention and high levels of respect. At the close of each day teachers share a prayer with pupils, *Keep me safe this night*. With strong encouragement from his teacher, a pupil in Year 6 reflected thoughtfully on war and peace in his poem, *Peace is calm, like a shining sunbeam*.

- 36 Teachers promote a strong moral code. They provide clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour and caring attitudes and display the rules of the school prominently in classrooms. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong from the earliest age and teachers expect them to behave very well and to respect the rights of others. Teachers foster values such as honesty and fairness. When a pupil in Year 4 was asked if he was talking at the same time as the teacher, he replied openly, honestly and with an apology, which was accepted. As pupils progress through the school, they have opportunities to consider wider moral and ethical issues. In Year 6, they reflect on issues such as whether a criminally convicted famous champion boxer can provide a good role model for others.
- 37 The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, show initiative and develop an understanding of community living. One of the school's Millennium Resolutions is to *Believe in our own abilities*. Teachers use assemblies to celebrate and encourage good work, achievements, attitudes and behaviour. Pupils accept the rules of the school and have very good relationships with one another and with their teachers. Staff are good role models for pupils to follow. They encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. One teacher rejected a pupil who was *telling tales*, reasoning with the class that he *expects* them to behave properly and always keeps his own eyes on them. Teachers encourage pupils to work co-operatively, as for instance, in design and technology, when the teacher explained the benefits and importance of teamwork. Pupils throughout the school are given monitorial duties. In Year 6, pupils are encouraged to develop their responsibilities further. As the school's oldest pupils, teachers give them whole-school duties, which include activities such as helping younger pupils. Consideration for others is promoted effectively through charitable work. Pupils recently contributed harvest and Christmas gifts for less fortunate children in Kosovo.
- 38 Teachers provide many good opportunities to promote pupils' cultural development. In subjects such as art, history, geography, English, music and religious education teachers plan work about different cultures and civilisations past and present. In art, pupils' cultural development is enhanced when they are taught about the work of artists from a wide variety of traditions and are presented with music from all round the world. The school provides a visit from a theatre group, which successfully introduces pupils to live drama. Teachers plan visits to places in the locality such as a museum and a weaver's cottage, to immerse pupils in the cultural traditions of their own area. Pupils learn of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society when they study faiths such as Hinduism and Islam. A visiting Muslim student enthralled pupils as she talked to them about the Five Pillars of Islam.
- 39 The school has maintained good links with the local community since the last inspection. These continue to have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. Educational

visits to places of interest and a range of visitors to the school help to extend the work pupils do in class and provide first-hand opportunities for them. Pupils in Year 6 gain confidence from an annual residential visit to an outdoor education centre. The school enhances the curriculum in mathematics, science and technology for pupils in Year 6 and several higher attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5 through lessons and after school classes at a nearby college. Enduring links with various local companies, organised through an Education Business Partnership scheme, make a useful contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in science at Key Stage 2. The school is not yet connected to the Internet, but retains good links with other local schools through sport, and occasionally through art.

- 40 The school continues to provide a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These include a choir and recorder group, which make useful contributions to music. Sporting activities, such as, football, netball, cricket and short tennis. The school provides opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to take part in outdoor adventure activities at a residential centre. This helps them to gain confidence in a setting away from home and school and makes a positive contribution to their learning and their personal and social development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 41 The school continues to take good care of its pupils. It has effective child protection arrangements and follows local authority guidelines when cases of abuse are suspected. The current safety policy, however, is out of date; this is fully recognised by the school. There is also very limited involvement of governors in this area of its provision. Nevertheless, day-to-day working practices are generally good, and only a few health and safety matters were drawn to the attention of the headteacher who attended to them before the end of the inspection. By visiting them in their homes before they start school, the teacher in the reception class ensures that the school's youngest pupils settle quickly to new routines and experiences. Staff supervise pupils carefully throughout the day and manage lunchtime routines well. There are effective procedures for dealing with accidents and illness, and appropriate guidelines for the administration of medicines. Emergency equipment is serviced regularly and a fire drill takes place each term.
- 42 The school has very good procedures for promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour, although many of the good practices used by teachers are not explained fully in the discipline policy. Sanctions are reasonable and are applied fairly. A straightforward set of rules ensures pupils' thoughtful and orderly conduct around school. Procedures for dealing with bullying were formalised during the inspection. There are no specific arrangements to promote regular attendance, but a reward system is being developed currently to help improve it.
- 43 Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good, and permeate all areas of school life. Teachers know their pupils well and work hard to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The school uses its Gold Card merit system very effectively to encourage and celebrate significant achievement, especially good behaviour. Teachers plan very helpful discussions, which take place when pupils sit in a circle, to teach personal skills and to strengthen very good relationships. The school monitors attendance thoroughly. Teachers complete registers efficiently in line with current guidelines and all latecomers have their names recorded. There are clear procedures for investigating unexplained absence, or emerging patterns of absence or lateness, and the school follows these diligently.

Some parents do not always reply to enquiries about absence. As a consequence, unauthorised absence remains well above national figures. Rates of attendance are reported appropriately to parents.

- 44 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are not as strong in Key Stage 1 as in Key Stage 2. They are not established evenly throughout the whole school to track pupils' progress and to guide teachers' planning of the curriculum. There is clear evidence of procedures to record and track pupils' progress from the end of Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. A gap in tracking progress exists from the time children enter the reception class to the end of Key Stage 1. This makes it more difficult for teachers in Key Stage 1 to be certain that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. There is room for improvement in the way that the results of tests carried out by children when they enter the reception class are analysed. At present, the achievements of some four-year-olds are compared unfavourably with those of five-year-olds.
- 45 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and follows the nationally agreed Code of Practice. However, although most pupils with special educational needs make good progress, the school's system of using group individual education plans does not lend itself easily to checking the progress of individual pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 46 Since the last inspection, the school has maintained good links with parents. The small proportion of parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire show considerable confidence in most aspects of the school's provision. They are encouraged to support their children's learning through the work they do at home, and only a very few would like more homework for their children. The school establishes good partnerships with parents through meetings and home visits before children enter the reception class. Reading diaries maintain good communications between teachers and parents, particularly at Key Stage 1. Several parents help in classes on a regular basis where they provide valuable support for teachers. Some of these took part on a successful Parents as Educators course, which was led in school by a qualified nursery nurse to improve parents' understanding of their children's learning.
- 47 Although the school has produced a home-school agreement, a significant number of parents have not responded to it. The Parents' and Teachers' Association organises well-attended fund-raising events. The school uses the proceeds wisely on additional resources for pupils. Recently, parents have provided funds for computers, window blinds and resources for literacy. Arrangements for settling children into the reception class help children to settle down quickly into school life and routines. They are made more effective by the home visits made by the reception class teacher.
- 48 Communications with parents remain satisfactory. Parents receive regular information about school events and some details about what is taught, particularly through organised meetings and the literature provided at Key Stage 1. Most parents are happy with the information they receive about their children's progress and feel comfortable when approaching the school with questions, worries or concerns. However, inspection findings agree with the views of some parents who would like better information about their children's learning. Written annual reports generally meet requirements but are better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, where they do not always recognise progress and achievement, and are often discouraging for the

