

INSPECTION REPORT

SHADSWORTH INFANT SCHOOL

Blackburn

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119220

Headteacher: Mrs. B. Booth M.B.E.

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. Gill
4074

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th November 2000

Inspection number: 224505

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rothesay Road Blackburn Lancashire
Postcode:	BB1 2EL
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. N. Pearson
Date of previous inspection:	5 th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. R. Gill - 4074	Registered inspector	Mathematics and physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs. B. McIntosh - 8922	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Mrs. P. Peaker - 12060	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, art and design, design and technology and religious education	
Mr. D. Wilkinson - 3240	Team inspector	Science and information and communication technology	How good are the curricular opportunities?
Mr. R. Walker - 19708	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, equal opportunities, geography, history and music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized infant school for boys and girls aged between three and seven years old. It has 213 pupils on roll with 58 children in the nursery who attend part-time. At the time of the inspection there were 56 children on roll in the reception classes. The majority of pupils are from the immediate locality. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is well below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the national average. Six pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is more than the number found in most schools. Most pupils are of British heritage, but there are six pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The school is part of the Blackburn with Darwen Educational Action Zone (EAZ). The school was awarded national Beacon status for the standards in children's writing achieved. This is an award, given by the Department for Education and Employment, for excellent work in raising or maintaining high standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Shadsworth Infant School is a most effective school with a warm and caring atmosphere very conducive for learning. Standards are often low compared to national averages, but more pupils are now reaching nationally expected levels at the age of seven and the school compares well to similar schools. The school is very well led by the headteacher, staff and governors who have a strong commitment to improving standards. Expenditure for all pupils is high as the school receives extra grants from the local Education Action Zone. Nevertheless, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides energetic leadership that concentrates on raising standards.
- Teaches and supports all children in ways that helps them achieve well.
- Gives children a very good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes.
- Ensures that pupils enjoy their learning, have exciting things to do outside lessons and achieve high levels of personal development.
- Has greatly improved links with parents.
- The headteacher, staff and governors all work very well together to create a family atmosphere in which pupils feel confident and cared for.

What could be improved

- Opportunities for the children to talk about their learning in lessons.
- More detailed records of attainment, progress and targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1996 and since then it has made good progress in dealing with the key issues identified in the previous report. The monitoring of teaching, to ensure that teachers' plans are implemented appropriately, has been successful. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced in the last four years and the quality of teaching is now good throughout the school. Higher and average attaining pupils in mathematics and science are now challenged to complete more demanding work and consequently they reach better standards. These improvements have been accompanied by equally solid improvements in the number of seven-year-old pupils reaching

the required level in English, mathematics and science. There has also been a very good improvement in the way the school communicates with parents. In addition to improvements in these key issues, the school has successfully implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and made significant advances in information and communication technology, particularly in the introduction of the electronic whiteboard. Improvements have also been made in the school's provision for moral, social and cultural development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	D	D	E	B
writing	D	C	E	B
mathematics	B	C	E	C

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

This table shows that pupils' overall attainment, at seven in 2000, was well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils' attainment was above average, in reading and writing, when compared with pupils' results from schools with a similar free school meal figure. It was average in mathematics compared to the same schools.

The results for 1999 are more typical of the school's recent performance in National Curriculum tests. Pupils did as well as any other pupils of their age in writing and mathematics and, in all three subjects, scored well above average when compared to similar schools. The numbers of pupils reaching above average levels, in writing and mathematics, was high. The school was awarded Beacon status for its success in writing.

The school's results have improved faster than other schools in the last four years with the exception of those in 2000. Overall, pupils' learning is good and they achieve well considering the very low level of skills with which they enter the school.

By the age of five children attain below expectations in language work and mathematics. They meet expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. This is good achievement overall since they start in the nursery at well below expected levels. By the age of seven, pupils achieve higher than expected in art and design, but still fall below expected levels in English. This is because their ability to explain their ideas and speak at length about topics is weak and this has a limiting effect on their reading and writing. In all other subjects most pupils achieve what is expected for their age except in history where, currently, too little emphasis is placed on pupils recording anything in writing. They mainly show their understanding by drawing pictures.

Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well because of the very good support they receive from teachers and classroom assistants of all kinds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Children are enthusiastic and very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Children behave well in class and around the school. They are friendly and polite.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very positive and contribute very well to good learning. Personal development is a strength of the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Children enjoy coming to school. Unauthorised absence is well above national figures. However, these figures are largely affected by a very small number of children whose attendance is poor. The school is working closely with the families involved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory or better in the majority of lessons observed: in 62 per cent of lessons teaching was good or better and in 21 per cent of all lessons it was very good. Lessons were unsatisfactory in seven per cent of cases. This amounted to three lessons in which slow pace, ineffective strategies for discipline and undemanding teaching of letter sounds for reading were the cause. These shortcomings, largely by temporary staff, are being well monitored and tackled by the headteacher and other key staff. Teaching is good throughout the school and this makes learning good. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and they concentrate hard on their lessons. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been satisfactorily implemented by staff and are well taught. The school meets the needs of all pupils including those capable of higher attainment, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum consists of a good range of learning opportunities and is enriched by a generous number of additional activities, including out-of-school clubs, educational visits and visiting speakers. This is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. The high quality of support they receive from learning support assistants ensures good achievement.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The support from teachers and classroom assistants is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Good provision for cultural development. Improvements have been made in these areas since the last inspection. Satisfactory provision for spiritual development has been sustained since 1996.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Strong levels of care to ensure pupils' welfare. Very good support from classroom assistants to ensure effective learning. The school employs satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, but does not yet have a complete system to record the results of these assessment and set individual targets for improvement.

There are good relationships with parents, and parents are supportive of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and key staff are most effective. They have reviewed the school's practice successfully over a number of years. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction for the school and the way that the school's aims are fulfilled is excellent. Standards have been raised well over the last four years and the school compares well to schools of similar nature.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are enthusiastic and very involved in evaluating the school's performance. They fulfil virtually all of their statutory requirements and take a keen interest in the pastoral work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes appropriate use of national data and local statistics to evaluate its performance and the headteacher and key staff have evaluated teaching well. The school's development plan is evaluated well by all staff and governors.
The strategic use of	Very good use is made of resources. Very good use is made of

resources	computers and the electronic whiteboard in a Year 2 classroom.
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There are enough teachers and a good number of support assistants. They are all very well deployed. The accommodation is good and maintained to a high standard. Resources for teaching and learning are good and used well. The governors take a vigorous interest in all aspects of school life. They seek information from all sources, including parents and they are continually finding ways in which to run the school more efficiently and effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching that children receive. • The school helps children become mature and responsible. • Children like the school. • The way the school works closely with parents. • The school is very well led and managed. • Children are expected to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no areas of concern.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The National Curriculum test results in 1999 showed that seven-year-olds were well below the national expectation in reading, but in line with it in writing and mathematics. Science results, which are measured by teachers' assessments, were below national expectations, but more pupils reached the higher level than was found in most schools. When these results were compared with those achieved by schools with similar numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals, they were very good. Pupils were well above the standards found in similar schools. Pupils did so well in writing, particularly when writing stories, that the school was awarded Beacon status, which is a national recognition for high achievement.
2. These results came at the end of a four year period during which the school's results rose faster than those in most schools around the country did. The school's test results in 2000 were predictably lower because of the high number of pupils, in Year 2, who experienced difficulties in their learning. However, the teachers knew that this was going to happen and despite being well below the national average these results still compared favourably with those obtained by similar schools. In reading and writing, for example, pupils did better than pupils in similar schools. The school is back on track again this year with standards in mathematics and science being as one would expect for pupils of this age. Standards in English are still lower than would be expected nationally owing to pupils' weak skills in verbal description and explanation coupled with the difficulties in reading and writing that are experienced by those with special educational needs, in particular. These pupils make good progress, but invariably fall short of the national expectation for their age.
3. Initial assessments on entry to the nursery show that the majority of children are well below average in literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. This is borne out by the findings of the inspection. By the time they are at the beginning of the reception class they are still below what is expected. Nevertheless, many children are on course to reach the nationally expected goals in learning by the end of the reception class, except in language and mathematical work where they have not had time to close the gap between their entry levels and what is expected by the time they are six. Notwithstanding any standards that remain below the national average, the achievements made by pupils by the time they are seven are good. Many have made significant progress in the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic.
4. In English, pupils, in Year 2, do much better, relatively, in writing than in reading. This is confirmed by the inspection's findings. The pace of reading progress has lessened as the emphasis on writing has increased. The school has begun to redress the balance and has placed attainment in reading firmly in its development plan for the foreseeable future. The school's library has been established on the new mezzanine floor in the school hall, but has not yet become a regular place of research and study for older pupils. Writing is often accurate and conveys meaning to the reader in simple stories, for example, but factual sentences to describe learning in subjects like history are not so well developed and represent a relative weakness in standards. Pupils' standards in speaking, for example in describing and explaining their thoughts or observations, are weak. There are missed opportunities in many lessons for pupils to practise the art of speaking.

