

INSPECTION REPORT

St JAMES' CE (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lower Darwen.

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119503

Headteacher: Mrs P Barnes

Reporting inspector: Mike Carter
20714

Dates of inspection: 3-6 December 2001

Inspection number: 218134

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St James' CE (A) Primary School Stopes Brow Lower Darwen Darwen Lancashire
Postcode:	BB3 0PQ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Graham Barlow
Date of previous inspection:	1 November1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20714	M Carter	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology History Equal opportunities English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19320	B Attaway	Lay inspector		Attitudes and behaviour How well does the school care of its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11419	J Underwood	Team inspector	Foundation stage English Music	Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
27545	A Scott	Team inspector	Science Art and design Geography Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves a mainly urban area between Darwen and Blackburn. A majority of the pupils come from a large estate of local authority dwellings that are due for substantial refurbishment. About a third come from newer owner occupied housing. There are 208 pupils in all, with slightly more boys than girls. Fifty pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is higher than the average proportion. The school accepts pupils into the reception class in the September term before they are five. A majority of the children attend one of the several pre-school settings before starting school. On entry, their attainment is currently about average but, in previous years, it has been below average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and even less with English as an additional language. There are five cared-for pupils. There are 67 pupils entered on the school's register of special educational needs and this is more than the average. Nine of these pupils have a statement and this is higher than average. The difficulties of these pupils include physical as well as learning, behavioural and speech problems. The school is part of an Education Action Zone and is involved in a national research project about social inclusion. The school is also part of a pilot project run by the NSPCC providing a weekly drop-in counselling service for pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a fast improving school. Since its last inspection a good number of changes have been made that are increasing its effectiveness substantially. Because of improved teaching, the pupils now learn more and, from some low levels, the test results have risen faster than the national trend and are now average at the end of Key Stage 2. The headteacher has led the improvement strategies well, although more could still be done to increase the amount of high attainment. The governors have supported the school in this period of change and although its costs per pupil are slightly above average for the type of school, it now gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- There has been good improvement in National Curriculum test results in both key stages.
- The good teaching, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are leading to good learning and progress.
- The headteacher's leadership has already made good improvements to the school's provision.
- Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is good and helps support the school's overall aims and mission statement.
- The school's provision for learning information and communication technology is good.

What could be improved

- Some aspects of the work of the school are insufficiently monitored.
- There is a lack of challenge for some higher attaining pupils.
- The curriculum lacks an emphasis on progression in skills and understanding and in the Foundation Stage it is not linked sufficiently to the Early Learning Goals.
- Subject co-ordination is inconsistent and not effective enough in the non-core subjects.

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

The school has improved since the last inspection and no longer has serious weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1999, when a number of serious weaknesses were found. The school's action plan has been very effective in overcoming these and there have been good improvements made in the test results. Parents now support the pupils' homework well as part of the new home-school agreement. There has been much training for staff to raise expectations of the pupils' capabilities. Development planning is improved and includes a wider range of peoples' views. However, the setting of long-term financial projections has been frustrated by admission uncertainties. Report writing and homework have improved. The schools' policy for behaviour is much more effective and there are no disruptions to learning. Although there are now systems in addition to statutory baselines to assess the attainment of pupils in the Foundation Stage, the non-statutory systems are not yet regular or linked sufficiently to the curriculum for this age. Lesson planning and assessment have improved, although more could usefully be done.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	D	C	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E*	E	C	B	
science	E	D	C	B	

The results above are based on pupils who have now left the school and show good improvement, particularly in 2001. This improvement is better than the national trend. When compared with similar schools, this performance is above average for English, mathematics, and science. The eleven-year-olds tested in 2001 made better than average progress through the juniors. Overall the pupils' learning is good and they achieve well. The targets set for the number of pupils to achieve the expected national level for their age in English and mathematics have been met. However, in these core subjects, there were fewer pupils with high attainment than the average. At the end of the infants, the results of the National Curriculum tests also show that standards have improved well and reached average in 2001 in mathematics, but were below average in reading and well below in writing. In comparison to schools having pupils from similar backgrounds, the 2001 results for seven-year-olds were better in mathematics, the same in reading and not as good in writing. The proportion of seven-year-olds with high attainment was below average in reading and above average in mathematics but in writing no pupils achieved above the expected standards. Although the attainment of pupils in past baseline assessments has often been below average, the latest assessments by the school, together with the evidence of the inspection, indicate attainment is varied and average overall at the end of the reception. The attainment of the current seven and eleven-year-olds is similar to the results of the 2001 tests, although there are some differences in the proportions of pupils with special educational needs. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra support and attention they receive. Among the current seven-year-olds, standards are average in science, design and technology, art and design, geography, history, music and physical education. Among the eleven-year-olds, standards in these subjects are also average, although it was not possible to judge standards in geography. Religious education was inspected separately.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most of the pupils like school and take a good part in all the activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There is very little bullying and behaviour has improved significantly. It is positively supported by the staff's good use of the school's code of conduct.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils do a number of duties willingly and gain maturity well. They learn to care for each other.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance figures are close to the national average.

The pupils are very helpful to each other and have a growing sense of community. For example, some help by pushing a pupil in a wheelchair, others regularly help at mealtimes by ensuring that all the pupils are happy and have what they need. In these ways, the pupils learn to become friendly, helpful, and mature, while caring for others. The success of this work reflects the school's ethos well and its principles and aims. The pupils' behaviour has improved and there is now very little disruption due to anti-social behaviour. None was seen in the inspection. There was a temporary exclusion last year. Attendance has improved because of a drop in the number of unauthorised absences to below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	satisfactory	satisfactory	good

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

Teaching is good overall and significantly improved since the last inspection. In Key Stage 2, the effective teaching is often because of the teachers' considerable enthusiasm combined with extensive subject knowledge. In the other key stages, these characteristics also occur but with slightly less frequency. The teaching of English is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1, where the skills of spelling and punctuation are not learnt with quite as much rigour. There is a similar situation for mathematics and for science. The teaching of the reception pupils is satisfactory for all the areas of learning. Classroom assistants and other adults make a significant contribution to the teaching, especially for the pupils with special educational needs, who are often taught well, as are the few pupils with English as an additional language. The previous teaching weaknesses of poor discipline and low expectations have been largely overcome. However, in a few lessons, higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. While the lessons typically use methods that are interesting, and successfully maintain the pupils' attention, a few teachers spend too long in whole-class discussion and instruction although this does not reduce the generally good management of the pupils' behaviour.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All the subjects are provided for appropriately in a lower than average amount of time overall for Key Stage 2. The long-term overview could provide more detail that is helpful for teachers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. With extra support and withdrawal these pupils learn well overall.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are very few such pupils. However, they are all able to access the curriculum fully and have satisfactory provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Spiritual and cultural provision is satisfactory but provision for the pupils' moral and social development is good. The pupils become confident and caring.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall with good emotional and social support for pupils who often have good relationships with their teachers.

The school has greatly improved its partnership with parents. The information the school provides for parents is now good and parents feel happy to talk with and question staff. Parents also are more aware of the children's educational opportunities and support homework better. However, few parents help in school-time or become involved in the school's daily life. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is often taught in lively ways but planning does not promote progression in the pupils' skills and understanding sufficiently. The planned curriculum for the pupils in the Foundation Stage is not securely linked to the nationally recommended early learning goals and there are few regular assessments made. There is some enhancement of the pupils' learning through educational trips, outings, and visitors. A few of these are provided through the Education Action Zone. There is a similar number of extra-curricular activities to that provided in many schools.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has established a very clear educational direction and managed many improvements effectively. The school has recovered from its previous serious weaknesses.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. In many ways the governing body is very effective and has worked hard to correct the school's weaknesses. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths, and offer support and challenge.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school analyses its test results well and takes accounts of staff views through self-evaluation procedures.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Grants are used fully for their purpose and the school has a good degree of financial accountability.

The school is satisfactorily staffed and there is a good number of teachers and support staff for the number of pupils. There is also a good programme of staff development to help raise effectiveness. The school's building is satisfactory and has had a number of improvements recently. There is, however, no readily accessible and secure, outdoor area for use by the reception children. The school's learning resources are satisfactory in the main. In some areas, such as computers, it is good, whereas in others, such as artefacts for history, there are too few. The headteacher has led the school well out of the serious weaknesses that were identified in the last inspection. It is in a good position to make further improvements. The school is also careful with its finances and applies the principles of best value carefully. Some governors have expertise that helps the school to provide careful financial procedures.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents are very happy with the school and its improvement. • They think the children are expected to do their best and largely do so. • The school is well led and parents have confidence in the headteacher. • Parents are happy with the partnership and their ability to talk with the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small minority think homework is not consistent. • A very small minority would like more information about their child's progress. • A very small minority think there should be more after-school activities.