parents of lower attaining pupils. They sometimes contain imprecise targets for pupils' future learning. The prospectus and governors' annual report are satisfactory. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are notified of any concerns at an early stage. They are invited to review meeting to discuss their children's progress and the school pursues any parents who do not attend.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 49 Overall, the leadership and management of the school remain at the same satisfactory level as at the time of the previous inspection. Since a new headteacher had been in office for less than two weeks at the time of the latest inspection, conclusions about leadership are drawn mainly from the outcomes of action planning and the work of senior staff and governors to raise standards. A strength of leadership lies in its success in meeting the school's aims and in securing its values. This is evident in a commitment to equality of opportunity, very good relationships and pupils' positive attitudes and interest in learning. All of these aspects have a strong impact on pupils' willingness to learn.
- 50 At the time of the last inspection, senior staff had little involvement in implementing new initiatives or measuring the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Most improvements to management stem from a gradual strengthening of their roles and responsibilities. Through annual analysis of the needs of the school, priorities to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching are established and strategies are identified to raise standards. The senior management team takes good care to fulfil requirements to support newly qualified teachers and to introduce new teachers to the school. This impacts favourably on their knowledge of the school and its expectations, and a growth in their expertise and skills to meet pupils' needs. Similarly, the school bases its appraisal of the performance of teachers effectively on their individual targets for professional development. It directs teachers towards essential training to improve their competencies and to raise standards.
- 51 With the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the senior management team introduced satisfactory strategies for checking and evaluating the quality of teachers' planning, pupils' work and teaching in lessons. The most important benefit from this recent initiative is that it unites the staff by raising awareness of areas in need of improvement such as, for example, writing and information technology. However, the success of monitoring and evaluation will not be felt until standards in these subjects improve at both key stages. The work of the deputy headteacher and subject leaders in analysing the results of National Curriculum tests has successfully raised standards in science at both key stages and in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Monitoring and evaluation, together with analysis of the results of National Curriculum tests, are less successful in raising standards, particularly in writing, at Key Stage 1. There is still room to improve the impact of monitoring on pupils' achievements by using it in a more structured way to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- 52 A weakness in development planning lies in the lack of a consistent system for recording and tracking pupils' achievements. Without clear profiles of progress, such as those promoted by the deputy headteacher in Key Stage 2, it is difficult to be certain that pupils do their best from their earliest days in school. However, plans for the school's development are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The school now makes good use of the skills of the local education

authority's advisers to move planning into practice and to ensure the successful implementation of national strategies to raise standards in English and mathematics.

- 53 Significant changes to the membership of the governing body have weakened its current capacity to fulfil its corporate role. There are, however, sufficient experienced governors in office to ensure that all statutory duties are carried out. Governors ensure that the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is in place. They understand most of the challenges faced by the school and they receive good information of how well the school meets and exceeds its targets. At this transitional stage, the governing body has insufficient experience of the initial stages of setting targets for development, or of linking all priorities to financial planning and checking the effectiveness of spending on standards.
- 54 Through the conscientious work of a governor, who is also the school's secretary, financial administration is efficient and unobtrusive. The very few recommendations of the most recent auditor's report were acted upon promptly. The budget allocated to pupils with special educational needs is spent productively on additional support for their learning. A strength of management and the governors' role is the careful and prudent use the school makes of its resources. Consultation takes place between governors and staff about major financial decisions. For example, a current surplus to the school's budget is allocated towards the planned purchase of hardware and software for a new computer suite. The school purchases resources on the basis of good quality and best value for money. Decisions on staff appointments include considerations of financial costs in relation to those of other schools and the school's needs for improvement and expertise.
- 55 The school has sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the planned curriculum. They are all suitably qualified and there is a good balance of experience and expertise. Teachers have a clear understanding of their roles, work well as a team and receive regular training to allow them to meet new national initiatives and to update their skills and knowledge. The distribution of curriculum responsibilities is generally good with one teacher having responsibility for co-ordinating special educational needs. Non-teaching support staff are also suitably qualified to support pupils' learning and provide an appropriate balance for curricular demands.
- 56 Accommodation is satisfactory. Very good use continues to be made of all available space, particularly the corridors which also contain the libraries of both key stages. Classrooms are adequate in size for the number of pupils and appropriately furnished. High quality, carefully mounted displays in corridors and classrooms help to create a warm and stimulating place for learning. Internally, the building is spotlessly clean and the caretaker maintains it to a high standard. Outside the grounds are landscaped attractively, but both playgrounds are generally featureless and do little to promote pupils' social development. Although no separate area is allocated to children under five, arrangements allow younger pupils to use the grounds at different times from older pupils and ensure there is sufficient space for them to play in safety.
- 57 Overall, the school has good resources for learning in most subjects. The libraries are well stocked with a wide range of books, but there are insufficient computers and computer programmes for the teaching of information technology, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school lacks large outdoor equipment to develop the balance, control and co-ordination of children under five in the playground. Most of the school's resources are well-managed and easily accessible. Teachers use them effectively to improve pupils' understanding and to raise standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) raise standards in writing throughout the school by
 - providing training for teachers to improve their expertise in the teaching of writing
 - placing greater emphasis on writing in different subjects of the curriculum
 - allocating more time to writing so that pupils can practise the skills of spelling and punctuation

(paragraphs 5, 7, 8, 24, 64, 74, 79, 80 and 82 of the main report)

- (2) improve attainment in information technology at Key Stage 2 by
 - training teachers whose understanding of the subject is limited
 - providing sufficient up-to-date equipment for pupils to practise the skills of control technology
 - raising the status and use of information technology in other subjects of the curriculum

(paragraphs 11, 20, 31, 82, 92, 104, 106 and 108 of the main report)

- (3) extend existing systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning by
 - establishing formal procedures for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and its impact on standards and learning
 - using the information from monitoring to plan teachers' needs for training
 - incorporating aspects of teaching and learning into development planning
 - finding out why boys' performance in English, mathematics and science is lower than that of girls
 - involving members of the governing body more closely in development planning and checking the effectiveness of spending on standards

(paragraphs 51, 53, 83, 105, 115, 123, 127, 133, 137 and 142 of the main report)

- (4) improve the procedures for recording pupils' attainments and tracking their progress by
 - extending existing systems for recording attainment and tracking progress in use at Key Stage 2 to include the reception class and pupils in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that all teachers plan their work in full awareness of pupils' earlier achievements
 - providing individual plans rather than group education plans for pupils with special educational needs

(paragraphs 29, 33, 44, 52 and 70 of the main report)

- (5) provide a curriculum that fully meets the needs of children under five in the reception class by
 - tracking the progress of children's achievements in each distinct area of learning to provide activities which match the stage of their development
 - planning a curriculum leading to the early learning goals in literacy and mathematics for four-year-olds.

(paragraphs 21, 31, 44 and 63 of the main report)

Issues 1 and 2 are identified by the school for attention in its current development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2%	4%	60%	33%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	212
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	73

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		66

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999 [1998]	17[17]	15[16]	32[33]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10[16]	9[7]	12[10]
	Girls	15[13]	12[13]	13[14]
	Total	25[19]	21[20]	25[24]
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	78[58]	66[60]	78[73]
	National	82[81]	83[82]	87[86]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9[16]	12[13]	17[14]
	Girls	12[13]	15[14]	15[15]
	Total	21[19]	27[27]	32[29]
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	66[58]	84[81]	100[81]
	National	82[81]	86[85]	87[86]

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999 [1998]	15[18]	14[16]	29[34]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8[7]	10[11]	11[12]
	Girls	13[10]	10[12]	14[13]
	Total	21[17]	20[23]	25[25]
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	72 (50)	69(67)	86(73)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8[10]	10[11]	11[12]
	Girls	12[13]	10[13]	13[12]
	Total	20[23]	20[24]	24[24]
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	69[67]	69[70]	83[70]
	National	68[65]	69[65]	75[71]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	199
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.2
Average class size	30.2

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Number of pupils per FTE adult	53
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	351160
Total expenditure	339115
Expenditure per pupil	1563
Balance brought forward from previous year	26898
Balance carried forward to next year	38943

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	158
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	41	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	65	30	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	38	3	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	43	11	0	3
The teaching is good.	58	37	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	27	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	16	3	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	41	41	8	3	8
The school is well led and managed.	62	32	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	35	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	35	5	0	3