5. In mathematics, pupils are becoming more confident in arithmetic and are reasonably quick to solve simple problems. Achievement is enhanced by the use of the electronic whiteboard and the way it enables pupils to draw numbers with their fingers and then immediately print them out. The inspection findings concur with the test results that show that many pupils reach the required levels and a good number go beyond them. This is due to detailed planning of the work, which is well matched for different groups of pupils according to their previous results.
6. In science, many pupils have acquired a satisfactory level of scientific knowledge and older pupils are able to investigate well in groups and reflect on their results. Their thinking is developed by teachers who know when to ask open-ended questions that require pupils to mull over what they have learnt. For example, in lessons about electricity and light, teachers ask why bulbs light up in certain circuits and not in others. Pupils' learning is also developed by judicious use of the Internet and CD-ROMs.
7. Beyond English, mathematics and science, pupils' attainment is typical for their age in: all subjects except for art and design and history. In art and design standards are higher than would be found in many schools because of the specialist support provided by the co-ordinator and the in-depth reference to famous artists and their work. Standards in history are lower than they could be because recording is mainly in pictorial form, which is a good way to show understanding, but one which does not help pupils to practise previously learnt skills from English lessons.
8. There are good procedures in place that help the school to identify pupils who may be having difficulties. Individual education plans are thorough and are very helpful in enabling class teachers to provide programmes of work and lessons that help pupils to make progress. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are generally well supported and they make satisfactory progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well due to the special support they receive from teachers and classroom assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school has improved the standards of behaviour and relationships since the last inspection. Behaviour is now good throughout the school and relationships are very positive and a strong feature of the school. Pupils' attitudes to the school continue to be good. All of this impacts very well on pupils' learning and achievements.
10. All staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour and this contributes to the very pleasant and well-ordered community in which learning is supported very well. Parents are very much aware that the school has caring and sharing rules for staff and pupils. Pupils like being in school and they respond well to the encouraging environment, which enables them to flourish and grow in self-confidence.
11. Children in the nursery and reception classes are well behaved. They quickly gain an understanding of school routines and expectations, as members of staff are very supportive and encourage them to become increasingly independent. They are keen to learn and are beginning to persist with their chosen activities. For example, when children in the reception class persevered for a good length of time with their cutting activities. They used the scissors carefully and sensibly and proudly showed each other the things they had cut out. At the end of lessons children know it is their responsibility to clear resources away and they do this well.

From this early stage children are taught to value books and they respond well to the teachers' instructions that they should handle them with care.