Parents' views of the school are strong in the main. Inspection evidence agrees with the parents that the school is improving quickly and that the pupils generally learn well in lessons and are mostly challenged appropriately. The inspection also found that the school is well led, especially by the headteacher. Inspectors found that the partnership with parents is generally good, but they found some inconsistencies in the setting of homework. However, the information provided for parents about the children's progress is generally good and reports have improved as have the number of occasions when parents can talk with teachers. The provision of extra-curricular activities is similar to many schools and satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, attainment is satisfactory and has significantly improved since the last inspection. The serious weaknesses in standards in English, mathematics, and science have been overcome. Pupils make good progress in lessons and they learn well generally. By the end of the juniors the pupils' achievement is good and this is reflected in the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests, which, when compared with other schools where the pupils had similar results when they were seven, were better than average. This is reflected in the school's data, which shows that the average progress made through the junior years was significantly more than that expected nationally. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been changing and is now close to average, whereas in previous years it had been below average. This is reflected in the current standards of the pupils at the end of the Foundation Stage, most of whom now meet the appropriate early learning goals and standards are generally average on starting in the infants. The improvements in the school's performance have been due to improved teaching and management strategies rather than to the increases in the attainment of pupils entering the school, which are quite recent.
2. The school's performance as shown in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, was average in English, mathematics and science and in comparison to schools having pupils from similar backgrounds it was above average for these subjects. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were well below average. The trend in improvements over the last four years is better than the national picture and consistent in all three subjects. The 2001 results show, however, that while the number of pupils achieving the expected level is greater than the national average, the proportion achieving high standards was smaller than the average. In English, there was also a slightly higher than average proportion only achieving a low standard. The attainment of the current eleven-year-olds is slightly lower than 2001 because there are more pupils with special educational needs and fewer of high attainment. This is particularly so in writing where standards are least secure and below average. The standards of the current eleven-year-olds in reading are average. In mathematics and science, standards are currently average overall and good teaching is helping to reduce the amount of low attainment and increase the high attainment. However, standards are a little lower than those indicated by the 2001 test results.
3. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds were an improvement on those for 2000 except in writing, where standards remained well below average, and also below the average for schools having pupils from similar backgrounds. Although the number of pupils achieving the expected standard grew, there were none attaining a high level. In reading, standards were below average and average in comparison to schools having pupils from similar backgrounds. In mathematics, standards improved greatly in 2001 and were similar to the national average and above the average for schools having pupils from similar backgrounds. Overall since the last inspection, standards at the end of the infants have improved in all three subjects and are now average in mathematics and science, close to average in reading but have not yet reached average in writing.
4. Since the last inspection standards of seven-year-olds have improved in English, mathematics, history and science, and have been at least maintained in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Standards in geography could not be judged in the juniors. The provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly and now includes two mini-suites of computers as well as interactive white boards. The improved resources are generating considerable enthusiasm for the subject. Improved enthusiasm is also apparent in history, where the key elements of the subject are clearly evident in the teachers' planning. In the infants, there have been improvements in standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, although these are not as strong in writing, where there is little high attainment. In information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, and physical education standards are average and similar to those in the last inspection. The school has rightly emphasised improvements in provision for the core subjects.
5. A third of the pupils has been identified as having a special educational need, and these pupils generally learn well. They make good progress overall. This is because targets are clearly set in their individual education plans and teachers and support staff use these to help plan their learning. The few pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and they all have sufficient English to access the curriculum. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress and, in test results, there are some good improvements in the proportion of high attainment. However, some of this is a result of the extra boost given to these pupils in the spring term. More could be done generally to identify such pupils earlier and to plan learning from higher levels of the National Curriculum; not enough is done to provide for any gifted pupils that may be identified. The school also tracks the progress of boys and girls. The differences in their performance are variable often with boys having better attainment in Key Stage 1 but with less difference at the end of Key Stage 2, except in science where the girls do better.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The pupils' good attitudes are demonstrated by their eagerness to be at school, and consequently there is little lateness. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection and the current parents' views. The pupils take pleasure in showing and discussing their work. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, a pupil enjoyed discussing the varying effects of different coloured plastic placed across a beam of light and reflected onto a monitor; she wanted to continue even when resources were being put away. Most pupils maintain a good level of motivation even when the pace of the lesson is slow but this could be improved if all the lessons maintained a good rate of learning. There is good support for the extra-curricular activities offered and pupils were seen rehearsing with enjoyment for their Christmas event.
7. Behaviour is good throughout the school. It has improved since the last inspection when, although overall behaviour was good, there was a small amount of poor behaviour. Parents report pupils as having *a strong sense of morality*. The behaviour and discipline policy reflects the school's Christian faith and expects high standards of behaviour throughout the school. These high expectations are reflected also in the welcome visitors receive and the courtesy pupils show, for example, in readily opening doors for adults. Bullying is rare. The pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. There has been one exclusion during the last reporting year, which was for a fixed term. It was handled appropriately and the parents have supported the school's action.
8. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to school. They try hard for their teachers and work willingly with support staff on their individual areas for development. Occasionally, though, in whole class discussions, these pupils prefer to remain quiet because they lack confidence or do not fully understand what is going on.
9. In the L-shaped playground, older and younger pupils play in different areas. Older pupils are not allowed to retrieve balls from the younger pupils' area and have to wait for them to be returned. This was seen operating effectively and older pupils respected the arrangements. In the older pupils' section, balls of varying types and sizes were in use ranging from footballs to small softballs. This leads to play becoming appropriately active and a quiet area would be beneficial for some. This view was supported by some of the girls. The school studied playtimes and their impact on the pupils' learning during research undertaken with the Economic and Social Research Council. This research identified the need for a quiet area, especially before returning to class; this is to be considered by the recently elected school council. The school took part in a national conference in London linked to this research. The youngest pupils would benefit from a secured play area in which, for example, they could use large toys to develop gross motor skills; consideration is being given to this. The new school council elections have enabled pupils to begin understanding democracy and to know that they have the right to be heard. There is no team sport for girls during the winter months. In the past girls have joined boys in football clubs, but no longer do so.
10. Relationships throughout the school are good and the school develops them by ensuring that there are social opportunities to develop relationships between older and younger pupils. For example, older pupils help younger ones at lunchtimes and were seen doing so with enjoyment. During indoor lunchtime play friends joined an eight-year-old pupil attempting to complete a number domino puzzle. They played well together in sharing and discussing the various solutions. Another eight-year-old had designed a card for a friend's mother congratulating her on her new baby; he was proud to show his work.
11. Personal development is good and fostered from reception class onwards. All pupils are expected to tidy away resources and to have class responsibilities. Year 6 pupils take on monitors' roles such as making the tea and coffee for parents after Friday assembly or operating the CD player. The school's good practice in asking pupils to apply in writing for such positions, stating why they consider themselves suitable and why they want the job, helps to prepare them for the adult world. The help pupils receive, if they find it difficult to write an application, ensures that each pupil can apply. The practice of using ten-year-olds as monitors' when the eleven-year-olds are swimming and at the end of the summer term, ensures that they begin their final year at the school with greater confidence. The eleven-year-old pupils' experience in designing and running workshops on Shakespeare for other local pupils, together with the science workshop for all pupils in the school, has advanced their personal development.
12. Attendance and authorised absence are broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence has fallen in the last reporting year to below the national average. This is a very good reduction that reflects and supports the pupils' good attitudes to school and the improvements in partnerships with parents. There is good practice in promptly following up any unexplained absence and these procedures should be included in the otherwise well-written attendance policy.

HOW WELL ARE THE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. During the inspection, there was no teaching that was unsatisfactory. There were equal proportions of good and satisfactory teaching and there was a small amount of very good teaching. Teaching is best in the juniors, where it is mainly good. Teaching is satisfactory in the infants and the Foundation Stage, with some good features. The serious weakness reported in the last inspection, concerning the expectations of some staff of the pupils' learning, has been largely overcome and teachers usually make the work suitably harder for higher attainers, although this is less frequent in the non-core subjects. Very occasionally, the level of challenge offered to the higher attaining pupils is too great and they puzzle how to carry out their work. Frequently, the tasks make appropriate demands on pupils of all abilities but, in a minority of occasions, there is too little challenge. For example, in a mathematics lesson for infants, the teacher asked the pupils to roll dice to find a number to record as an *o'clock time* on printed clock faces, but many of these pupils could already read such times well.
14. A good degree of training has taken place; some within the school; some facilitated by the Education Action Zone; and some by teachers attending external courses. This has helped the teachers to gain a generally good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach. In addition, all of the teachers have visited lessons taught by leading teachers in other schools. The school has successfully adopted the teaching methods of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The teaching of basic skills such as phonics and the multiplication tables is generally good. Where teaching is less effective, such as in spelling and punctuation, further training for teachers is planned. Teaching for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with some good features such as the teaching of literacy and numeracy lessons. The teaching in the Foundation Stage could be improved with more attention given to the children working in largely unsupervised groups, and with more use made of assessments to aid the progress of the higher attaining pupils. A nursery nurse ably supports teaching in the Foundation Stage.
15. The teachers' planning for the pupils' learning is effective generally and follows the school's guidance. However, in a minority of cases the objectives for what the pupils will learn are either too general or apply to a whole week's lessons. For example, in mathematics, lessons are planned for a week at a time using a simplified version of the recommended National Numeracy framework and having a general learning objective for the week. This lacks the precision needed to promote specific teaching or different learning for pupils of different ability. However, the methods used by teachers to help motivate the pupils are good, especially in Key Stage 2. The teachers often ask good questions that help the pupils to reflect and to extend their language skills when answering. In the best lessons, the learning is presented in an interesting way encouraging the pupils to become involved fully. For example, in a lesson about air resistance, the teacher helped the pupils to carry out tests involving parachutes. The pupils learned not only about the force of air resistance but also about ensuring scientific rigour in experiments and the importance of using the correct vocabulary when recounting and recording their learning.
16. In a large majority of the lessons the rate of teaching is sound, but in a sizeable minority too much time is spent on whole class instruction and discussion, which often limits the time available for the pupils to carry out the set tasks. Although the pupils are usually well behaved, after sitting and listening for extended periods their attention wanes. However, the pupils are well managed by the staff and this helps them to be well motivated and consequently discipline is managed more easily. This in turn helps the pupils to intensify their interest, behave well and learn well. In the last inspection a small number of anti-social pupils disrupted the learning of others, but this is no longer the case and behaviour is generally managed well.
17. Classroom assistants and other adults make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning, sometimes by the direct teaching of small groups of pupils. However, there is variation in this work and much depends on the way in which it is managed by the class teacher. On a number of occasions, assistants were under-used during whole-class sessions, where, with suitable planning, assessments of pupils' responses to the teachers' questions could be recorded helpfully or individual pupils helped to contribute more to class discussions. The teachers are keen to use resources for learning giving the pupils appropriate practical experience. They generally do this well although in some subjects, such as history, there is a limited supply of artefacts. Nevertheless, other resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, are used well and help the pupils' learning. Homework is also helpful in enhancing the pupils' learning. Although there is still some inconsistency, homework is mostly regular and now is supported well by parents. Pupils having difficulties with homework are supported well by the pupil support mentor. This is often at lunchtimes.
18. The teaching of English has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. In the many well taught lessons teachers convey a good deal of enthusiasm which encourages the pupils well. Humour is used well particularly in two classes where the relationships are especially good. The marking of pupils' written work is not sufficiently rigorous to prevent the pupils making similar mistakes on ensuing occasions, but target setting is beginning to have an impact in reducing individual pupils' errors. The teaching of mathematics has become much more effective over the last two years and pupils of all abilities are usually given work that is appropriate. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. However, there is occasionally a small degree of under-expectation for

the higher attaining pupils, either because the teacher is not fully aware of what the pupils already know and can do, or because work is not planned from high enough levels of the National Curriculum programmes of study.

19. Teaching of science is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. However, in occasional lessons and in the pupils' past work, the difference between the tasks given to pupils of different ability is not great enough. Assessments do not help the teachers to know sufficiently what the pupils know and can do already. The teaching of information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education is satisfactory in the juniors. There are many good examples of pupils learning and having the choices to learn from their own mistakes. However, assessments are not used fully when the next lessons are planned. In information and communication technology, history, music and physical education the teaching is satisfactory in the juniors. In design and technology, teaching is satisfactory and often good, especially in the juniors because the teachers have a keen awareness of the key features of the curriculum.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. It is especially effective because when pupils work individually or in small groups with a support teacher or assistant, they learn well. In these situations, staff form good relationships with the pupils and develop an atmosphere of care and support. As a result, the pupils feel valued and are keener to work hard. Support staff teach basic skills carefully and methodically so that the pupils learn well at the right pace. The teaching these pupils receive when they are with their class is less effective but usually at least satisfactory. The teachers provide less demanding work, especially in English and mathematics. This is often not the case in other subjects. Teachers lower their expectations of their work but seldom provide work sufficiently adapted to their needs, such as simpler vocabulary in worksheets. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and because they offer appropriate support or make language intensive work appropriately easier the few pupils learn well.