Other issues raised by parents

3 (8%) parents made additional comments

Pointers from the meeting for parents

- Parents are satisfied with the standards of work done by their children.
- Parents believe the school takes every possible step to help pupils of all abilities to learn and make progress.
- Parents are satisfied that the school promotes attitudes and values of which they approve.
- Parents are happy with the way the school encourages good behaviour and attendance.
- Parents say they get good detail about their children's work and that the amount of homework set is appropriate. They also recognise that they get plenty of encouragement to assist the school in many ways.
- Parents believe that the school listens to them if they have suggestions or concerns.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 58 In the reception class, 13 children under five are taught alongside 17 pupils who have already had their fifth birthdays. Most children benefit from attending either nurseries or playgroups in the locality before attending school. The school has a good range of information about the early attainments of four-year-olds. This is based on tests when they enter school of their early achievements in reading and mathematics and on the school's own entry profile. Assessments from the years from 1996 to 1999 provide a varied profile of children's early accomplishments in reading and mathematics. With the exception of 1998, as many of the school's four-year-olds as nationally have high levels of understanding of mathematics. However, more children in the school have a lower understanding of mathematics than is typical for their age. The picture for reading is diverse. With the exception of children tested in 1997, only half as many four-year-olds as nationally have above average experiences of early reading. In 1996 and 1997 there were fewer children with very low attainment in reading than nationally, considerably more in 1998 and a similar proportion as nationally in the present reception class.
- 59 This profile of children's early attainments on entry into the reception class differs from that described at the time of the last inspection when the *great majority* entered school with attainments below those expected for their age.
- 60 Personal and social development is good and is a strength of teaching and learning. By providing them with many opportunities to work alongside others, children quickly learn the importance and benefits of sharing materials, taking turns to join in discussions and making a small group of close friends on whom they can rely for company in the playground. The teacher and nursery nurse provide very good role models for positive relationships. They treat children with the respect and friendship they feel towards each other. In return, children are friendly and positive towards each other and adults. Staff make good use of lessons where children who are seated in a circle are given the chance to practise and declare their friendship for one another. The teacher set a good atmosphere for discussion during this activity by establishing very firm control of children's behaviour and a feeling of togetherness among the group. A very small amount of unfriendly behaviour occurred when several children who were trusted to find a partner during dance rejected others without a partner. Similarly, a girl who shared the money in a cash box with two boys became very anxious when they refused to return the money. *You've got to give it me back!*
- 61 Most children have few problems in looking after themselves and their belongings. Some extend this facility to others. One boy who was late for school was at considerable pains to help a girl who found it hard to remove her jacket. He also went to the trouble of opening the classroom door and explaining to the teacher, *She can't get her coat off.* All children settle happily into the routines of the school day. They sit quietly and enjoy assemblies in the hall, eat their meals sensibly in the dining room and play happily with others at break. The high levels of good behaviour and social development established by staff in the reception class have a continuing impact on pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning throughout the school. Children make good progress in this area of learning from the time they first enter school.
- 62 Children under five make good progress in developing the skills of reading. Their use of language grows with the many opportunities provided for talk in a widening range of

situations. Although four-year-olds behave extremely well and sit quietly on the carpet for longish periods of time, this ability leads to most of them experiencing work in the literacy hour that is beyond their comprehension. Far more effective than this strategy is the support that the teacher provides when reading with small groups of children. After a term in the reception class many children know that print carries meaning and moves across a page in a left to right direction. A small group recognises several words in a simple story. Most *read the pictures* of a story they have practised with their teacher or parents. Most children are also supported in their efforts to read by working with their parents at home.

- 63 The development of children's ability to write does not move at the same good pace as their progress with reading. By writing for the whole class, the teacher successfully demonstrates how writing works. At the beginning of their second term in school, children write with considerable confidence in an appropriate mixture of lines, shapes or random letters. This achievement is typical of what is expected for their age. However, strong emphasis is given to teaching the names and sounds of letters in a variety of interesting ways. Although many children recognise the names and sounds of a growing number of letters, none of their writing reflects this understanding. Children are not moved on to using this knowledge of the sounds of letters to try to build words for themselves. Instead, they *write* their own ideas beneath pictures of events in their lives and then dictate the ideas contained in their writing to the teacher who records them as a model of *correct* writing for children to copy. This strategy for developing children's skills in writing is similar to that used when modelling writing for the whole class. Without a wider range of strategies to develop the early stages of writing, children's progress towards work in the National Curriculum is unsatisfactory. Most four-year-olds write their names independently in well-formed letters.
- 64 Higher attaining children make satisfactory progress towards the outcomes of learning expected of five-year-olds in mathematics. When working with support from their teacher, most children count aloud up to ten with reasonable accuracy, while a few higher attainers count beyond ten and recognise digits from one to ten. This achievement is not typical, however and although many four-year-olds try hard to copy the shapes of digits, they recognise or appreciate the value of very few. The teacher and nursery nurse provide a satisfactory range of opportunities and resources for counting and sorting. Children who made models from boxes were asked to select a number between one and five and then to count and choose the same number of boxes. This encouraged them to select and count five boxes as they needed them to make an attractive model. Most four-year-olds sort several objects accurately by colour and shape. As many children have a lower starting point than nationally in mathematics, teaching towards the first level of the National Curriculum starts too early and is not always responsive to their needs.
- 65 Children make good progress towards the expected outcomes of learning for five-year-olds in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world. Teachers' planning for this area of learning incorporates a good range of activities and opportunities for children to widen their experiences beyond the known and familiar to the wider environment. During an assembly, the teacher from the reception class made an excellent contribution to children's cultural development through the celebrations of the Muslim festival of Eid and stories about the Chinese New Year. Children were enthralled by the story of how the Chinese people originally named their years and were drawn into an improvised drama about the event by 12 older children wearing animal masks. They also listened to a taped song about the Chinese celebration, spoke a few words in Chinese and were introduced to Chinese writing.

- 66 Attractive displays of natural objects from the school grounds provide children with chances to touch, experience and examine their textures under magnifying glasses and to talk about *sharp*, *smooth* and *prickly* things. Staff provide good guidance for children in the early use of computers. Many have good knowledge of how to access and close folders containing popular activities. They use the mouse and keyboard with ease to operate programmes. Similarly, four-year-olds who listen to taped stories, music and rhymes have no difficulty in using headphones and operating tape recorders. Children's understanding of information technology exceeds expectations for their age and many work in the early levels of the National Curriculum. Early achievements in knowledge and understanding of the world provide a basis for pupils' achievements in science and information technology at Key Stage 1.
- 67 The physical development of most four-year-olds is above that expected for their age and many already demonstrate good achievements in some aspects of the early programme of the National Curriculum for physical education. When moving to taped music in the hall, many four-year-olds show good levels of control, co-ordination and balance. They are aware of one another's space when travelling round the hall and as a result, manage to avoid bumping into others. Children respond to simple instructions with lovely light skipping and running movements. The teacher's very positive relationships and good use of an effective resource gives children the confidence to join in and gain maximum enjoyment from all activities. A lack of large equipment for use in the playground limits children's physical development out of doors. Non-teaching assistants, who take an active part in tasks, help children to produce their best work and efforts. Children use a wide range of tools, constructional toys and jigsaws, and equipment such as scissors, pencils, paintbrushes, glue spreaders and machinery with good levels of skill and control. When they come into school, most manage the buttons and zips on the clothes comfortably and put on their sweaters and shoes with little help.
- 68 Some aspects of creative development are above those expected for four-year-olds and they make good progress towards work in the National Curriculum. For example, staff encourage children to listen and to respond to music by playing taped music while other activities are taking place in the classroom. Children's enjoyment of music is apparent in their attentive listening to pieces chosen to support the themes of assemblies. Similarly, their soft and tuneful singing is heard adding to the effectiveness of hymn singing in the hall. The teacher in the reception class makes good use of the skills of the nursery nurse to ensure that children under five have a suitable range of experiences in the area of creative development. They combine junk materials imaginatively for modelling, create patterns by weaving wool, fabric and card, print with their fingers and a range of objects and mix colours to paint vibrant pictures of themselves, their families and everyday experiences.
- 69 Systems to record and track children's progress towards the recommended outcomes of learning for five-year-olds are limited. As a result, it is possible to lose sight of children's achievements in each distinct area of learning when planning work to suit their needs. This lack of clear information leads to four-year-olds carrying out some of the same activities as five-year-olds who have gained more experiences of early mathematics, reading and writing.