12. Pupils aged six and above, including those with special educational needs, have good attitudes to their work. They respond particularly well when the work interests them and provides a degree of challenge, as in a Year 1 music lesson when Handel's firework music was chosen to emphasise sounds of varying duration. The topic on fireworks engaged the children well and they were excited to join in with their own personal anecdotes. When faced with interesting activities pupils can sustain good levels of concentration. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, children enjoyed reading their part of the Troll in the story, 'Three Billy Goats Gruff'. The activity created a lively enactment of the story and pupils felt a sense of pride and achievement. In many lessons pupils are keen to answer questions and ask relevant questions to enhance their learning.
13. Pupils' behaviour is good. When moving around the building pupils are orderly and sensible. In many lessons the good behaviour is a positive feature and contributes well to their learning. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, children were very well behaved, and listened well to instructions, which led to high achievements in personal development and control. On very few occasions behaviour falls below what is normally expected. This was the case, for example, in some assemblies where pupils were unusually noisy, chattering to each other. During playtimes pupils mix well and play together in a friendly way and make good use of the play equipment provided. The lunchtime supervisors join in and supervise activities, making a good contribution to the care of pupils.
14. Relationships throughout the school are of a very high standard helping achieve a very positive work ethos in which pupils collaborate and learn well. Pupils are friendly, polite, and helpful to adults. They share resources, take turns and support each other. During plenary sessions they are keen to share each other's successes and achievements. Pupils co-operate very well in group, class and individual activities. The school is a happy, friendly community; bullying is not an issue and this benefits pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are very well integrated into the life of the school.
15. Pupils' personal and social development is very good. Pupils respond well to opportunities for responsibility such as giving out milk, tidying the classroom and collecting registers. The Year 1 and 2 pupils spoken to said they were very pleased to be involved and enjoy taking responsibility for tasks in class and around school. Even the youngest pupils readily accept suggestions for improvements to their work and are able to select, use and return resources.
16. Older pupils learn the value of helping others; for example, Year 2 children share activities with younger children acting as playtime buddies and helping them to fasten their coats and shoes. In some lessons pupils work independently very well. In a Year 2 lesson in information and communication technology the teacher demonstrated a complex activity using the electronic white board; following this, pupils worked confidently and quite independently at the activity on individual computers.
17. Attendance is broadly satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is well above national figures. However, these figures are largely affected by a very small number of children whose attendance is poor. The school is working closely with the families involved. The school has incentives in place to reward good attendance at the end of the year which have helped raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and this represents an improvement from the time of the last report when 14 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. There is still some unsatisfactory teaching and the school tackles this well and is determined to eliminate it altogether. For example, lessons sometimes still run at too slow a pace, but these occasions are few and far between. The school's close system of monitoring teaching has identified those staff that need support to make their teaching more brisk and appropriate assistance is provided regularly. Funding from the local Education Action Zone has had a powerful impact on the quality of teaching. Staff have received extra training in the National Numeracy Strategy, for example, and computers and the electronic whiteboard have added a very beneficial extra dimension to lessons that pupils really enjoy. Their learning in information and communication technology has consequently advanced rapidly of late.
19. The good teaching for children in the nursery and reception classes ensures that children make very effective progress, from a low starting point, and sometimes attain standards, by the age of five, that are similar to those expected nationally. The keynote to this successful teaching is the way in which the teachers and support staff create confidence in the children from the very beginning of their schooling. This has a beneficial effect on children's learning. They are excited by stories and books and are becoming good at predicting what might happen next in a story. Mathematics is taught using a lively approach consisting of songs, rhymes and other counting activities that helps to make learning fun. This is successful and children are beginning to know how to judge the difference between heavy and light objects and to use simple scales correctly in the classroom post office. Other areas of learning are taught equally well.
20. Teachers of children in the nursery and reception classes are extremely well organised. The classroom support assistants are very experienced and know precisely how to help children with their learning. Resources in the classrooms are readily available for children which helps them develop skills of independence and their work is displayed in a way that makes learning exciting. The nursery staff, in particular, who have to help children with their social skills, are very sensitive and offer gentle encouragement to any child who is reticent or who needs some special attention. By their gentle approach they give these children the confidence to speak out for themselves. Teachers in the reception classes make very good use of the electronic whiteboard to extend children's learning. This sort of teaching has a very good effect on children's learning. Children are very quick to learn how to use the electronic pencil to select the program they want and operate it. They end up knowing how to activate the screen on the whiteboard to call up different programs from the computer.
21. Improvements in teaching have taken place across the school and there is equally good teaching in classes for children aged between five and seven years old. Teachers' planning has greatly improved and the implementation of national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy has helped in providing more brisk teaching that concentrates on what pupils need to know and the speed at which they need to work. The main reservations, about unsuccessful lessons, at the time of the last inspection were that pupils spent too little time working on challenging tasks. Management of some lessons was poor and teachers' expectations were too low. These weaknesses, which were entirely in Years 1 and 2, have been tackled well. Work is more demanding, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Group work is well organised for all pupils, which means that those capable of higher attainment are suitably challenged. The lack of such challenges was a criticism in the last report. The impact of these improvement are reflected in the school's National Curriculum test results, which show good numbers of children reaching the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics.