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

21. The curriculum is satisfactory. It rightly places an emphasis on the key areas of literacy and numeracy but gives enough time to all the other subjects. However, the school prefers to alternate some subjects, such as history with geography, and art and design with design and technology. This does not restrict the overall time available but is less likely to promote the continuous learning of skills and understanding. There is ample curricular time each week available overall for the infants. Junior pupils, however, receive less than the nationally recommended hours. The teachers' plan in the medium and short-term for what the pupils will learn. This planning is based on schemes of work for the subjects and a long-term overview of topics to be taught in each half term. However, this overview lacks sufficient detail for teachers to interpret which aspects of the schemes of work should be taught and it provides little help in promoting progression in the pupils' skills and understanding.
22. The school's provision for literacy is satisfactory. Teachers are efficient at making sure that pupils acquire basic skills such as reading and writing so that they can cope successfully with all subjects. Teachers spend a good deal of time in class discussions and these sharpen pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Teachers endeavour to develop the pupils' writing skills in lessons, in withdrawn groups and through regular homework. The provision for numeracy is good and the teachers provide regular sessions to help pupils learn, for example, multiplication facts and how to calculate numbers mentally. In many cases there is good discussion of the possible alternative mental strategies for a calculation.
23. Teachers offer some opportunities to promote literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology through other subjects. They encourage pupils to word-process some of their poetry, for example, and have promoted the internet as a means of locating information in a geography topic. However, teachers do not systematically plan their lessons in other subjects so that pupils can develop their basic skills fruitfully. For example, in science investigations, pupils have to write down their findings in a prescribed format rather than produce their own versions. Similarly, teachers do not expect a lot of writing from pupils.
24. The school is keen to provide equal opportunities for all its pupils. The mission statement pronounces the importance of this ideal and all the staff generally endeavour to ensure that all the pupils have equal care and respect. This is reflected in the school's caring treatment of any pupils with disabilities or disadvantage. Extra provision is made in many cases. For example, there is extra help for pupils made through the learning support mentor or the NSPCC drop in centre. There is good care and attention given to individual needs, such as for the cared for pupils or those for whom English is an additional language. This enables them to access the curriculum and in most cases to make good progress. However, the overall progress of such groups and the time they spend being withdrawn from classes is not specifically monitored. However, the progress of girls and boys is monitored and the school provides appropriate role models through a mix of genders on the staff.
25. The pupils with special educational needs benefit from good provision. The teachers usually tailor their planning in English and mathematics to make sure that such pupils receive work, which is matched to their level of understanding. This does

not apply quite so much to whole-class activities when pupils with special educational needs can be reluctant to join in. Provision is particularly effective when pupils receive individual or group tuition from the special needs teacher or support staff. These staff focus on the pupils' language needs and are able to give pupils the close attention they need. However, the needs of pupils are not always specified exactly. Sometimes, the individual targets are clear, sharp and achievable. At other times, they are vague and no success criteria are given.

26. The school has a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. At various times of the school year, there is football, swimming, choir, chess and art activities. The school expands this with visits to places of interest. For example, Year 3 pupils visit the local library and older pupils visit Gawthorpe hall as part of their history studies. Some pupils have enjoyed a six-a-side football tournament at Blackburn Rovers. Visiting experts help to enrich the curriculum. There has been a demonstration of African dance and music, as well as workshops on poetry and Shakespeare. However, teachers do not always broaden pupils' horizons enough within lessons. In art and design, for example, teachers seldom introduce pupils to the work of major artists as a source of inspiration.
27. The school supports the pupils' personal development well. Teachers ensure that pupils learn well about health matters, such as hygiene and nutrition, through the science curriculum. Teachers deal with personal issues as they arise and the school nurse visits to provide sex education for the eleven-year-old pupils. The school has taken a long time to implement an effective programme of drugs awareness but plans to include this are now well advanced.
28. There are good links with the local community and a particularly strong bond with the adjacent church. Pupils visit the church regularly for school assemblies and the vicar often leads assemblies in the school. Pupils sing on occasions for senior citizens and at the nearby community centre. There are good connections with local branches of charities. Officials from the NSPCC visit from time to time and there have been special assemblies from the RSPCA. There are also strong links with other schools in the area. The reception teacher visits local nursery schools to meet pupils who are about to start at the school. There are sometimes joint church services with other schools and pupils benefit from the sports facilities at the nearby secondary school. Pupils from the secondary school are able to carry out their work experience at the school.
29. There has been an improvement in the provision for pupils' moral and social development since the last inspection and these are now good. Provision for spiritual and multi-cultural development remains satisfactory.
30. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and promoted through assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to think about how they treat others and how to be kind and caring. However, spirituality and the importance of worship are not sufficiently emphasised, especially when there is little emphasis on prayers or reflection. Occasionally, thoughts are read from sheets when they are too difficult for many of the pupils to follow. The monthly visit to the church gives the pupils a much greater sense of their existence and spirituality. In religious education lessons, the teachers provide the pupils with information about their own and other world religions. The pupils are well known to adults who are dedicated to promoting confidence in them as individuals and an awareness of the impact of their attitudes and behaviour on others. The school is developing a scheme for personal, social and health education, which will provide pupils with another way for discussing issues as they arise. Pupils are given opportunities in other areas of the curriculum to appreciate the world around them, the wonder of Christmas and the work of other pupils.
31. Moral education is promoted through stories in assembly, the school's code of conduct, devised with input from staff, parents, governors and pupils, and the ethos of the school. The behaviour policy also reflects the Christian ethos. When a pupil has a problem, it is talked through to help the pupil understand the effect of their actions. The teacher may hold a discussion lesson so that the class can discuss what has happened. A system of rewards that promote acceptable behaviour and all members of staff can give pupils points for good behaviour. For example, the midday supervisors can award points for the pupils at tables with the best table manners. A weekly celebration assembly is held when pupils' achievements both in and out of school are celebrated. In this way, a sense of concern for others is promoted. Certificates are awarded and displayed. A letter informs parents when their child has received a certificate. These strategies have a positive effect on the pupils' behaviour and on the growth of their consideration for others. The staff are good role models and take every opportunity to teach the principles of right and wrong.
32. Pupils are expected to look after their school and care for the environment. Each class has monitors with tasks to perform. These duties vary according to the age of the pupils. The oldest pupils have to write a letter of application for the jobs they would like to do. These range from setting out the hall for assembly to making tea and coffee for parents attending the Friday morning assembly and to supervising tables at lunch time and clearing up afterwards. Some eleven-year-old pupils help in the infant classrooms during wet play times. Recently a school council was set up but its first meeting is not planned until after the inspection. Literacy and numeracy lessons encourage pupils to become independent workers without having to rely on the continual support of adults. Pupils can be seen working together, helping each other and sharing resources. They are given many opportunities to perform in class assemblies, Christmas productions, in church and in the local community. Each year the school supports a recognised charity; this year it is the NSPCC. Should pupils wish to organise their own fund raising event such as a Blue Peter sale, they are encouraged to do so.

33. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Understanding of other cultures is provided through geography when the pupils study an Indian village and through religious education and assemblies when festivals from other cultures are considered, including Eid and Diwali. The pupils listen to a variety of music as they enter the hall for assembly but only a limited range of non-western music is heard. Recently an African drummer visited the school and presented a workshop for younger juniors. The school held a European awareness day looking at foods and customs from across Europe and the teachers are now planning to focus on non-European cooking from around the world. The pupils have visited the local church and the Jewish Museum in Manchester, which includes a synagogue. There is a range of resources available that reflect the diverse cultures found in Britain, but no displays.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school's Christian ethos plays a major role in the good level of personal support and guidance the pupils receive; this is in line with the findings of the last inspection. The pupils feel that they can approach any member of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and know that they will be listened to. Parents see the school as caring. The pupils are helped to understand the disadvantages that people suffer in other parts of the world; one parent said her child discusses current affairs from this aspect. The school has very good links with the education welfare officer.
35. The school is a pilot school for a weekly drop-in NSPCC service that enables the pupils to discuss, by appointment, a range of problems such as homework, problems at home, and changing to secondary school. Appointment figures show this service is well used and has been beneficial. The pupils are pleased to have this opportunity. They are known to report to the NSPCC to say thank you and to pass on good news. Analysis of problems shows that some have been encountered by more than one child. As a result, consideration is being given to setting up workshops. These would enable pupils to share and discuss similar issues and know that they are not alone in encountering a particular situation. Teachers, with parental permission, will also refer a pupil if they believe such a referral would be beneficial and in this situation, parents are given feedback. Some parents have also made use of the service.
36. As part of a national project, the school has run two successful pyramid clubs to raise pupils' self-esteem and a further two are planned. This ten-week programme targets the lower juniors that are identified by staff as possibly becoming disaffected. Evaluation is informal but as a result of this club, one pupil has gained sufficient confidence to speak in assembly and is now more independent. Another pupil with very poor attendance has also shown some improvement. This pyramid is one of the most successful in the country and is run by trained volunteers.
37. Cared-for pupils are very open about their arrangements. When some discrimination did occur, the headteacher ensured it was mentioned as part of an assembly. One of the cared-for pupil wanted to talk about her situation and was given the opportunity to do so as part of a personal, social and health education lesson, resulting in other pupils having a better understanding. The headteacher attends review meetings for these children as regularly as possible.
38. A phased induction for reception children enables them to start school confidently and to develop good relationships from the beginning. Towards the end of their first term, they were heard speaking in class with confidence.
39. Improved discipline procedures have had a positive impact on behaviour overall. Some pupils, who in the past could have become disruptive, are now well managed. Good use is made of rewards to promote their good behaviour and their behaviour is monitored. The school code is part of the home-school agreement and is displayed throughout the school. Opportunities are taken to reinforce this through discussions in the classroom and assemblies. For example, in a Church assembly, the Vicar used a *Blind Date* story that gave an effective message about the importance of not making quick judgements about others; the pupils were asked to think about other people's kindness to them. For example, at lunchtime, ten-year-old pupils discussed the importance of kindness to others with good clarity.
40. Positive behaviour is rewarded. The schemes of rewards are good and some are class based. The Friday award assembly celebrates the week's successes publicly, for example, for special efforts or good behaviour and parents are welcomed to join these assemblies. Pupils are also encouraged to share outside achievements by bringing in certificates or badges. In instances of exceptional achievement, a letter is posted to parents.
41. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory and is done manually. The school has access to, but does not use, a computer program that enables attendance records to be recorded. If training were undertaken in the use of this program, it would allow the school to identify all patterns of absence through closer monitoring. It would also enable lateness to be monitored; there is no rigorous system for this at present. A lateness book should be established and pupils and parents should be made aware of the need to sign in with reasons why a pupil is late. However, parents generally have a good understanding of absence procedures.

42. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and the co-ordinator's training is up to date. The school needs to ensure that the second member of staff who is responsible for child protection in the co-ordinator's absence, receives training as soon as is possible. Staff are reminded of the procedures and they are detailed in the staff handbook. First-aid training is satisfactory and three members of staff, including non-teaching staff, have been trained. Health and safety audits are carried out regularly.
43. Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. The school analyses the National Curriculum tests, including the optional tests carried out through Key Stage 2, and samples of pupils' work. From this data, strengths and weaknesses are identified within each year group; the school is making satisfactory use of the information to promote learning through more informed lesson planning. Writing, for example, has been identified as an area for improvement and is now a priority. Use of data in lesson planning for English is good; in mathematics and science, it is satisfactory.
44. The data has emphasised the need for different strategies to cater for the variations between different year groups. As a result, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in a year group are receiving additional support. The Literacy Consultant has given advice to enable the class teacher to plan groups more effectively. A Pupil Support Mentor, partly funded through Education Action Zone, provides good additional support to older pupils who are identified as requiring further assistance to reach the expected standards in their last year at the school. Liaison between the assessment and special educational needs co-ordinators needs to be strengthened to ensure the latter is always informed of all higher and lower attainers' needs.
45. The analysis of the ten-year-olds' optional tests is just being developed and is providing useful information on which targets can be based for the pupils when they are eleven. Consideration should be given to developing effective procedures using similar data in the lower juniors. The tracking of the progress of six pupils from each year group in writing highlights areas for improvement, but does not necessarily support all the pupils' needs and offers no support in other areas of the curriculum. On-going assessments for learning are not used enough to help teachers to plan what the pupils should learn next. For example, although there are some very good examples of the marking of the pupils' work, this is not consistent and seldom leads to closely matched work for groups of pupils of different attainment. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory but under-developed in the non-core subjects. An evaluation is undertaken jointly by the headteacher, deputy and respective co-ordinator. Outcomes lead to priorities in the school development plan, for example, information and communication technology is identified for the summer term.
46. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school monitors all pupils during their reception year to ascertain what needs they have. From the age of six on, class teachers monitor these pupils' targets. When the targets are clear, the evaluations are precise judgements and new targets are set accordingly. Sometimes, the reviews do not analyse progress enough and so are not helpful. The school records how well pupils do in standardised tests from year to year but does not systematically track their progress overall to see how well these pupils succeed as they move through the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Partnership with parents is good and much improved since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory and a key issue. The current parents consider the partnership to be very good and that there is now more cohesion between teachers and parents. Almost all the parents have signed the home-school agreement. The school has made good effort to improve the partnership with parents. There is now an open door policy giving positive encouragement to parents to talk about any problem, however small, at an early stage. Consultation evenings have been increased to two. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed. More detailed information is provided about what the children do in school and are expected to do at home. The quality of annual reports has improved.
48. Attendance at consultation evenings varies but is often over 75 per cent. Those parents who do not attend are contacted and offered the opportunity to make an appointment to suit them. This leaves a small core of parents who do not discuss their child's progress, especially in relation to the targets for reading, writing, and literacy that are shared and discussed at both consultation evenings. The school accepts they need to resolve the problem regarding those parents who are not fully aware of their child's progress.
49. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are sent home and parents asked for input. This improvement has given good support to their progress. The school keeps parents well informed of the provision made. The school works hard to involve parents with the reviews of progress of pupils who have statements of specific educational need.