ENGLISH

- 70 Standards in English at Key Stage 2 have been maintained at a satisfactory level

since the previous inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has a satisfactory impact on maintaining standards and the school exceeded its targets for English in 1999. As a result, new targets have been established at a more demanding level for 2000. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was close to the national average. The percentage reaching a higher level was also close to the national average. This improvement in the performance of more able pupils successfully meets a key issue for development from the previous inspection. Attainment at Key Stage 2 has fluctuated over the years 1996 to 1999. A sharp drop in 1997 was followed by a steep rise in 1998 and a gentle rise, which reached the national average, in 1999. This variation in attainment makes sense when compared with annual variations to the results of tests of children's early achievements in reading when they enter school.

- 71 Girls in Year 6 did better than boys in English over this period and their performance was close to the national average. Boys' performance was well below the national average. There is no apparent explanation for this difference and the school has done nothing to find out why boys are performing at this low level. In comparison with pupils from similar schools in 1999, pupils' performance was well above average. The attainment of most pupils in the current Year 6 is similar to that of most eleven-year-olds and their progress is satisfactory. It is on course to meet the expected level in National Curriculum tests in 2000.
- 72 At Key Stage 1 in 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in reading was well below the national average but close to the average for similar schools. The proportion reaching a higher level was well below the national average but comparable with that for similar schools. This means that attainment at the expected level was unsatisfactory in national terms but was satisfactory when compared with pupils from similar backgrounds. As at Key Stage 2, standards at Key Stage 1 have been erratic from 1996 to 1999. The main difference in standards is that as they rose to meet the national average in 1999 at Key Stage 2, attainment in reading dropped at Key Stage 1 when the national trend was rising. There is no apparent reason for this variation other than annual differences in children's attainment on entry into school. However, the performance of pupils in the current Year 2 is similar to that of most seven-year-olds. This shows an improvement in standards and good progress.
- 73 In writing in 1999, the percentage of pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected level was well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. However, the performance of more able pupils improved. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching a higher level was above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. This improvement also met a key issue from the last inspection to raise standards for more able pupils. During the four years 1996 to 1999, attainment fell sharply in 1997; in spite of rising again in 1998 and 1999, it still remained well below the national average. Standards in writing at Key Stage 1 were not high enough in comparison with all schools or in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Although this situation shows some improvement in the current Year 2, writing is still below expectations for seven-year-olds. Most pupils could do better in writing and their learning is unsatisfactory. In both reading and writing, the performance of girls and boys was well below the national average over the last four years although girls performed better than boys.
- 74 Teaching in English is good at Key Stage 1 and mainly satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teachers provide many opportunities for speaking and listening which impact on good

levels of learning at both key stages. As a result, by the time they are in Year 6, all pupils listen attentively to others in discussion and talk confidently in a range of situations. In the literacy hour, talk is adapted to discussions about the meaning of texts. Most teachers are good at questioning. They encourage pupils to consider their answers and to explain their opinions and ideas with clarity. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour, which begin when pupils enter school, ensure that by the time they reach Year 2, pupils listen attentively to instructions and take turns when speaking. Very positive relationships between teachers and pupils give pupils the confidence to join in and get the maximum benefit from all activities. Teachers successfully encourage higher attaining pupils to use more adventurous vocabulary when explaining the main points of stories. They give average and lower attaining pupils many opportunities to develop their language by talking about books and answering questions about their work. Most pupils express their ideas more easily during religious education and discussions in lessons to promote personal and social education. In these situations pupils are free from the need to use the language specific to different subjects of the curriculum.

- 75 All teachers are confident in teaching to the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. Direct teaching of reading has a good impact on learning in both key stages. Pupils enjoy the challenge of new language provided by the variety of texts chosen by their teachers. Teachers organise activities well and this ensures that lessons move at a brisk pace and that pupils sustain good levels of concentration. For example, pupils in Year 6, who read a challenging extract from *The Eye of the Dragon* by Stephen King, were urged constantly to look for deeper meaning from the text rather than being satisfied with simpler, surface meanings. As a result, average and high attainers read with good levels of understanding and some read expressively. Although their knowledge of authors is not wide enough, higher attaining pupils talk confidently about the books of familiar writers such as Roald Dahl and R.L. Stine. Most pupils use contents, index, and glossary pages to research information. A weakness in pupils' ability to find particular books in libraries stems from their lack of understanding of library classification systems.
- 76 Teachers use questioning effectively to revise previous work before developing and extending pupils' learning. Questioning plays an important part in teachers' regular assessments of pupils' learning. Information from assessment at the beginning and end of lessons enables teachers to plan the next stage of pupils' work. In Year 4, for example, the teacher made sure that pupils fully understood the meaning of *scanning* before comparing it with *skimming*. Teachers mark and discuss pupils' writing regularly to explain how it can be improved. Each term, the teacher in Year 6 agrees targets to improve each pupil's writing after marking a piece of their work. Work is generally well-matched to pupils' needs during group activities although at times there is a lack of balance between demanding work and tasks that enable pupils to work independently. Objectives for learning are clear and are shared with pupils. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and work hard to achieve it.
- 77 In Key Stage 1, teachers use good strategies to ensure that pupils learn the names and sounds of letters and phrases. This improvement to teaching the basic skills of reading has contributed to the recent rise in attainment. It also ensures that higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read with confidence and clear understanding of the text. As a result, they are beginning to be more selective and to widen their reading. The strategies taught allow average attaining pupils to recognise many words and to use pictures and their knowledge of the sounds of letters to read a range of simple texts. Pupils with special educational needs know the names of characters in their books but need considerable help to read simple stories.