22. The school has successfully implemented the national frameworks for teaching literacy and numeracy. The teachers' plans follow the national recommendations well and lessons begin effectively with a good discussion about what is going to be learnt. This is followed up, at the end of the lesson, by an appraisal of the pupils' success and in what they could have done better. In some classes pupils are asked to comment on their own performance and teachers compare how well this approximates to their own view. However, the lack of continuity in this respect is a weakness in teaching. There is not enough oral assessment at the end of lessons, which requires the pupils to explain what they have done and how well they have achieved. Teachers tend to do too much of the talking. This weakness in lessons applies just as much to physical education, for example, as mathematics. Pupils' weak skills in describing and explaining what they have done were identified at the time of the last inspection. Satisfactory progress has been made in tackling this weakness, but there is more still to be accomplished.
23. Teaching in all subjects, except English and history, helps the pupils achieve what is typical for their age. Standards are low in English, but this is effected by pupils' weak skills in describing and explaining verbally. Writing is more successful than reading because teachers have concentrated on this aspect in great detail, particularly in the respect of story writing. The school has recently focused successfully on reading in order to raise standards. This work has involved large numbers of parents. Many parents have been active in finding out how they can help their children at home. Teaching in history is good in many respects. Lessons are very lively and introduce pupils to the story of household lighting or the invention of the telephone, for example, in very interesting ways, often using videos and items on loan from the local museum. However, the weakness lies in the fact that pupils are not often expected to write about their learning in a factual way until the second term of the school year.
24. The good teaching in lessons results in good learning where pupils concentrate well, and gain knowledge and understanding at a good pace. Teachers and able support assistants foster very effectively the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils who experience extra challenges in their learning because of physical or emotional difficulties, for example, often make remarkable progress, which is directly due to the sensitive support they receive from support assistants, in particular.
25. Assessment at the end of lessons or of a series of lessons is a weakness. This is recognised by the school and there are plans for this aspect to be improved. Teachers, currently, make few jottings about the outcomes of learning that would help them set targets for pupils in future. They discuss learning in a very informed way, but there are too few written records to guide future plans.

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

26. The school provides a rich curriculum for its pupils. The staff constantly keeps the curriculum under review in order to put improvements in place. This is illustrated by the schools prompt response to the latest fully revised National Curriculum and new curriculum guidance for children of nursery and reception class age. Teachers are successfully incorporating these initiatives into their planning.
27. At the time of the last inspection there was limited attention paid to certain aspects in some subjects. This has much improved. The school, for example, now pays sufficient attention to

investigations and experiments in science. In some measure, this is because teachers' long-term planning now focuses directly on individual subjects rather than on a group of subjects.

28. The curriculum is good for children in the nursery and the two reception classes; it is broad, balanced and imaginatively planned. Teachers and non-teaching staff plan together and complement each other well in organising and supporting learning in the classrooms. Staff in the nursery and reception classes provide stimulating learning opportunities for their children, and structured play activities are particularly well organised. There is much hard work put into promoting personal and social skills and developing children's language skills; staff make every effort to ensure all children are equally provided for.
29. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and adequate time is allocated to all subjects. Joint planning and review between parallel classes is firmly rooted in the National Curriculum and is often supported by subject guidelines that have been published nationally. Consistency is good because planning makes good use of the agreed schemes of work and planning has the oversight of subject co-ordinators. Teachers' planning, however, does not include enough opportunities for pupils to talk constructively about what they have done.
30. Good provision, in line with the recommendations of the national Code of Practice, is made for pupils with special educational needs. Classroom teachers identify problems at an early stage. Individual education plans are set out clearly identifying targets, methods and resources required. The targets are achievable and are built up small step by small step. All pupils have full access to the curriculum. Classroom assistants play an important role in supporting less able pupils and help them by reinforcing teaching points. The high quality of support they provide enhances the learning and care these pupils receive.
31. The school has successfully implemented the national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. In both these areas the school began to make appropriate modifications to its teaching styles prior to the official start dates; for example, some years ago the school introduced a structured programme for the teaching of letter sounds.
32. The school enriches its basic curriculum in many ways. There is a good range of out of school activities including clubs for computer, recorder playing and mathematics. Parents are encouraged to take part in the mathematics and computer clubs, which is in line with the schools ethos of promoting parental involvement in their children's education. A good programme of educational visits is arranged during the year, for example, the nursery visit to the farm. There are frequent visitors to school including theatre and music groups. Homework is regularly provided both through reading at home and to support the work of other subjects; for example, in science pupils were asked to list sources of light that they could find in their homes.
33. There is a strong commitment in the school to equality of opportunity by ensuring everyone is valued and that no one feels left out. This is endorsed by the fact that the school meets the requirements of the 'Investors in People' standard.
34. The school maintains good links with a variety of institutions in the neighbourhood. There is a strong commitment to those agencies that have a significant impact on the welfare of the families in the school. There are good links with the neighbouring junior and secondary schools. The school holds appropriate induction days for new parents and children before they enter the nursery.

35. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal and health education. Health and sex education are taught as an integral part of the science curriculum. In physical education, pupils are taught the importance of exercise and its effects on the body. Visitors from the emergency services ensure pupils are aware of fire, road traffic and other dangers. The school has identified the need to offer more structure to this area of its work and whilst present procedures are adequate this is a sensible way of further enhancing the curriculum.
36. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral and social development is particularly strong and the school successfully provides pupils with a range of experiences to promote their cultural awareness. All these aspects are areas of improvement since the last inspection. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. The school's aims are clearly focused on fostering a positive ethos and the importance of maintaining a caring, supportive environment.
37. Spiritual development is satisfactorily promoted through assemblies and acts of collective worship. Music is played as pupils enter the hall but it is not used effectively to set the tone in assemblies and there is no appropriate focus to hold pupils' attention; as a result, opportunities for quiet reflection are often lost. A strength of the provision is the way staff raise pupils' self-esteem and make them feel valued. The 'Good News' assembly is important as it provides opportunity to celebrate and share each other's achievements. Pupils reflect on the value of friendships and appreciate that birthdays and individual names are special for all children throughout the world. In nursery a child felt very special when his birthday was celebrated and was very pleased with the 'Birthday Bag' of small toys that he was given to take home. In a religious education lesson in Year 1 pupils learned how someone chooses our names, that everyone is special, and that the Bible tells us God loves everyone. Pupils selected a name card, and in turn listed positive qualities they attributed to that child. At the end of a mathematics lesson in Year 2 a sand timer was used effectively to provide three minutes silence so that pupils could quietly reflect on their learning.
38. The provision for moral development is very good. From the earliest days in nursery, pupils are encouraged to consider how their actions affect others. Assemblies provide ample opportunities to address moral issues and pupils' understanding of right from wrong through being encouraged to make 'Good Choices'. The school is a caring community with clear values, and this permeates its ethos and working practices. The staff provide pupils with very good role models and encourage them to behave well, show consideration to others and develop a clear understanding of right from wrong. The school uses a good system of rewards based on the Shadsworth Bear. The system is very effective and much valued by children.
39. The provision for pupils' social development is a strong feature of the school, which is effectively enhanced in everyday contact between pupils and adults. On starting school children soon learn the simple rules which foster a happy and calm atmosphere in the classrooms. Pupils demonstrate good social skills at lunchtimes, registration and during assemblies. They are encouraged to work well together in class and play amicably in the playgrounds. Pupils take on jobs to help in the daily life of the school and teachers value this help. Monitors take pride in their responsibilities and do their jobs with care. Teachers organise events where pupils confidently perform music and drama for parents and various groups in the locality. Older pupils act as 'playtime buddies' to younger ones and distribute harvest goods to the elderly people in the area. The school provides many clubs, which are well supported and greatly enhance pupils' social development. Pupils are given chances to think of others through supporting a range of charities.