50. The quality of information parents receive is good; parents consider it to be generous. Weekly newsletters keep parents well informed of school life and allow them to share the success of those pupils who have received Friday awards. The introduction of the homework book since the last inspection has had a major impact on parents' understanding of what their child is expected to do in school. It lets parents know when homework is expected and the school shares advance information with them about forthcoming topics. The homework policy requires updating to take account of these new initiatives.
51. The school prospectus is well produced and contains all the required information, as does the governors' annual report for parents. Annual reports are good and improved since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. Teachers' comments are specific to the individual child, for example, *presented an excellent speech about World War I/II*. Supporting statements are used effectively to give a wider picture. For example, *His listening skills have improved throughout the year; his work has also shown improvement as a result of listening more carefully to instructions*. Areas for improvement are given and this is good practice. Parents would benefit further if pupils' targets were included; they would have written evidence of their child's measured progress. The school should ensure that subject headings always match the current National Curriculum subject titles. On-going monitoring should ensure that reports across all years are maintained at least to this level.
52. Events for parents have been held to inform them about literacy and numeracy. Parents reported that the literacy evening was excellent and that the numeracy event was good. Timing for the first event followed discussions with parents. The school was disappointed that more parents did not take advantage of these sessions. The partnership with parents would benefit from further parental help in the school. In the past parents have assisted in school, for example, with food technology. It is recognised that many parents work and are not available during the school day.
53. The headteacher has good procedures in place to monitor parental complaints; this ensures emerging trends are identified at an early stage. The pupils' learning is supported well by The Friends of St James' (FOSTA) association. The community also helps to raise funds and FOSTA receives support from local companies. These additional funds have been used, for example, to purchase carpets and the fittings for the technology room.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are good. The school has improved its provision and its performance well since the last inspection and is very clearly focused on the key aspects of improvement. In last two years, the school has overcome its serious weaknesses and is well on course for further improvements in the effectiveness of the education it offers. The headteacher has provided a very clear educational direction and used a number of appropriate strategies to improve the key issues arising from the last inspection. Teachers have been fully involved with major decisions and consequently there is a good shared commitment to improvement and to the school's strongly held principles and aims. This is enabling changes through strategies such as self-evaluation, whereby teachers are asked to judge the school using a local education authority format. The outcomes help to provide priorities for the school development plan. Performance management is effective and helping to gain greater agreement about effective teaching.
55. A programme for monitoring planning, the pupils' work and lesson observations is also helping to raise standards and the school is able to identify weaknesses and divert resources to help meet its targets and objectives. However, the monitoring programme omits some aspects of the school's provision relating to previous decisions made. For example, additional funding has led to increases in the number of assistants, but the use of their time and the impact made is not monitored regularly. The school has no reliable method of assessing standards in the non-core subjects yet. Pupils are withdrawn from lessons for a number of reasons and the learning missed is not monitored. While homework is generally set well, its regularity and impact are not monitored. The quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs is not monitored, nor is these pupils' overall progress across the curriculum. This is also so for other groups of pupils such as the cared-for children and any with English as an additional language, although the school's procedures do enable monitoring on an individual basis. Since the last inspection, teaching has been monitored and lesson observations made by the headteacher and various external experts, including School Improvement Officers, consultants, and Her Majesty's Inspectors. The core subject co-ordinators have had good support from consultants in observing lessons. The headteacher has also developed her own role in this respect and is now gives on-going and supportive feedback to teachers.
56. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is keen and efficient, and understands the needs of pupils with special educational needs. She communicates well with other staff to give good support for learning. However, the co-ordinator is not yet involved enough in making overall decisions and shaping the direction of special needs. In addition, she does not have the scope to develop further the quality of the teaching.

57. Development planning uses a good number of ways to involve teachers and governors and is clearly laid out with appropriate priorities. It does not have the same degree of detail of the very good, re-written post inspection action plan, but the priorities are clearly listed including times and costs, which are planned into the school's annual budget setting, by the governors. To include a diary of when the success criteria will be met, would be a helpful development. The co-ordinators of the subjects make reviews of the development needs for their subjects and these help to provide priorities for the school development plan. However, the non-core subject co-ordinators have few means of knowing about the standards in the subject across the school. Teachers' planning is sometimes monitored, but the pupils' work is seldom looked at, or lessons observed. Subject co-ordinators should find out more about the standards in their subject throughout the school, in order that they can identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, the teaching or other aspects of provision. This is particularly important when subjects are taught in alternate half terms.
58. The school has a good number of teachers for the number of pupils and this has the potential to allow teachers a small amount of time for their co-ordination duties. However, the number of pupils in one infant class is such that extra teaching time is devoted to reducing this. The governors need a clear set of alternative projections of numbers on roll in order to plan staffing for future years. The school is financially prudent despite using slightly more funds than its income this year. Governors are keen that the school is cost effective and that funds are used fully to meet the pupils needs and external requirements. The principles of best value are adhered to soundly and there is a good deal of financial propriety, in which there are appropriate checks and accountability for spending and virement. The school uses computers for financial accounting and there are appropriate safety checks in use for this. A growing amount of assessment data is organised by computer and together with the use of interactive white boards, the school uses new technology well.
59. The governors have a good understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses and while supporting the headteacher and staff, are also aware of their role in holding them to account for the school's performance. Several governors are involved heavily in the school and are regular visitors and the governing body also profits from the financial or other expertise of some of the other governors. An all-pervading aim has been to help the school recover from its serious weaknesses. Long-term planning is harder, due to a lack of certainty about future numbers and here the governors could be more pro-active in obtaining projections of the different possible situations as well as making clear the direction they want the school to take.
60. The use of teaching and non-teaching staff is satisfactory and they are suitably qualified. Some class sizes are larger than normal and in Year 5 there are 35 pupils, although taking special educational needs pupils out of class does reduce this high number on occasions. Classroom assistants' time is not always used effectively; for example, during plenary sessions they could record levels achieved by the pupils they have supported. The nine classroom assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs, resulting in good progress. Teachers have benefited from a wide range of training. In particular, they worked alongside special support teachers in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, funded through the Education Action Zone. They have also profited from the opportunity to see leading mathematics teachers delivering lessons in other schools. The school does not have students in training for teaching, but does support work placements for secondary school pupils. Induction for newly qualified teachers is satisfactory and meets requirements, providing a considered experience and support when needed. A good staff handbook contains information that is useful to any new or supply teacher.
61. The school building is generally of sufficient size and appropriate for its pupils. It is well maintained and there is good understanding of what needs to be done to the building. For example, some provision has already been made for disabled access but there is good awareness of further work that needs to be undertaken to comply with new laws coming into force in 2004 regarding disabled access. The building is 25 years old and the original floor in one of the boys' toilets requires replacing due to seepage before it becomes a health and safety issue. The flat roof has a soft spot that requires repairing.
62. A new reception classroom has been completed recently, although there is no readily accessed, secure outdoor area for these pupils. The curtains separating areas of the open plan have been replaced with walls and doors. This provides a quieter and warmer environment for pupils as well as increased storage space. The curtains have been put to good use in the hall. Two computer suites have been created which enables all the pupils to have full access to the programmes of study for information and communication technology. A new library area has also been completed, the resources room has been refurbished and a new store for physical education equipment built. The installation of an internal intercom system has enabled administrative staff time to be used more effectively.
63. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory. There is good provision of hardware and of software for information and communication technology and there are computers in the two mini- suites as well as most classrooms. Interactive whiteboards provide an effective additional resource for the teaching of the subject and for other subjects. Resources for history and geography are limited in their scope and provide too few artefacts and materials to support the pupils learning. In mathematics and in design and technology there is a good range of appropriate materials and equipment and these are generally accessible in classrooms or the resources store. In all the other subjects, resources are satisfactory and appropriately accessible, being well stored. The quality of resources is satisfactory except in science and information and

communication technology where it is good. A variety of wildlife occupy the playing fields, squirrels, rabbits, birds, including magpies, pipits and green finches, are sometimes used to enhance the pupils' learning, particularly of habitats.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

* Issues that the school has already identified are starred.

In order to continue to make improvements, and to consolidate and build upon recent increases in standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ❑ increase the monitoring procedures to include:
 - the effectiveness of classroom assistants (paragraphs:17, 55, 60, 90, 101, 107 and 128);
 - the teachers' use of time in lessons* (paragraphs: 16,101, 123, 134 and 139);
 - the frequency and content of lessons missed when pupils are withdrawn (paragraphs: 24 and 55);
 - the tracking of the overall progress of groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs (paragraphs: 5, 24, 46 and 55);
 - the overall standards in the non-core subjects* (paragraphs: 115, 120, 124, 129 and 139);

- ❑ increase the challenge offered to higher attaining pupils by:
 - rigorously monitoring the teachers' planning* (paragraphs: 5,15, 100 and 104);
 - teaching the higher levels of the National Curriculum programmes of study, especially in Key Stage 1 (paragraphs 3, 5, 18, 90, 100, 102, 103 and 121);
 - making greater use of daily assessments to help teachers know what the pupils can already do and thus promote accurately matched learning* (paragraphs: 3, 15, 18, 20, 45, 65, 91, 93, 97, 98 and 108);

- ❑ improve the planned curriculum by:
 - providing an overall curriculum plan that gives sufficient guidance about when the main elements of the scheme of work will be taught and how progress in skills and understanding will be made (paragraphs: 21, 57, 112, 115, 124 and 135);
 - linking the curriculum for the Foundation Stage firmly to the early learning goals and to an appropriate assessment system* (paragraphs: 14, 65, 76 and 124);

- ❑ improve curriculum co-ordination in the non-core subjects by:
 - clarifying expectations of subject co-ordinators in terms of their responsibilities with respect to standards in the subject (paragraphs: 57, 107, 108, 115, 119, 120, 121 and 139);
 - providing appropriately rigorous and yet manageable assessment systems for these subjects* (paragraphs: 17, 18, 44, 45, 55, 115, 116 and 129).