- 78 A strength of pupils' writing in Year 6 lies in the opportunities their teacher provides to produce interesting writing for a variety of purposes. The good progress in Year 6 is not consistent throughout the key stage. Although teachers use interesting and varied strategies to develop older pupils' learning, some allow too little time for pupils to produce substantial pieces of finished work. The chance to work together to share ideas and vocabulary helps pupils to develop the quality of expressive language in their stories and poetry. One group described war as, *solitary; no one wants him around*, while another wrote that *the screams of his bombs are his whistles in the air*. Most pupils use punctuation at a satisfactory level. While higher attainers use more advanced forms of punctuation, pupils with special educational needs still use only capital letters and full stops to punctuate their work. Most pupils' spelling is weaker than their use of punctuation. Although the spelling of high attainers is mainly accurate, average and lower attainers spell at a level below that expected for their age. Handwriting is mainly joined, fluent and clear.
- 79 Although teachers in Key Stage 1 teach the sounds of letters to help pupils make sense of their reading, their teaching lacks the skill needed to develop this awareness in writing. As a result, attainment in writing at Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory and pupils' progress is too slow. Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to write independently. Often, potentially interesting writing is either too short or unfinished; ideas are not sufficiently explored and pupils' vocabulary is unadventurous. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding of punctuation. While higher and average attaining pupils use appropriate punctuation, higher attainers use speech marks with confidence. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs sometimes use capital letters and full stops to punctuate short pieces of work. With limited opportunities to develop basic skills in their own writing, spelling in general is below the standard expected of seven-year-olds. Most pupils' handwriting is good. It is established in the reception class, and continued until pupils in Year 2 have a clear, neat and legible style.
- 80 Pupils with special educational needs, whose attainments in reading and writing are below expectations for their age, make good progress towards the targets of their individual education plans. They respond well when working with the teacher and other adults and their behaviour is very good. They benefit from a generous amount of extra support for their reading in small groups outside the classroom. As a result, pupils read a range of simple texts with confidence. Additional support is often provided by visiting teachers with specialist skills. Their teachers usually match the tasks provided for these pupils in the classroom carefully to their needs.
- 81 Opportunities are limited for pupils to read and write in other subjects. A serious lack of working computers restricts the use of word processors to draft and edit writing. Pupils in some classes in Key Stage 2 use dictionaries competently to find the meaning of unknown words. In religious education in Year 4, for example, pupils added to their knowledge of Hinduism by exploring the meaning of relevant vocabulary. In history, pupils in Year 6 wrote accounts of life during the Second World War from the point of view of evacuees. Pupils in Year 2 used storyboards to give structure to their story of Guy Fawkes. In science and mathematics pupils label diagrams and graphs.
- 82 The co-ordinators provide satisfactory leadership for the subject. Procedures established during the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy to check the impact of teaching on pupils' learning have provided sufficient information to maintain standards at Key Stage 2. Monitoring has been less successful in raising standards,

particularly in writing, in Key Stage 1. Good procedures to assess attainment and to track pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 do not extend to Key Stage 1. Consequently, information about pupils' achievements from the reception class to Year 2 is not readily accessible to target the next stage of pupils' learning. The governor responsible for literacy keeps the governing body well-informed about the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Resources for the subject are of good quality and quantity and most classrooms have attractive displays to support the teaching of English.

MATHEMATICS

- 83 Standards have risen in mathematics since the previous inspection. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels in mathematics was close to the national average. This shows that the school is successfully tackling the key issue of improving the progress of more able pupils. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the school's results were well above average. The school is working hard to raise standards in mathematics. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, results for eleven-year-olds follow the rising national trend. Girls did better than boys in mathematics although there is no apparent reason for this. The school did well to exceed its targets for mathematics in 1999 and has increased them to a realistic level for 2000.
- 84 The results of the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining a higher level was below the national average. This represents a decline in standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, in comparison with the results of pupils from similar backgrounds pupils' performance was close to average at the expected levels and above average at a higher level. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, girls' results were below average and boys' were well below.
- 85 The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall, especially in Key Stage 2. All teachers have successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, which is already having a positive effect on raising standards and pupils' attitudes to their work. Satisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1 has improved pupils' progress. At the beginning of their second term in Year 2, most pupils reach the expected level for their age and about one tenth reach a higher level. This represents a marked improvement on the results of National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 in 1999.
- 86 Pupils have good understanding of place value. Most choose the appropriate operation when solving problems by addition and subtraction. Higher attainers work quickly and confidently when solving more complex problems and calculations. Lower attainers take more time and work at a simpler level. The standards reached by many pupils at the start of their second term in Year 6, are satisfactory and are improving with constant practise. Teachers offer higher attaining pupils more challenging work than previously and this improves their progress. For instance, more able pupils are confident in their use of division, add fractions accurately and understand equivalences. Most pupils have good knowledge of using six-figure co-ordinates. They handle data well and know how to find area and volume by calculation. However, many pupils are less confident when using fractions, decimals and percentages. Although lower attaining pupils tally information correctly, they lack the skill to represent it as a graph.

- 87 With the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, some improvement has taken place to pupils' skill in mental mathematics. This lack of skill was identified as a key issue during the previous inspection. Weaknesses still exist in the pace at which teachers introduce daily lessons with mental mathematics; it is not brisk enough to promote quick thinking and fast recall of facts. Higher attaining pupils need to be patient when others slowly work out their answers. Although teachers in Key Stage 2 provide additional sessions in mental mathematics, pupils' response is still not prompt enough to improve the speed of their mental and written calculations.
- 88 Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and give informative and well-structured introductions, which clarify what a lesson is about and what pupils have to do. This ensures that pupils settle quickly to their tasks without time-wasting or fuss. By setting tasks according to pupils' earlier attainments and needs, teachers enable pupils to work at a suitably challenging level. In a lesson in Key Stage 2 introducing new learning about division, the teacher spent time with each group in turn, knowing that all were concentrating on their tasks without demanding her attention or losing interest.
- 89 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with work planned to meet their needs, both in the classroom and in small groups with additional help outside the class. Pupils' individual education plans provide achievable mathematical targets, which teachers and support assistants use effectively to enable pupils to progress at the same rate as other pupils.
- 90 A strength of teaching is teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. This has a strong impact on pupils' learning. Teachers insist on the use of correct mathematical vocabulary so that from their earliest days pupils develop confidence to express their thinking with accuracy. For instance, a teacher rejected a pupil's answer of *nothing*, in favour of the word *zero*, with the explanation, *Zero is a proper value*. Throughout the school teachers encourage pupils to *have a go*, so that they are not afraid to make mistakes. Teachers promote the development of different strategies to tackle problems and then expect pupils to explain their methods. As one teacher explained, *Knowing how we got the answer is as important as getting the right answer*. As a result, pupils in Year 6 use correct mathematical language and explain their thinking with confidence.
- 91 Teachers encourage pupils to understand that mathematics is a part of real life; lessons reflect this thinking. Pupils see the relevance and importance of mathematics and enjoy challenging tasks. Some teachers' lack of expertise in information technology and the school's limited resources detract from the quality and range of pupils' learning. Pupils' good progress in handling data is not consolidated and extended by the use of computers. Measurement plays a satisfactory part in science and geography.
- 92 All teachers assess pupils' work regularly during lessons and have a satisfactory understanding of what pupils know, can do and need to learn next. They do not, however, mark pupils' work in a sufficiently constructive or supportive way to move them on. Pupils' achievements are recorded and tracked systematically in Key Stage 2 and information from assessment is analysed for gaps in teaching and learning. The use of assessment is less effective in Key Stage 1, where the same system is not used to record and track pupils' progress. Assessment findings are not as readily available for teachers at Key Stage 1 to plan future learning.

- 93 Leadership in mathematics is good. The co-ordinator supported teachers effectively as they prepared to implement the National Numeracy Strategy, and ensured that mathematics was fully resourced. Secure procedures are in place for monitoring the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. With the support provided by the leadership and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the school is in a satisfactory position to improve standards.