The governors should also consider the following issues for inclusion in the Action Plan:

- ❑ the lack of a readily accessed and secure, outdoor play area for reception pupils* (paragraph 62).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	22	22	0	0	0
Percentage	0	4	48	48	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	208
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	50

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	67

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	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	10	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	15
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	23	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (77)	82 (74)	86 (71)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	14
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	23	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (71)	86 (71)	82 (87)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	9	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	13
	Girls	8	8	9
	Total	17	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (69)	82 (52)	100 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	N/a	N/a	N/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (66)	82 (52)	82 (55)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Key Stage 2 figures for teacher assessments were not available from OFSTED's statistics.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	214

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	473483
Total expenditure	479018
Expenditure per pupil	2348
Balance brought forward from previous year	36816
Balance carried forward to next year	31281

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	208
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	51	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	42	9	5	1
The teaching is good.	63	36	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	42	9	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	30	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	29	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	49	47	2	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	66	33	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	36	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	37	8	1	2

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are very supportive of the school and like what it offers. They believe it has improved significantly.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

64. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with good teaching in numeracy, literacy, and physical education lessons. The good teaching in these areas has a positive effect on children's learning so that the majority of children make good progress towards the early learning goals, with many achieving the goals by the time they leave the reception class. Initial assessments conducted shortly after admission to the reception class, show that the majority of children are average in most areas. Analysis of these baseline assessments shows an improvement since 1997, when the majority of children were below average. The school uses a standardised baseline assessment for these children.
65. Children progress well in numeracy and literacy because the planning is based on the national strategies. However, the planning for other areas is not matched sufficiently closely to the early learning goals and relies too heavily on the Key Stage 1 curriculum. The school has identified this weakness and has arranged for external advice to rectify this matter. Despite the weak planning, the class teacher has a thorough grasp of the developmental and educational needs of young children and this makes a significant contribution to the quality of their learning. A nursery nurse ably supports the class teacher and usually works with a specific focus group. The children are regularly assessed whilst working in the focus groups but assessments of the pupils' skills whilst participating in other activities are not monitored effectively. This is another area for improvement.
66. The children are admitted to the reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. The intake is staggered to allow children time to settle. The older children begin on a half-time basis for the first week, moving to full-time the next week, while the younger children begin part-time before spending all day at school. The majority of children have had some pre-school experience in playgroups or nurseries.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Teaching is satisfactory and the majority of children will achieve the expected standard by the time they leave the reception class. Children enjoy school, are enthusiastic about learning and well behaved. They are developing independence and confidence. This reflects the teaching and encouragement to achieve that is consistently reinforced by the staff. Children are beginning to display an understanding of and empathy for the needs of others, particularly in play and group activities. This was evident in some role-play observed in the "Greengrocer's shop" where children were buying fruit and vegetables and giving change to the "customers". Adults provide good role models. They treat the children and each other with courtesy and respect and the children know they are valued. Children are beginning to develop self-reliance in taking responsibility for their own actions for example, dressing and undressing for physical education and tidying up. Children are encouraged to share, take turns, help each other and wait patiently. Examples of this were seen when children took turns in the water tray and sand tray and helped each other solve jigsaw puzzles. The teacher makes sure there is a range of activities available that help children develop a positive attitude towards learning and to each other.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Children broaden and consolidate their use of language so that by the end of the reception year many have achieved the expected standards. There is a small minority who find communication difficult but the majority are developing into confident and articulate speakers. A curriculum that is clearly related to the stages of development leading to the early learning goals would help staff to intervene to promote higher levels of vocabulary and extend higher-attaining children.
69. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in planned literacy lessons. The teacher carefully plans well-organised lessons and tasks pitched at an appropriate level. Communication skills are encouraged throughout, and speaking and listening skills progress well. This is evident in many of the classroom activities. The teacher provides time for the children to share experiences and work during discussions on the carpet after each session. Children listen and respond to the teacher's questions and to the contribution of others, although occasionally they forget and speak out of turn. During the inspection, the children enjoyed the storybooks, "The Lion and the Mouse" and "Hairy Mclary's Rumpus at the Vet's". They know the meaning of words such as author, illustrator, and title. Children are beginning to develop a phonic awareness and can recognise some initial sounds. All the children have made an enthusiastic start with reading and all enjoy sharing books with adults and listening to stories. All, but the lower attainers, can read a few words and recite a favourite nursery rhyme. They can use the pictures to help them retell the story and answer questions about the book. All the children handle the books with confidence and pleasure. Many children read regularly at home and a helpful reading record is completed by both parents and staff. The children are beginning to give the teacher simple sentences for her to write so they can copy underneath. A few higher attainers are trying to write for themselves and often manage to put down the first letter or two of the word they want. The lower attainers are struggling to write letters that are recognisable

although they are trying to copy the teacher's writing. Many children can write their own name and there is scope for some further development using improved curriculum guidance.

Mathematical development

70. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and good in the group sessions, which follow the National Numeracy Strategy. There is a range of activities to support the children's learning. However, a lack of structure to the activities and recording of children's successes impedes the overall progress. Already many children have achieved part of the early learning goals for mathematics as they can confidently count to 30 and recognise the numbers to 5 shown in random order. Most children are aware of "bigger than" "less than" and "one more". A few children can sequence triangles in alternate colours. Most understand securely the one-to-one correspondence in numbers. The children can also recognise some two-dimensional shapes such as circle, triangle, square and rectangle. They can distinguish between sets of different objects and mark them out. The teacher uses every opportunity to reinforce number with counting songs and rhymes. These activities the children enjoy and all participate with enthusiasm.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Teaching is satisfactory and by the time the children leave the reception, most will have attained the expected level. Children show curiosity in their surroundings and explore, investigate and ask questions. They are given the opportunity to walk round the school, following simple directions and to look for signs of autumn. They have made bread as part of the topic on harvest. Photographs show the children's pleasure at the outcome of their bread making. They know the days of the week and are aware of the different seasons. A display of the children as babies makes them aware that they are all special and have changed over time. They will learn about the Christmas story and its importance to Christians. The topics used are helpful and wide-ranging but do not always reflect the levels and width recommended in the early learning goals.
72. However, within the classroom, the children experience wet and dry sand and enjoy building sand-castles. Water from the water play tray goes everywhere as the children experiment with filling different sized containers. However, they generally tidy up well. They have the opportunity to use the computer and are withdrawn for individual support. Learning out-of-doors is restricted for this area.

Physical development

73. The quality of teaching for this area of development is satisfactory overall and in lessons for physical education, it is good. Already the children are in line with expectations for this aspect of the early learning goals. In one such lesson, the children demonstrated how skilfully they could balance although not all could sustain a balance on one leg. The children could climb and swing on a rope from one bench to another and walk along the beam with support. All the children have good body co-ordination. The children are able to experience large wheeled toys but lack of a secure area and appropriate outdoor storage makes it hard to provide for this activity on a regular basis.
74. However, although many children demonstrate good control in physical education lessons, their fine motor skills such as pencil control and using scissors are not so secure and more practice is needed. There are good opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills. For example, part of a focus group session involved the children in having to carefully colour a lion's mane in two colours, used alternately, and then cut it out. Not all the children were able to colour in the correct sequence or to use scissors effectively and cut along the lines. One child struggled to make the scissors work properly. Most children hold pencils correctly and can write recognisable letters. Paintbrushes are used appropriately and with care. Wall displays indicate the sound number of opportunities children have for cutting out, colouring and writing but the lack of a curriculum clearly related to early learning goals means that opportunities are not maximised through sensitive intervention in activities.

Creative development

75. Teaching is satisfactory and many children are on course to achieve the expected standards. The provision and range of activities are good as children experiment with mixing colours, using a variety of techniques such as collage, printing with leaves and other objects, model making and finger painting. The role-play area is appropriately resourced, presently being a greengrocer's shop with fruit and vegetables for sale. Children enjoy singing games and rhymes and interpreting music and all enthusiastically join in whenever the teacher suggests a song or two.
76. Although planning is satisfactory, it is not sufficiently linked to the early learning goals. The teacher is aware of this and is presently receiving support to improve this aspect. The teacher and the nursery nurse work closely as a team and relationships between pupils and adults are good. Expectations of children's behaviour are high and the children respond well to these expectations. For example, they tidy up the room with little prompting from their teacher. The attractive wall displays, much of which is the children's work, provide a bright and interesting environment where learning is encouraged.

ENGLISH

77. Throughout the school standards of speaking and listening are average. In reading and writing standards are below average for seven-year-olds. The eleven-year-olds' standards are average in reading and below average in writing. The school has highlighted the need to focus on writing and spelling to raise the number of pupils achieving the higher levels and is beginning to address this matter. The marking of pupils' work is not sufficiently precise to tell them exactly what they need to do to improve their work. Consequently, they are not making sufficient progress to achieve high standards. However, since the previous inspection, the pupils make better progress and standards have risen.
78. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, the pupils achieved close to the national average for the subject overall, with 77 per cent achieving the expected level or above, but below the national average for those achieving high standards (18 per cent). This performance, when compared to similar schools, is above average. In comparison to schools whose seven-year-old pupils had similar results in 1997, these pupils made better than average progress.
79. The trend for improvement in English is rising faster than that nationally and shows good progress in improving standards. Further analysis of the 2001 test data shows that standards were just below the national average, whereas taken over the period from 1997 to 2001, standards were well below average. The evidence from this inspection suggests that the test results for 2002 will be slightly lower than in 2001 because there are more pupils identified as having special educational needs and fewer pupils of high attainment.
80. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, results in reading overall were just below the national average but well below for the proportion of pupils attaining highly. The results for writing showed that, while an average proportion of pupils reached the expected standards, many only just did so and there were none with high standards. When compared to schools having pupils from similar backgrounds this performance in reading was average whereas for writing it was below average.
81. Standards for the seven-year-olds have risen steadily since the previous inspection. Despite this, the results are still lower than average, but the pupils are making good progress. On starting school in the reception class, many of the past entrants' attainment was below average. Taken over the last three years 1999-2001 test results in both reading and writing were well below the national average. Evidence from the inspection shows that the standards of the current pupils in reading and writing remain below the national average, because very few have high attainment.
82. When pupils enter the school their speaking and listening skills are close to average. By the age of six, their reading skills are beginning to develop, as are their writing skills. The pupils have a good range of experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills. By seven, many pupils are becoming articulate, confident speakers. When given the opportunity they readily respond to questions and volunteer information. For example, they enjoy discussing the book *Detective Tilak* trying to predict what might happen in the story. The six-year-old pupils enjoyed the sound of onomatopoeic words such as *swishy swoshy* and *splish, splash*. They listened carefully to their teachers and peers, who value their contributions.
83. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils are confident and articulate, expressing their views, often in detail and frequently showing a good understanding of the subject. For example, some pupils were discussing the beginning of the Macbeth story when the *Three Hags* met and used such words to describe the scene as *tremendous storm, vicious, rain like a river pouring down on you, lashing down*. Another example of the good use of vocabulary was observed in a ten-year-olds' lesson, when pupils were asked to describe grass as *glimmering; gleaming; spikey* and a dog was described as *hairly and boisterous*.
84. By the age of seven, standards in reading are below average. Books are handled with care and a variety of texts are read. Many pupils read fluently with reasonable understanding. The pupils are developing ways of reading unfamiliar words either by sounding them out or by using the pictures as clues. They can talk briefly about their favourite book or story but do not recall the name of the author. The lower-attainers are not such confident readers and find some common words difficult to read. They also have limited skills to sound them out. They are not confident when retelling a story or answering questions. The higher attaining pupils can use a reference book to find information but have few opportunities to develop this skill.
85. The standard of reading of the eleven-year-olds is average. Most pupils are independent readers, enjoying a range of stories, poetry and reference books. Most are fluent readers although they do not always read aloud with expression, for example, they do not use punctuation to assist in conveying the meaning. All pupils talk knowledgeably about the books they have read and enjoyed. They express their opinions as to why they have enjoyed a particularly book or author. Pupils are beginning to predict what might happen in the story and to evaluate their books in the form of book reviews. The pupils are competent to use reference books for information. The school is fostering links with the local library to encourage

pupils to join. There is a regular book fair in the spring term. Parents are encouraged to listen to their children read and the home school reading record book provides a valuable vehicle for comments and suggestions of help from teachers for the parents to follow.

86. The standard of writing of the eleven-year-old pupils is below average. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that no pupil has above average attainment. There is also limited evidence of extended writing as the majority of work is of very short pieces. Written work often lacks appropriate punctuation as full stops and capital letters are forgotten. This is noticeable in all work, even that of the higher attaining pupils. Spelling is variable and often inaccurate even in the work of the higher attainers. A few pupils struggle to spell the most commonly used words. The majority write in simple sentences with very few writing more complex ones. The use of imaginative descriptive writing is limited. Pupils are given opportunities to write for different purposes such as diary entries and giving instructions about how to make a sandwich or washing hands. There are few opportunities for extended writing except for a termly piece of writing that is assessed and compared with others. All the pupils are taught cursive script but few use this style on a regular basis. The presentation of some work is neat but this is not consistent.
87. Various writing tasks are set, including book reviews, imaginative stories, biographies, play scripts, and poems. There are some examples of the good use of descriptive language, such as in poems written by eight and nine-year-olds using Kit Wright's *The Magic box* as a stimulus. For example, *ancient teddy with a twinkle in its eye; coldest wind blowing cruelly; golden star in the indigo sky; the hindmost tears trickling down my face*. However, much of the pupils' work does not indicate such an effective use of adjectives and vocabulary. The pupils do not use punctuation effectively and in independent writing, some forget even the basic elements. Although spelling improves there are still too many examples of pupils making common errors.
88. The pupils across the school enjoy literacy sessions and are keen to participate. They listen to text with interest and some excitement and respond with enthusiasm to questions and discussion. A good example was observed in Year 6 when the class were discussing the first scene of *Macbeth* and considering interesting ways of setting the scene. The pupils were totally involved in this lesson. Similarly, in a Year 5 lesson when pupils were thinking about the feelings of and describing characters found in the Christmas story. Pupils are well behaved and work well, concentrating on the task, particularly where teachers' enthusiasm has inspired and stimulated them. In these lessons pupils listen attentively and respect the views and opinions of their peers. In lessons where the pupils are less well motivated, behaviour is often satisfactory rather than good. The majority of pupils express pleasure and enjoyment in reading and many read regularly. Many are confident in discussing their favourite books and authors.
89. Taken overall the pupils' learning in both key stages is good and they make good progress in all aspects of literacy. For example, the present Year 6 pupils achieved low results in the Key Stage 1 tests but optional tests taken in Years 3, 4, and 5 show steady improvement from well below average to just below average.
90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors with 66 per cent good overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when 23 per cent of the lessons observed were good. Where teaching is good, the lessons are well structured with a variety of activities that motivate and hold the pupils' interest. Effective questioning helps extend the pupils' understanding and knowledge. All teachers have good relationships with their classes and this gives pupils the confidence to answer questions even if they are unsure of the answer. In the good lessons the curriculum is delivered with enthusiasm and pace that encourages the pupils to succeed and has a positive effect on their learning. In the satisfactory lessons although pupils work well the pace is slower and too much time is spent on class discussions. For many pupils the work is well matched to their needs, particularly the lower attainers, but there is often insufficient challenge for the higher attainers. Teachers liaise closely with support staff and in most lessons they are used effectively to enhance pupils' learning. However, in a few lessons particularly during the whole-class sessions these adults are under-used. They could be offering additional support or assessing pupils as they respond to teachers' questions.
91. Teachers regularly check the pupils' work but marking is not sufficiently rigorous or precise to provide pupils with clear guidance about what they need to do to improve. Consequently, they make the same mistakes again. Staff have recently begun to set specific targets for pupils and this strategy is helpful and needs further development. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the implementation of the literacy hour have been successful, with teachers having clear ideas of the most effective ways of teaching the various elements. The pupils with special educational needs are well provided for because the teachers are usually keen that these pupils have work that is appropriate and often well chosen to help them meet the targets in their individual education plans. They are also often supported in their work, both in lessons and outside them, by well informed assistant staff.
92. The teachers give the pupils a range of opportunities to write in other subjects of the curriculum but as yet this is an under-developed area that could provide the pupils' with topics for extended writing, a weakness highlighted in the work scrutiny particularly at Key Stage 1. There are examples of writing in religious education but in history and geography, evidence of this is limited. The school has highlighted the need to improve spelling and writing but also needs a sharper focus on the

development of interesting vocabulary. This is lacking in pupils' writing although orally, pupils are encouraged to use good descriptive language.

93. The subject is well managed by the two co-ordinators, one for each key stage. They regularly monitor planning. All staff have been observed teaching literacy. The optional tests taken at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 are being analysed as well as the statutory tests to highlight weaknesses. This use of detailed assessment information needs further development to allow teachers to track the progress of individual pupils and specific groups, rather than the six who are tracked at present. This would give teachers an overall view of the progress each pupil is making and help them set specific individual targets to inform planning.
94. A variety of activities and visitors enhance the curriculum. These include live theatre groups, a local author who runs workshops for Years 2, 4 and 6, a workshop for Year 6 pupils that introduces them to Shakespeare and a drama club. Pupils are given opportunities to perform in class assemblies and Christmas productions.

MATHEMATICS

95. Standards have improved greatly and for eleven-year-olds, they are now average. The attainment of current seven-year-old pupils is also similar to that found nationally. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, standards improved substantially in 2001, and were average. They were above the average for schools having pupils of similar backgrounds. The National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds in 2001 also show dramatic improvement and were average and above average for schools with pupils of similar economic backgrounds. The test results over the last four years indicate that the school's performance in this subject has been extremely low but has improved with a steep rise in 2001 resulting in average standards in both key stages. The school's improvement has been greater than the national trend. The results also showed that, although there were more seven-year-olds than average not reaching the expected level, there were also slightly more than average achieving a high standard. In contrast, for the eleven-year-olds, there were less than average with high attainment and less than average with low attainment. A good number achieved the expected standards. The differences between the attainment of boys and girls were not significant. Although there have been very good improvements, the school's performance is not yet secure. There is a degree of variation in the proportions of high and low attainment year to year and in the quality of provision.
96. The current eleven-year-olds were tested last May when results showed that attainment overall was close to the average. Since then there has been good progress although there is still about a quarter who have low attainment. While the higher attainers can multiply numbers by 10, 100 or 1000 easily, the lower attainers cannot see the pattern in numbers, such as; 0.3, 3, 30, and 300. A good majority of the pupils know appropriate words such as *multiple* and *inverse operation* and can check their answers by doing the inverse operation. About a quarter of the pupils have good attainment and also know terms such as *square root*, and can work out simple ones, as well as calculate sums in thousands. Nearly all the pupils know the multiplication tables reasonably well and have a broad-based understanding of the subject including fractions, decimals, co-ordinates and probability. Higher attainers have completed some of the work likely to help them achieve above average standards.
97. In the other junior years, attainment is broadly average, with an average proportion of pupils with high attainment for their age but with more low attainment than average. The proportions vary slightly from year to year and to some extent are dependent upon the quality of teaching and the match of work to the pupils' past learning. For example, in one lesson, the higher attaining pupils could already add numbers in hundreds, tens and units, but were taught to partition them to do this. In another, the tasks set for the higher attaining pupils had instructions that the pupils found hard to interpret, although their mathematical understanding was sufficient for the task. However, the progress made by pupils of different ability is generally good. This is partly because of the support that is provided, usually for pupils of low attainment, and partly because teachers are keen that pupils of all abilities learn thoroughly.
98. In the seven-year-olds' class, there is a smaller than usual group of pupils with above average attainment and about a third with low attainment. Nearly all the pupils can count in twos and have a sound range of strategies to work out simple sums. They all know about numbers up to 100 but few know the numbers that add up to ten by heart, although one girl spoken with was extremely quick at this. About two thirds of the pupils can use rulers to measure accurately. In a lesson, they extended this skill by estimating, then measuring and finally finding the difference. The higher attainers were able to select appropriate measures for items of different length around the classroom. Overall, the attainment of the six-year-old pupils is satisfactory. Their written work does not always reflect their knowledge fully and, for example, the work set in a lesson about time did not take account of their prior knowledge.
99. The attainment of about two-thirds of the current children on entry to the school was below the local average. However, the work of pupils currently in the reception class indicated they had made good progress and that standards are similar to those expected for the time of the year. Progress is satisfactory through the infants and some lessons provide good

learning. Learning has been improved through the use of the framework and methods of the National Numeracy Strategy. The learning is clearly planned on a weekly basis and this enables the pupils of different abilities to have appropriately different tasks. By the age of seven, some pupils have achieved high standards while others have progressed more slowly and remain below average. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the difficulties they have and this is often promoted well by the work of assistants. In the juniors, although varied class to class, the pupils' learning speeds up because of some brisk teaching. During this key stage, the pupils of all abilities are making generally good progress in lessons and this is because of the separate provision that is made in most lessons. For example, in a lesson about fractions the teacher was able to provide well-matched learning for pupils in different ability groups because she had found out what they knew previously.

100. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. It has improved since the last inspection and teachers are now making a difference in the work set, depending on the pupils' abilities. The school's policy is to teach pupils in age groups and not to separate them according to their past achievements. This is being effective because the teaching is providing largely appropriate work for different groups within each class. It is also successful because of the additional help that is provided, usually for pupils of lower attainment. High attainment is boosted particularly in the final months before testing. However, more work could be planned from higher levels for the above average attainers from the start of the key stage. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted with some adaptations, and is effective in helping teachers to know what the pupils need to learn next. The curriculum provided in the framework and the good provision of training has helped teachers to gain a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This includes, for most teachers, a clear knowledge of pupils' common errors and misconceptions. They also know the value of learning that involves using resources and materials practically. In their planning, the teachers devise learning objectives for each week. These help the teachers to be clear about the overall learning needed, but occasionally lack precision for pupils of different abilities or lessons on different days of the week.
101. There has been good improvement in the pace of lessons. Teachers use quick questioning well to help the pupils to reflect and keep them well motivated. However, in about a quarter of the lessons too long is spent in whole class instruction when pupils begin to lose interest, despite the teachers' good explanations. In the rest of the lessons there is good timing and good use of the last part of the lesson to review what has been learnt. The teachers' management of the pupils has also improved and only occasionally does behaviour lapse or the lesson become noisy. Usually the pupils are well behaved and their interest is maintained well, helping them to learn more. Several teachers use humour well in developing very good relationships with their pupils. In most cases, the work of the classroom assistants is very supportive of the pupils' learning in groups and they are well deployed by the teachers knowing how they are asked to help. They are under-used in recording assessments of the pupils' learning and consequently in about a third of lessons, there is little use of past assessments when teachers plan the pupils' next work.
102. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are readily available for teachers who refer to these when planning the provision for these pupils and this teaching is good and helps these pupils to learn well and make good progress. Homework is also used well, particularly in the juniors, where extra help is available for any pupils finding difficulties. The co-ordinator's role has been carried out effectively. There has been a good degree of extra support for staff from a specialist teacher employed by the Education Action Zone. Planning and lessons are also monitored and the results of the school's testing programme are analysed to find areas where there are weaknesses. These lead to further training and emphasis on aspects identified. For example, it has been found that there should be more high attainment, and the school rightly has this as a target.