SCIENCE

- 94 Standards have risen in science since the last inspection. They exceeded the national average in National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 1999 and in assessments by teachers at Key Stage 1. Pupils' performance at Key Stage 2 was well above average. It was very high at Key Stage 1. A further improvement in the subject lies in the increased proportion of pupils who reached a higher level of attainment than expected. This met a key issue for improvement raised during the previous inspection by bringing the percentage of pupils performing at higher levels close to the national average at both key stages.
- 95 The well-above average standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in 1999 were stronger than their performance in previous years. They exceeded standards in English and mathematics at both key stages. As with English and mathematics, attainment in science at Key Stage 2 was also well above average when compared with pupils in similar schools. Girls did better than boys over the four years 1996 to 1999 together. The school has not established any reasons for this variation and none were evident during the inspection. A rising trend of improvement in science, particularly since 1998, has led the school to raise its targets for 2000 to a suitably higher level. Evidence from the current work in lessons of seven and eleven-year-old pupils indicates that well-above average standards will be maintained in National Curriculum tests in 2000.
- 96 The quality of teaching is mainly good. Good teaching in science is based on teachers' strong knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is particularly marked in Year 6. A more effective feature of planning allows teachers to communicate high expectations of attainment and behaviour, which results in very good behaviour and raising levels in pupils' learning at both key stages. A particular strength of attainment lies in pupils' use of accurate scientific vocabulary. This is encouraged by teachers in Key Stage 1 and further developed in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 have no difficulty in talking confidently about *pollutants*, *biodegradable objects* and the effects of *carbon dioxide* on *the atmosphere*.
- 97 Teachers use interesting and varied strategies to develop good learning in forming hypotheses at Key Stage 1. The chance to brainstorm different types and sources of sound allowed pupils in Year 2 to build successfully on their earlier achievements and to produce a wide and adventurous range of ideas. By the time pupils are in Year 6, their ability to predict and hypothesise is a strength. When the teacher skilfully draws all strands of their earlier learning together, pupils find it easy to predict what they are going to investigate from the equipment set out on their desks. They use a broad body of scientific knowledge very effectively to predict what will happen to a heated solution of paint and water when the water evaporates.
- 98 By presenting pupils with scientific ideas from a number of different angles, teachers ensure that pupils' knowledge is wide and can be used as a good starting point in investigative and experimental work. This strength of teaching allows more pupils with

special educational needs to reach standards similar to average attaining pupils. As a result, in National Curriculum tests in 1999, far fewer pupils in Year 6, 14 per cent, reached the level below that expected for their age than in English and mathematics.

- 99 The comparatively low attainment of more able pupils in science, particularly at Key Stage 2, which was identified as an issue for improvement at the last inspection, has been addressed effectively. A successful initiative from the deputy headteacher produced a survey of the quality of teaching for more able pupils in Key Stage 2. By involving these pupils in the survey, teachers improved the standards they attain by modifying aspects of teaching to suit their particular needs. As a result, in National Curriculum tests in 1999, 28 per cent of pupils in Year 6 reached a level above that gained by most pupils. This percentage was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level in teachers' assessments in Year 2 was also similar to the national average.
- 100 A less effective aspect of teaching exists when teachers, who are satisfied that older pupils have enough sensible ideas to be tested and know how to carry out a fair test, deny them the opportunity to decide how to test their ideas or to choose their own equipment. By assessing pupils' learning on a regular basis in lessons, teachers have a reasonable view of where pupils are up to and what they need to learn next. A common system is not used throughout the school to record pupils' achievements or to track their progress. As a result, it is only possible to be certain that pupils are doing the best they are capable of from the end of Key Stage 1.
- 101 Although standards in science have risen since the last inspection and teaching and learning are good, teachers' planning leaves some room for improvement. One of the positive features of planning lies in teachers' clearly defined objectives for learning, which are shared with pupils. This strength allows pupils to get on with their work with a clear sense of direction and high levels of independence. Long and medium-term plans for science are based on a well-planned scheme of work provided by the local education authority. This ensures that pupils have the full range of knowledge essential for them to reach at least the expected level in National Curriculum tests and has been largely instrumental in raising standards.
- 102 A weakness in planning is the way that the subject is taught in large blocks of time rather than on a more regular basis. The school's current success in raising standards could be improved as this method of teaching depends on too much time being spent on reviewing aspects of pupils' previous learning before new learning takes place.

- 103 Although all pupils can explain the results of experiments and investigations, limited opportunities to present them in computerised tables, charts and graphs detract from the quality and range of pupils' learning. This stems from some teachers' lack of expertise in information technology and the school's limited resources. At the time of the inspection there was little to see of pupils' written work in science at Key Stage 2. Existing work in science is recorded on pieces of paper and stored in folders. This makes it difficult for pupils to locate previous work and to review and use it as a basis for new learning.
- 104 Procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom have not extended to science since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Consequently there are no current procedures in place to measure the impact of teaching on pupils' attainment. With improvements to standards in science resulting from careful analysis of the results of National Curriculum tests and assessments by teachers, there is room for standards to rise even higher if monitoring and evaluation of teaching takes place. A new co-ordinator, who is also new to the school, took up office just before the inspection. Plans for the co-ordinator to audit the effectiveness of teaching and resources place the school in a satisfactory position to maintain and improve standards.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 105 At both key stages standards are in line with expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds in communicating and handling information. Attainment is unsatisfactory in control technology at Key Stage 2. This is caused by a serious deterioration in the school's resources for information technology since the last inspection. A number of computers do not work while others are unreliable. The range of software is limited and the school does not have access to the Internet. Without access to up-to-date resources, some teachers are unable to use computers competently or to see the potential of computers in pupils' learning.
- 106 Some limited use is made of information technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils in Year 1, for example, use their knowledge of geography and mathematics successfully to program a robot to follow a specified route on a large plan of the school. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 6 use computers to draw electrical circuits and a CD ROM to find information about pollution to extend their work in science.
- 107 At Key Stage 1, pupils use both the keyboard and the mouse to control programmes. They know how to use icons and menus on familiar software to create pictures and text. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are confident in their understanding of the facilities of computers and know how to use the tool bar, the meaning of icons and how to load, save and print their work. They change the style and colour of their writing to edit their work on the screen, and import pictures into text when producing their own illustrated storybooks. Most pupils accurately enter data and use the computer to display the results of surveys as charts or graphs. Although pupils use simulation programmes such as adventure games to control events by changing variables, this aspect of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory due to the school's limited software. Some pupils lack confidence in using the mouse and keyboard. They are helped when teachers group them with others who are able to support their efforts.

- 108 Pupils show considerable enthusiasm for work in information technology. They are well behaved, listen carefully to instructions and show good levels of concentration when working independently.
- 109 The new co-ordinator, who has considerable expertise in the subject, has made a good start by identifying what needs to be done to raise standards. The school plans to use existing reserves in its budget to order new computers and more up-to-date software. A start has been made on adapting an area of the school into a computer suite. All of this puts the school in a satisfactory position to make the changes necessary to improve teaching and learning. The school maintains good links with the technology department of a local grammar school where pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to use software and other resources not available in school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 110 Standards in religious education have improved since the last inspection. At the end of both key stages, the attainment of most pupils exceeds the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and have a good knowledge of religious education. This has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and attainment. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know about the main beliefs, festivals and celebrations of Christianity in depth. When introducing work about different religions, teachers respect the views and beliefs of others. This positive feature of teaching gives pupils good role models and has a positive effect on their tolerance and respect for others. They have a good understanding of the beliefs, traditions and lifestyles of Islam and Hinduism. They appreciate the similarities and differences between the major world religions and know that some religions believe in one God while others believe in many.
- 111 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils gain good early knowledge of Christianity. They understand why Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter and are beginning to read meaning into the stories that Jesus told. For example, after listening to the story of the *Lost Sheep*, pupils in Year 2 concluded that *God will never forget any person*, and that *God will look for the person that has walked away from Him*. They are beginning to gain a good knowledge of Islam. They know that the mosque is a place of worship and that Muslims wash before praying, as a sign of respect for their God. Teachers make good use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils in Year 1 were enthralled by a Muslim prayer mat, which incorporated a compass to enable Muslims to face Mecca before beginning their prayers. Talks from people with different faiths extend pupils' understanding of the subject.
- 112 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan their work thoroughly and provide pupils with a wide range of stimulating activities. They give thoughtful and interesting introductions to lessons, often relating their own experiences, and involve everyone in discussions. This was seen in Year 6, where pupils studying the Five Pillars of Islam, shared their thoughts openly, listened attentively to others and were engaged fully in a discussion, which helped them to increase their understanding.
- 113 Teachers' high expectations of behaviour and discipline result in producing a creative working atmosphere, which allows pupils to make good progress. A strength of teaching in religious education is the good use made of discussions that take place in a circle where pupils consider social, moral and religious issues. Teachers show caring and respectful attitudes to pupils, which they then extend to one another.

Religious education makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It interests pupils in serious issues, develops their thinking and encourages them to express their views. Pupils demonstrate a growing spiritual awareness of the needs of others.

- 114 The management of religious education is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the curriculum and has made good progress in developing the subject since the last inspection. As a result, the curriculum now matches the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This strength of leadership ensures that the school is able to maintain standards in the subject and to continue to improve pupils' learning. No structured procedures exist to monitor the quality of teaching or to assess pupils' progress in religious education. Resources for learning are satisfactory and are put to good use. Attractive displays create a focus for discussion and reinforce learning.

ART

- 115 Attainment in art is typical of that reached by most pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result of teachers working conscientiously through the same programme for teaching art, there is little variation between the work observed at the time of the last inspection and pupils' present work throughout the school. The main strength of pupils' attainment results from the emphasis teachers place on the skills of drawing and painting. Although most of the teaching in art is good, its main strength lies in providing tasks in one or two dimensions. By working systematically to produce work in the style of artists such as Mondrian, Kandinsky, Lowry, Monet and Picasso at Key Stage 1, pupils in Key Stage 2 approach the work of Seurat, Klimt, Muslim artists and Munch with increasing awareness of the influences underlying different traditions. This knowledge and experience of the techniques, tools and materials of such a wide range of art from different times and cultures is the most successful aspect of attainment.
- 116 Throughout the school, teachers pay less attention to three-dimensional work in their planning. This limits pupils' skill and progress in printing, working with malleable and mouldable materials or in producing work in different scales. There is also less evidence of pupils experiencing a suitably wide range of first-hand opportunities to record their observations of natural and man-made objects.
- 117 A strategy teachers use to raise pupils' awareness of one another's achievements has a good impact on developing pupils' understanding of what contributes to the most effective work and on encouraging them to evaluate their own performances. Very well-behaved pupils in Year 5 moved slowly and sensibly around the classroom at the end of a lesson, looking at Muslim patterns and quietly discussing their opinions about the work. Another good feature of this lesson lay in the teacher's firm manner and smooth organisational strategies, which allowed pupils to get on with their work in an atmosphere of quiet concentrated effort.
- 118 Informative introductions to lessons, which often include details of the lives of different artists, make the objectives of the work clear to pupils. In this way, pupils are able to work with good levels of independence and to use all available time productively. Much of the work displayed by teachers in Key Stage 1 also contains helpful notices about different artists and their styles to extend pupils' knowledge of the subject. Pupils in Year 6, who worked in the style of Munch, followed their teacher's encouragement to experiment with pastel crayons rather than worrying about producing exact copies of *The Scream*. Very good relationships with their teacher

allowed them to question him closely about techniques as they worked. This resulted in interesting pictures, which reproduced the feeling, atmosphere and colour of the original painting rather than slavish copies.

- 119 Pupils show considerable interest in art and their behaviour in lessons is very good. Positive attitudes to learning ensure that pupils concentrate on activities that are sometimes lengthy and laborious.
- 120 Teachers in the reception class and Key Stage 1 work together closely to ensure that pupils make steady progress in all aspects of the subject. They make good use of the skills of a classroom assistant whose time is shared between different year groups in the key stage to build on pupils' achievements and to support the work of a newly qualified teacher. The school has plenty of resources to teach different aspects of art effectively. Information books and prints are in reasonable supply and add to pupils' knowledge of a variety of artists.
- 121 Attractive and carefully planned displays of pupils' work also provide a clear picture of how pupils from the three classes improve and develop their skills when mixing paint, producing portraits and collage and reproducing the work of different artists. Displays of pupils' art are not as consistently prolific in classrooms and on the corridor in Key Stage 2. This detracts from the atmosphere and appearance of this part of the building. Similarly, teachers in Key Stage 1 keep samples of pupils' work from different classes in the key stage. This helpful strategy allows them to compare the work of current pupils with examples of good work from previous years. Without a comparable system to record pupils' achievements in Key Stage 2, it is difficult for teachers to be certain of the progress made by older pupils.
- 122 As emphasis is currently placed on English, mathematics and information technology, there are insufficient teachers available to provide specific leadership for the subject. Similarly, since the school's development planning is not directed towards art, no opportunities are available to check the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The maintenance of present levels of attainment and the satisfactory progress pupils make in art are dependent on teachers following an established scheme of work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 123 By the time they are 11, pupils' attainment in design technology is below expectations for their age. Although pupils have few problems in assembling model cars with electrical components, they use ready-made plastic chassis and templates to construct the bodies. This restricts pupils' ability to generate their own ideas, or to experiment with materials and design nets.
- 124 Pupils' progress in design and technology is mostly unsatisfactory in most year groups. However, within a limited range, some aspects of pupils' work are satisfactory. For example, younger pupils plan and make working models from construction kits. They prepare food by combining different ingredients to produce a variety of textures in a sandwich. Older pupils work with a range of materials such as stiff and flexible card and wood for frameworks. They use mouldable material, such as papier mâché, to make masks with fastenings. In a lesson concerned with strengthening a two-dimensional framework, pupils in Year 3 made good progress and achieved satisfactory results. They experimented for themselves and finally came to understand the need for and how to stabilise their shape. However, in most classes, pupils' knowledge and understanding of how simple mechanisms can be

used to produce different types of movement is limited. Their knowledge of investigating, disassembling and evaluating simple products to learn how they function is unsatisfactory. Their design skills are limited. Although pupils use design briefs to make products, they do not give satisfactory indications of what is to be done and how.

- 125 Teachers' expertise in design and technology has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection for them to provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to gain essential skills. However, in Year 3 the teacher demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the subject, which enabled pupils to make good progress. Pupils remained interested throughout the practical task, knowing they needed to learn a strengthening technique to incorporate into a model house in a future lesson. The teacher encouraged teamwork and used good examples of pupils' work to demonstrate successful methods.
- 126 The school has made some progress since the previous inspection in the development of design technology. There is now a co-ordinator in place to lead the school forward and she has produced a useful scheme of work. Sufficient resources are now available for the subject. Teachers have undertaken some training to improve their skills; this is insufficient to raise attainment. There are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to check the quality of teaching and learning or to give teachers the help and advice needed to improve standards.

GEOGRAPHY

- 127 Attainment in geography has been maintained since the previous inspection and is in line with expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds.
- 128 Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of geography, which enables all pupils to make good progress with their learning. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have good understanding of how people can either improve or damage the environment. They know that individuals and the pressure of industry cause pollution. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject is so strong that the local council is interested in some of their imaginative proposals for the renovation and change of use of the Ilex Mill. The school expects some of their ideas to be implemented into the new development.
- 129 By the time pupils are seven, teachers ensure that they have good awareness that the world extends beyond their own environment. Good progress at Key Stage 2 is evident in the comparisons pupils make between features such as housing and schools in their own locality, with those in a village in India. The strong emphasis teachers place on accurate geographical vocabulary ensures that pupils talk confidently about *erosion*, *meander*, *equator* and *sphere*. Good opportunities for practical work in school improve pupils' understanding of geography. Pupils' knowledge of weather increases every year as they measure rainfall in different ways.
- 130 Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and make the objectives of learning clear to pupils. This strength of teaching allows pupils to know what will happen in lessons and what they are expected to learn. In a lesson in Key Stage 2 about rivers, the teacher ensured that all pupils were involved in preparations to get the most out of watching a video. Because of this careful preparation, pupils knew what to look for in the film and remained engrossed in it throughout. Probing questions from the teacher gained a good response and ensured good gains in pupils' learning. Teachers use effective

resources and provide informative introductions to lessons to gain pupils' interest in the subject. In a lesson about weather in Key Stage 1, for example, pupils enjoyed matching suitable clothing to different kinds of weather. The teacher's demonstration of hot and cold places on a globe interested them so much that they were keen to learn new words and ideas.