SCIENCE

103. Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is in line with national expectations. This represents good progress since the last inspection. Progress has been even better for older pupils. By the age of eleven, the pupils' attainment is now also average and this shows a strong upward trend over recent years. Although there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, the teaching is successful enough to ensure that nearly all the pupils achieve the expected level. However, the teaching does not always provide for pupils of higher ability, and they are not all yet achieving the higher levels of which they are capable.
104. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound all-round understanding of science. For example, pupils are aware of which foods are nutritious, like fruit and vegetables, and which foods can be less healthy, like sweets and soft drinks. They appreciate that exercise is good for the body. They know about the basic process of life from birth to death. They can identify parts of the body like elbows and legs. Pupils can express their own ideas to demonstrate their understanding. For example, they can devise a menu using healthy foods. However, teachers tend to provide worksheets for pupils to complete and this limits their ability to present data effectively. For this reason as well, there is little difference in the attainment of pupils of different abilities.

105. There is a similar picture with the older pupils. By the age of eleven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of habitats, forces and micro-organisms. They know, for example, that plants make food through photosynthesis, and how a food chain works. They know how micro-organisms are responsible for diseases like smallpox and for causing matter to decay and be recycled. They know how to carry out investigations in a fair and balanced way, using both fixed and variable aspects and measuring carefully. In one lesson, Year 6 pupils worked out that heavy weights need larger parachutes when falling. They can predict how experiments might work out and they understand the need to assess their own work to see how it might be better. However, as in the infants, teachers do not allow pupils enough freedom to experiment. This can be inhibiting for higher attaining pupils. On the other hand, pupils with special educational needs benefit from challenging activities and they do as well as most other pupils.
106. The quality of teaching is good in the juniors and satisfactory in the infants. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. Teachers organise their lessons well and often enthuse about the topics to be studied. As a result, pupils are well behaved, well motivated and eager to be involved in practical activities. This then produces a healthy buzz of activity in lessons as pupils strive to complete their tasks effectively. In a lesson on air resistance, pupils made every effort to drop their test parachutes from a consistent height. Teachers explain new learning clearly so that pupils quickly gain a good grasp of what they have to learn. This also means that pupils are able to get on with work quickly and sensibly. Teachers involve pupils in fruitful discussion to help them understand new scientific ideas. In a discussion about the damaging effect of the sun, one six-year-old was able to explain why a torch should not be shone in people's faces. Teachers do not, however, promote written English enough through science. They do not encourage pupils enough to write up their own findings and information, often only expecting labelling or filling in words. Similarly, although some teachers make use of computers to produce graphs, for example, information and communication technology is not used effectively enough to broaden pupils' experiences.
107. Teachers plan their lessons carefully so that pupils learn in a structured way. Sometimes, lesson planning covers every detail including key questions, vocabulary and target pupils. This gives the teachers real confidence and guidance. They also plan that suitable resources are available to help guide pupils' learning. In a lesson on fair testing, the teacher made very effective use of a wall chart and labels to emphasise how an experiment might be carried out. However, teachers' planning is not always so thoughtful. Often, planning relies on brief summaries of the activities, with little or no variety for pupils of different abilities. This does not give pupils, especially higher attaining pupils, enough opportunity to develop at their own pace. In addition, teachers do not make the best use of support staff in the classroom. Support assistants provide good help to lower attaining pupils in particular, but they often spend up to half of the lesson without an active role. This inevitably limits their effectiveness.
108. The school has done well to improve the curriculum in science. It has adopted a nationally approved scheme of work and this ensures good continuity to learning. The recent whole school emphasis on science has helped to drive up standards rapidly. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well aware of what the subject needs to develop further. At present, though, she does not have enough opportunity to observe colleagues teach or monitor pupils' progress through the school. Teachers informally assess pupils' progress at the end of topics, but teachers do not use the results of assessment to guide their planning of lessons. The school has acquired a good range of learning resources so that the pupils can work effectively.

ART AND DESIGN

109. There has been little change in attainment since the last inspection. Pupils' standards throughout the school are broadly average. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection and the pupils had not produced a great deal of work by this stage of the school year. Nevertheless, the display of pupils' work provided an adequate view of how high standards are.
110. By the age of seven, pupils have satisfactory observational skills. They can draw bicycles, which are reasonably well proportioned and highlight details such as wheel spokes. They add details of knuckles and finger-nails to pencil drawings of their own hands. They know how to experiment with colour on a computer paint program to make simple line drawings. They can use wax crayons to draw expressively. Pupils in Year 1 produced self-portraits which were not very precise but which captured the real spirit of some cheeky and cheerful personalities.
111. Older pupils build soundly on these skills. Pupils learn how to develop ideas through water-colour painting. Year 3 pupils, for example, portrayed the theme of relationships by painting pupils in pairs in different parts of the school. They use coloured pencils to illustrate work satisfactorily in other subjects. Pupils in Year 4 embellished some wintry poems with pictures of snowmen and icebergs, although they were not neat enough. Pupils develop good observational skills. Pupils in Year 5 showed an eye for detail when producing still-life pictures of flowers and plants, as well as demonstrating a deft touch when shading in pencil. Pupils have some concept of sculpture using natural resources but this is an underdeveloped area of their knowledge. Similarly, there is not much evidence that pupils experiment enough with

computer-based art, and work sufficiently with textiles and printing. Pupils do not have a broad experience of the work of major artists.

112. The school does not place enough emphasis on developing pupils' skills in art and design. The subject alternates with design and technology over the year and this does not help learning to be continuous. Teachers expose pupils to a reasonable range of techniques but do not insist on high standards and progression of skills. Pupils in Year 6, for example, produced models of hats for a play, which were untidy. Teachers sensibly involve other subjects to broaden the scope of art. Some pupils produced posters to accompany the novel, 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe'. However, the drawings were very casual and did little to promote art or literature. Similarly, the production of some Greek theatre masks was immature. Teachers show good practice in encouraging pupils to use sketchbooks to plan their creativity, although they are used more like rough books than a means of improving draftsmanship. Nevertheless, the curriculum as planned is satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Standards are satisfactory in both key stages and are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The subject is taught for half or for whole terms alternating with art and design and two lessons were observed in each key stage. A class of ten-year-olds was designing a puppet that would meet the needs for a nativity play that was being planned. The pupils were well aware of the need to plan, predict difficulties, amend, and evaluate during the production of models. Such key elements of the subject are well understood and yet few pupils can explain sufficiently the difference between this subject and art and design. A group of seven-year-old pupils worked hard to make a working wheeled vehicle each, using a combination of junk and provided materials such as wooden axles and wheels. They had made good plans and learnt quickly what worked best by altering the way they joined the parts. They were helped to gain skills of drilling for the holes in the wheels and understanding how to fix turning components. Several of the models were of good quality for the pupils' age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are given good assistance.
114. Teaching is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. Throughout, there is a good emphasis on the stages of the designing and making process. Teachers have good knowledge of the requirements of the subject. However, class management is varied and while in some cases the pupils are well organised, in others queues develop of pupils requesting individual help. Teachers are correctly concerned to stress safety issues, although occasionally this is not carried through to alert pupils of the precise dangers in a particular activity or to establish sound working rules. In the well-organised classes the pupils are given strategies to help them complete their tasks independently and the teachers draw pupils together to instruct them all about emerging issues. The organisation is not as effective when teachers are heavily committed to helping individual pupils on a rota basis to gain skills such as sawing or drilling. Teachers devise helpful papers on which the pupils can make plans, draw pictures and annotate details. Planning is generally of good quality and it indicates that the pupils' design and make projects are taught with a good degree of depth and thought about the knowledge, skills and understanding that the pupils need.
115. However, progress through the curriculum is slow because the way in which the subject is taught for only some parts of the year promotes a leisurely rate of learning within each project. The pupils have a good depth of learning but a narrow range of experiences. The school should consider ways to increase the number and range of experiences offered. The co-ordinator promotes a clear understanding of the subject's key features and a good enthusiasm. Medium-term planning is monitored but the overall time spent on lessons is not. Class teachers decide if the subject will be taught for a half term or a whole term and this leads to uneven time being spent. The school uses units from a nationally recognised scheme of work, but there is consideration of the school developing its own scheme of work, which should promote progression in the pupils' learning of skills. Pupils and teachers store occasional photographs or plans for the pupils' record of achievement, but there is no formal assessment system. A system is needed in order that teachers can be more aware of what the pupils' need to learn next. The school is considering the development of a self-assessment sheet for the pupils, which should help towards meeting this need. Resources are well provided and meet the requirements of the units currently taught.

GEOGRAPHY

116. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards expected for pupils of their age. This shows a similar picture to attainment at the last inspection. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about attainment for junior pupils, since there is insufficient pupils' work available at this stage of the school year. However, that work seen was satisfactory. The subject alternates with history throughout the year, which means that some classes have only just started their geography course. Written work from pupils who have covered one topic in geography is quite sparse and does not help to give a clear view of attainment.

117. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory awareness of their own locality. They can refer confidently to local features and landmarks, such as a church, factories, traffic lights and a graveyard. They can draw simple maps to show, for example, a route from home to school with appropriate labels. They know the simple vocabulary of travel, knowing people might go over, past or through different things. They do not yet, though, have the ability to write effectively about their knowledge for themselves, since most of their work involves merely colouring and labelling.
118. The junior pupils have a reasonable understanding of the water cycle and how water needs to be treated before consumption. They know how rivers develop before emerging through deltas and estuaries into seas. They understand why settlements might spring up at major road junctions or at fords. The pupils can draw satisfactory diagrams to illustrate processes, such as a simple water purification device. They can also write informatively about the topics but most of their work is similar and strongly directed by the teachers. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to investigate issues for themselves. As a result, most pupils have similar levels of ability, although lower attaining pupils do always not present their work neatly.
119. The school gives adequate time to geography over the year, yet does not help pupils to learn progressively, because the subject is alternated with history. Teachers cover a sound range of topics within the scheme of work, yet rarely explore each topic in depth. Consequently, pupils do not produce much work on paper. In addition, teachers do not give pupils, especially older pupils, enough free rein to carry out simple research and write up their own findings using reference books or the internet. This does not help to develop pupils' independent skills in presenting data and in writing factually. It also hinders the development of higher attaining pupils. Teachers expect the same level of work from all pupils and this may motivate lower attaining pupils but not all the class. In lessons, teachers have a good rapport with pupils, which helps to promote useful discussion about topics. Teachers explain work clearly and so pupils can readily understand new facts and what they have to do. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils quickly produced some effective maps with clear labelling.
120. The subject has suffered recently from a lack of direction. There has been little or no co-ordination of the subject for two years which has meant that there has been no monitoring of how well the subject is doing. Staff training has not been a priority and resources are poor. However, the school is shortly to introduce a new scheme of work with which the teachers are more confident. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and she has a clear view of the present situation and sensible plans to develop the subject.

HISTORY

121. Standards are satisfactory in both key stages. They have improved in the juniors since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. In the infants, standards are satisfactory as they were at the time of the last inspection. Through a study of transport, the seven-year-olds have learned something of changes over time and in particular the development of the bicycle. They have a developing sense of chronology in this respect, but have not yet related this to other aspects of historical study. The eleven-year-olds have gained a good sense of the passing of time and can make historical deductions based on the knowledge they have gained of particular periods such as the 1930s. They have some understanding of ideas such as *nationalised industry* and *the class system*. Some of their writing indicates an empathy with people of the past. The pupils of all abilities have similar attainment and there is little difference in the work set by teachers for pupils of different prior attainment. Throughout the juniors, the pupils are learning to use books and information and communication technology to locate facts and pictorial information enhancing their knowledge of the periods they learn about. However, there is very little evidence of pupils' ability to evaluate different sources of evidence. This is partly because few artefacts are used to enhance the pupils' learning. However, adults from the local community have been used to give first hand accounts of life in the recent past, but this has not been done for some time.
122. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. In the lessons observed, the pupils were well behaved and interested in their tasks. For example, in a discussion about ancient Greece, the pupils of Year 3 were keen to offer suggestions about the sort of armour and weapons used, knowing that there were no guns in the period. They enjoyed designing shields using information found from secondary evidence and were very enthusiastic. In another lesson, the pupils of Year 1 listened well to a long introduction by the teacher, but their worksheets lacked challenge and they were generally slow to complete them. A few lower attainers did not understand the nature of the tasks. In this lesson a number of pupils were withdrawn for short periods of reading to adults. In another lesson the pupils of Year 5 offered good suggestions for a leaflet about a historic hall, making historical deductions. However, lower attainers took little part.
123. The teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers are generally aware of the tension between the learning of facts and developing an understanding of the key elements of the subject. The methods used are generally good and involve the pupils in relevant and interesting tasks. There is a good emphasis in Key Stage 2 on researching from books and other sources such as the internet. However, there is little use of primary evidence such as artefacts or first hand accounts. In a minority of lessons, too little time is allocated for pupils to complete the tasks set and this is especially so for lower attainers, who, despite generally good questioning by teachers, are seldom drawn into whole-class discussions. Pupils with

special educational needs are offered extra support, often by classroom assistants and in this way their learning is satisfactory. In two thirds of the lessons the teachers convey a good sense of enthusiasm for the subject and this is reflected when they mark the pupils' written work with encouraging messages and helpful guidance.

124. The subject is taught through a small number of topics based on a local education authority scheme of work. Together with the school's overall plan of topics, this helps the teachers to plan the work for the coming term. The subject is taught alternately with geography, on a half-termly or a termly basis. These arrangements are clear for teachers but do not promote progression in pupils' skills and understanding. A broader range of learning is needed, which will help pupils to use new skills and understanding to analyse other periods. Teachers use their own assessments, usually at the end of topics, and there is no whole-school system for recording the pupils' progress in skills and understanding. This makes it difficult for teachers to know about the levels of understanding that pupils have already achieved. The co-ordinator is new to the subject and has had little time to analyse the needs and make an impact on standards. However, there is a growing enthusiasm and plans for more enrichment activities, a consideration of assessment, links with literacy lessons and with information and communication technology, which are already done well. There is a small number of relevant educational visits made but the school has few artefacts to use in bringing the subject to life.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards are satisfactory in both key stages and similar to those found in typical schools. There are some ways in which the pupils have a high capability, such as with their presentations and the use of interactive whiteboards. However, most pupils' keyboard skills are about average and there is a good number of pupils who lack confidence in trying new applications or experimenting to navigate unfamiliar programs. Nevertheless, learning is often good and the pupils quickly improve their capability, especially when the teacher models controls. There has not yet been sufficient time for the substantial improvements in the school's provision to impact on the standards across the school but standards have at least been maintained since the last inspection. The pupils with special educational needs learn well since they often have more access to the computers than other pupils, in sessions designed to help their spelling and writing skills.
126. During the inspection, the eleven-year-olds, made good presentations to their class using computer work and an interactive whiteboard. In these they employed a good number of techniques to persuade their audience such as; colour, moving text, graphics, and photographs accessed from the internet. These presentations were of a high standard. However, in another lesson, a number of nine-year-old pupils lacked keyboard skills and confidence to navigate a program, when working as a group withdrawn from the classroom. The work of the seven-year-old pupils indicates an appropriate range of learning and of skills gained. While higher attainers can use punctuation and amend text, the lower attainers' work omits much punctuation and indicates a muddled understanding of the nature of, and peripheral hardware associated with, computers. The use of computers in supporting other subjects such as history and mathematics is good. In several lessons interactive white boards were used well and, for example, the pupils were quick to learn and demonstrate how to access pictures relevant to their learning in history.
127. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Once they understand how to navigate a program they become confident and very keen to use it. In some cases the pupils are extremely keen and occasionally this leads to calling out. However, when first learning about an application the pupils lack confidence and are hesitant to try things out. When working with a partner at a computer both boys and girls are willing to share and help each other appropriately. The oldest pupils display the greatest confidence and take pride in their achievements, especially when they have thought about the impact of their work in interesting the viewers of their presentations. However, they are also able to be evaluative and suggest sensible improvements to others' work.
128. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. On appropriate occasions, classroom assistants teach groups of pupils in the small computer suites that are close to the classrooms. Some teaching is very instructional and allows the pupils too little freedom to explore ways to navigate programs and develop their own generalisations about the ways that programs often work. However, teachers and their assistants are well versed in the software being used currently. The staff have not yet received the training, based upon their needs assessments, which accompanies the government's provision of hardware. Nevertheless, the overall level of knowledge and expertise available in the school is satisfactory with a few teachers having very good capability. This has been greatly supported by the extra help provided by the Education Action Zone, particularly in solving technical problems.
129. A nationally recommended scheme of work has been introduced and is increasingly being implemented in line with the support given by the co-ordinator who has a good understanding of the school's current provision and the pupils' standards. This is because of the monitoring of the pupils' work and of the teachers' planning. A written proforma is used to feedback findings to teachers. Teachers use their own systems to assess the pupils' attainment but there is a helpful whole school plan to record each pupils' access to computers. Portfolios of pupils' work are being built up and the co-ordinator has helpfully provided guidance about National Curriculum levels for the teachers. There is a regular evaluation

made of the subject, which is presented to governors who are appreciative of the progress made and supportive in organising funding for new developments. The provision of hardware is much improved since the last inspection and a particularly good feature is the two mini-suites of networked computers that are located close to classrooms in addition to the computers remaining in classrooms. Co-ordination is good and involves devising a plan for future developments. The school needs time and robust systems to ensure regular and sufficient access for each pupil to develop skills and understanding. This would be aided by a whole school assessment system. There is a good quantity of software appropriate for most subjects.

MUSIC

130. Standards at the age of both eleven and seven match the levels expected nationally. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment make satisfactory progress overall and standards have remained similar to those recorded in the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make progress that is similar to others in their year groups. Two lessons were observed in the juniors and one in the infants.
131. In singing, progress is good. By the age of seven, the pupils can sing clearly and in tune, often without accompaniment. They are confident and know all the words to familiar songs. By the age of eleven pupils sing with enthusiasm. They perform well together in assemblies singing hymns, some of which have complex rhythms. Some dynamics are added but opportunities are missed to explore this aspect fully. The seven-year-old pupils are beginning to be aware of pitch and can take their voices for “a walk” demonstrating high and low pitch. They can recognise long and short sounds and the untuned percussion instruments that make those sounds. For example, they know that to stop a cymbal sounding you hold the metal part stopping it from vibrating.
132. The older junior pupils can identify instruments of the orchestra and the families to which they belong. They enjoy listening to a variety of music and noting down their thoughts and feelings. Those that were not personal were shared with the class and comments included *like a bee buzzing around; a motorbike sound; like cartoon music*. In one lesson, eleven-year-old pupils explored repeating rhythm patterns using a variety of untuned percussion instruments. They worked in groups to produce a short pattern. Although pupils completed the task many tried to make the composition too complex and more like a short piece rather than a phrase that could be repeated continually. The effect showed that many of the pupils had a feel for rhythm and keeping together. However, when patterns had to be copied by the class it proved more difficult than many had expected. Some could not keep the pattern going because of rests that the group had put in or poor counting.
133. Pupils enjoy musical activities and are enthusiastic about singing. They work well together in small groups and share their ideas. They are confident and keen to demonstrate their compositions or sing a solo: two pupils in Year 2 performed for the class. They respond with interest to teachers’ questions and offer some well thought out answers. They listen carefully to a variety of music. Pupils have fun in their lessons but are well behaved and careful in their use of the instruments.
134. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory overall, with some good elements. Teachers are interested in music and willing to have a go even where their own knowledge is weak. An appropriate range of experiences is provided for the pupils to develop their musical skills and to stimulate their desire to succeed. Questions are effectively used to extend pupils’ knowledge and understanding. Opportunities are missed to improve the standard of singing by adding dynamics and phrasing. Where the lessons are less satisfactory the plenary session is missed so pupils cannot evaluate what they have done or explore how it could be altered.
135. As the co-ordinator has only recently been appointed there has been no opportunity to develop the role or time to monitor the standards. Teachers have been planning lessons based on a nationally recommended scheme of work but, on evaluating this scheme, they are now looking for some published materials to give additional support and guidance about activities to enhance the pupils’ learning. The only extra-curricular activity available is a choir, which sings in church, performs at the Christmas production and in the local community. Instrumental tuition is offered for a number of instruments including recorder, violin, clarinet and piano. Parents are required to pay for this. An African drummer has visited the school and successfully led a workshop for younger junior pupils. However, there are generally limited opportunities for pupils to listen to non-western music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. By the age of seven, pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. As they progress through the school, pupils continue to demonstrate satisfactory standards. This represents a similar situation to that of the last inspection.
137. The pupils have sound co-ordination and control of their own actions by the age of seven. They know how to travel over the ground and apparatus using a variety of different postures and movements. They can mimic other pupils' actions. They do not always, however, take enough care to be precise in their movements. They know the importance of warming up before exercise and how exercise is good for the heart and lungs. They move about the hall with due regard for their own safety and are responsible enough to move apparatus sensibly. The junior pupils continue to have reasonable control of their actions but still are not self-disciplined enough to display high quality movement. Nine and ten-year-olds, for example, can dance quite well in response to music or to express emotions, but only the higher attaining pupils can interpret the influences well and move with sensitivity and poise. Most pupils are not able to produce a real quality of movement and style. By the time they leave school, pupils attain satisfactory standards in swimming. The pupils also benefit from a visit to a residential centre where they hone their skills in such outdoor pursuits as abseiling and kayaking.
138. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are organised in their planning and preparation of equipment. This ensures that pupils know exactly what they should be learning and in what context. Teachers demonstrate techniques clearly so that pupils can acquire the right basic skills. The six-year old pupils, for example, quickly appreciated that it is wise to bend the knees when landing from a jump. Teachers have good control of pupils' behaviour by keeping lessons moving briskly and treating pupils responsibly. Even the youngest pupils can set up and put away much of the apparatus confidently and with regard for safety. Teachers make many of the activities fun for the pupils. The seven-year-old pupils, for example, thoroughly enjoyed a follow-my-leader game as a warm-up activity.
139. The teachers assess pupils' performances thoughtfully during lessons. They encourage pupils to participate wholly and they praise good efforts. However, such assessments are not collated to form a view of the overall strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Teachers use more confident pupils to show good examples of actions or expressions to motivate other pupils. In a lesson, the teacher highlighted the skills of the ten-year-old pupils who attended dance classes outside school. However, teachers are not usually demanding enough of skills so that all pupils develop finely controlled movements. Too often, therefore, pupils are untidy in their actions. Teachers are keen for pupils to evaluate their own performances but have not made this a key part of lessons. As a result, pupils cannot be sure whether they are doing their best they can. Sometimes, teachers spend too long on discussing activities so that vital time is lost in lessons, and pupils have less time to practise. The subject is adequately managed although there is little attempt to evaluate standards overall.