- 131 A less effective aspect of the subject lies in the limited attention teachers' pay to encouraging pupils to develop their skills in reading and writing when recording their work in geography. Pupils' work shows a lack of detail and reasoning. Opportunities to develop geographical skills are missed. Insufficient attention is given to working with maps, such as using large-scale maps in fieldwork.
- 132 There is commitment in leadership of the subject to teamwork amongst the staff to plan work in geography, which will raise pupils' attainments. Since the previous inspection the school has made little progress in checking standards or to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in geography. However, with the good quality of teaching in the subject and a reasonable scheme of work in place, the school has sufficient strength to maintain standards in geography.

HISTORY

- 133 Attainment in history is below national expectations. This means that standards have fallen since the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Britain since the 1930s and the development of the skills associated with the subject are unsatisfactory. Pupils know of Hitler's rise to power in Germany. They understand something of the impact of the Second World War on the lives of ordinary people, such as the children who became evacuees. However, their work lacks the detail, accuracy, reasoning and maturity of understanding expected of eleven-year-olds.
- 134 The same weaknesses in the teaching of history feature in both key stages. Sometimes teachers do not provide sufficient range or depth for pupils to improve their learning or give adequate attention to the skills of recording and interpreting historical evidence. They miss opportunities to use pupils' interest in history to improve their reading and writing. This is evident in Key Stage 1, when pupils find out about aspects of the past from a range of sources such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, writing and buildings. They understand that time lines help them to sequence events and objects. Their knowledge and understanding of history, however, lacks range and depth and their skills in recording their learning are not sufficiently developed.
- 135 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress in some aspects of the subject. This is not sufficient to bring them into line with expectations for their age. Some pupils, notably in Year 4, make good progress as the result of teaching based on secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. In their third lesson about Ancient Egypt, pupils demonstrated wide knowledge of the period and good understanding of the importance of archaeology in the interpretation and understanding of history. The task, to excavate broken pottery from sand, fit the pieces together and to interpret hieroglyphic pictures was challenging and of practical value. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the teacher's skilled handling of the lesson. Their knowledge and interest in the period are extended by the teacher's use of related texts in the literacy hour.

- 136 Since the previous inspection the school has not moved forward by checking standards of attainment in history to help evaluate the impact of the policy and scheme of work on pupils' learning. With planned modifications to the programme for pupils' learning, the school should be able to improve standards.

MUSIC

- 137 By the time they are seven and eleven, most pupils reach standards in music that are typical for their age.
- 138 Attainment in singing is a strength of pupils' learning and stems from teachers' good knowledge and expertise in the subject. Pupils in Year 1, for example, made good progress after listening to a recording of the sounds of different types of weather. They followed their teacher's clear singing, which interpreted and emphasised the high and low sounds of the wind. Most pupils sing a range of songs tunefully with clear diction. They have good control of phrasing, tempo and dynamics in a variety of styles, and recognise the variations in mood created by changes in tempo and dynamics. Pupils in Key Stage 2 sing rounds confidently in three parts and hold these securely. They compose the words and music for their own songs, clapping out the rhythm until they achieve the right effect and are satisfied that the music fits the words. In Year 4, pupils adjusted the rhythm of their song so that it synchronised with the movement of Egyptian slaves building the pyramids.
- 139 In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to sing an appropriate range of songs in tune and from memory. They are aware of loud and quiet music and are gaining an understanding of pitch. They clap rhythms accurately to accompany their singing. For example, pupils in Year 2 listened carefully to *London Bridge is Falling Down*, and clapped in time to the repeating phrases. Pupils in both key stages learn about a range of composers and music from different times and places. They show a good appreciation of music from different cultures, such as the Chinese music played in an assembly in Key Stage 1 to mark the celebration of the Chinese New Year.
- 140 Lessons are prepared with clear aims and show what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers give clear demonstrations using their voice or instruments and this helps pupils to understand the work they are about to do. Most teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils' learning and move them on briskly to ensure that they achieve what is intended. This was evident in Year 4, when pupils composed a song and then progressed to improving and refining it by adding two ostinatos, which began and ended at different times. Pupils catch their teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and are keen to take part in interesting activities. They work together co-operatively and readily applaud each other's work. Day-to-day assessments of pupils' work are done well and teachers skilfully suggest how to improve compositions without stifling pupils' creativity and imaginative use of sound. The contribution of a visiting music teacher has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- 141 The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and maintains standards in music. Although the co-ordinator, who is an experienced musician, gives helpful advice and practical support to other teachers, there are no opportunities for her to check the effectiveness of teaching in the classroom. The scheme of work for music is linked to a commercial scheme that does not provide for a growth of skills in all aspects of the work. There are no systems for recording pupils' attainment or progress. The recorder club for pupils in Key Stage 2 is run by the co-ordinator. All members are very enthusiastic and make good progress in playing a musical instrument. The

school choir and the recorder group make significant contributions to performances in school and in the local community. Taking part in an annual music festival enhances pupils' social and cultural development. Resources are adequate and are used well in lessons. Insufficient attention is given to the range of computer software available for use in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 142 At both key stages, pupils' attainments in physical education are typical for their age. Complete coverage of every aspect of the subject continues at the same level as at the time of the previous inspection and satisfactory levels of learning have been maintained.
- 143 The quality of teaching in physical education is mainly good. A strength of most pupils' physical development lies in the co-ordination, control and balance they gain through systematic practice and close attention to clear instructions from their teachers. In a lesson in Year 2 to develop pupils' skills in rolling balls, the teacher extended the activity gradually and effectively until pupils could roll and control balls accurately with their hands and feet. In another good lesson in Year 3, the teacher used her secure knowledge of the subject and confident control of pupils' behaviour to encourage pupils to balance skilfully on various parts of their bodies. By the end of the lesson, pupils expressed pleasure and satisfaction with their own performances and appreciation of one another's work. The lesson made a strong contribution to their social development.
- 144 Most pupils show good levels of independence in setting up the apparatus needed for gymnastics in the hall. They do this quickly and carefully while paying attention to the rules of safety. In a few lessons, pupils or teachers dress unsuitably for physical education. When teachers fail to change their clothing for lessons, opportunities are lost for them to act as role models for pupils. Pupils who carry out vigorous physical activities in clothes they wear in the classroom remain unaware of important aspects of personal hygiene.
- 145 Although most pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and their behaviour is very good, there are occasions when older pupils are so overwhelmed with enjoyment of the activities that they neglect to pay attention to familiar rules about safety. When this happened in gymnastics in Year 6, some pupils sacrificed the quality of aerobic activity to speed of movement. Several made crash landings on mats that are not designed for this purpose rather than the refined star jumps and squats of which they are capable. To remedy this situation the teacher used the exemplary work of pupils whose jumps were controlled and co-ordinated as models for others and extended this part of the lesson for extra practice. This incident provides a typical example of teachers' close observation of pupils' learning and how the information gained from continuous assessments during lessons provides the basis for pupils' good progress.
- 146 Good resources for physical education impact favourably on opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of physical activities. To increase aspects of the work in physical education not regularly accessible in school, pupils in Year 6 become involved in outdoor physical activities on an annual residential visit. Teachers provide sufficient experiences through seasonal sporting clubs for pupils who are interested and talented in sport to extend their skills in football, netball, cricket and short tennis. At the same time, the school maintains its good links with other schools in the locality by taking part in sporting competitions, matches and galas.

- 147 The subject lacks leadership from a co-ordinator at a time when physical education is not a focus of the school's development planning. Learning is, however, suitably underpinned and maintained by a good scheme of work provided by the local education authority at Key Stage 2 and teachers' good practice at Key Stage 1.