40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They acquire a good knowledge and understanding of other cultures in many subjects including religious education, art, music, history and geography. Through good use of the local environment, pupils gain insights into their local area and make contrasting studies of various localities such as Silverdale and Marbella. The school develops music and drama well in the curriculum and pupils are given opportunities to perform and many learn to play the recorder. A recent musical performance, 'Travelling by Tuba' was a wonderful opportunity for children to hear unusual instruments from around the world, including the Alpine Horn, tuba and an ancient horn from Turkey. The school has purchased a good range of instruments from a wide range of cultures. Although pupils learn mainly about the Christian religion, they also gain opportunities to learn of other religions such as Hinduism and Islam through religious education. Pupils gain a good understanding of the cultural diversity of British society and this is reflected in the way they learn to share and value each other's cultures; for example, a parent of Asian heritage spoke about festivals and clothes and used artefacts to illustrate his/her culture. Other themes in school have included a study of Japanese art and Indian Dancing. The 'Caribbean Theme Evening' held at the community centre was very popular with parents and their children. They enjoyed listening to steel drums, dancing and sampling a range of food.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school has successfully established a very caring and supportive environment, which enables pupils to gain self-confidence so they can learn effectively. Staff work hard to provide a strong level of care to ensure pupils' welfare. They take every opportunity to boost pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are happy to come to school. Inspectors strongly agree with parents' views that this is a happy, friendly, supportive place. The high quality care is present in the nursery and reception classes and is continued successfully into Years 1 and 2.
42. Parents appreciate the care and support provided for their children. Personal support for the pupils is very good, they readily turn to staff for help and this has a positive effect on their attitudes to work.
43. The school has developed very effective links with a wide range of outside agencies which enable them to be particularly well informed on social and welfare issues which affect the life of the school. Teachers use this knowledge sensitively to ensure all groups of children receive the necessary support needed to help them with their learning. For example, when Kosovan refugees arrived there was close liaison with the families to ensure the children were fully prepared to start school.
44. There are clear procedures for the early identification of pupils with special education needs. The provision is good and pupils make good progress. The school gives good consistent support to these pupils in the development of their skills. Pupils learning English as a second language are well supported and they make good progress. They are happy in school and very eager to learn. The school is very supportive of these pupils and their families and very much aware of their individual needs. All pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and, within classes, work is usually planned which carefully caters for their special needs. Classroom assistants and nursery nurses are well briefed and work alongside children in the classroom promoting self-esteem and supporting the pupils' learning and well-being most effectively. Pupils are helped to learn new skills and practise them in ways, which makes learning enjoyable. Pupils' personal development is monitored very well because teachers know individual pupils well. Assessments are made of pupils' personal qualities such as attitudes, behaviour and attendance.

45. The school's management of behaviour is very good and Shadsworth Bear features strongly in helping promote good behaviour. Rules are simple and the whole culture and ethos is one of sensible behaviour, caring, sharing and consideration for others. Teachers and other staff maintain discipline in a calm effective manner. Midday supervisory staff maintain good order and provide good support at lunchtime especially on the playground. This has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour. Parents confirm that if any bullying or behaviour problems should arise they would speak to the class teacher who would sort out their concerns immediately.
46. The headteacher, together with the Educational Welfare Officer, monitors pupils' attendance very carefully and procedures for following up unexplained absences are rigorous. The level of unauthorised absence is above national figures but is largely due to a very small number of children. The school is effectively raising parents' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Rewards are donated by local businesses and presented at the end of the year to pupils with full attendance. Pupils away due to a long-term illness or in hospital are well supported.
47. Good welfare procedures ensure pupils are well cared for in the school community. The school has a detailed health and safety policy, which follows guidelines from the local education authority. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and all staff are aware of the requirements. They are attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the children in their charge. The designated teacher has received recent training and is very experienced to undertake the responsibilities.
48. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and use this knowledge in planning work and arranging groups. However, there are currently no formal systematic procedures for tracking individual children's progress from the nursery to the end of Year 2. The school is aware of this and the need to address it. They have explored a number of methods over the last few years, and are in the process of pulling ideas together to create a practicable and useful system. In addition, teachers do not yet have a system with which they can keep a record of pupils' attainment after a lesson or series of lessons. Assessment is rightly the key priority in the current year's school development plan.
49. The school assesses children's attainment on entry to the nursery and to the reception classes. Reading tests are administered in Years 1 and 2 and writing samples are reviewed every term. Teachers are beginning to annotate pupils' written work to identify what children are achieving and using this information in reports to parents. A start has been made on setting targets and this is being used satisfactorily in homework books that are shared with parents. More effective targeting of individual and group needs will be made possible once a whole-school system for recording progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science, has been established.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents' views indicate very strong support for the school. The good number who attended the meeting prior to inspection and returned questionnaires demonstrated this. All views expressed were extremely supportive of the work done by the school. In many cases, responses on the questionnaire showed over 95 per cent support for the school. Parents are particularly impressed by the way they are welcomed into the school and the amount of effort staff expend to help them with any family concerns or problems they may be experiencing. They have a very clear view that this is a friendly, approachable school where children make good progress, staff deal sensitively with individual problems and while expecting children to work hard, help

them to enjoy school. Inspectors' judgements agree with parents' positive views. Since the last inspection the school has built upon the good things identified in the report and has established very effective links with parents and maintains good communications with them; this is very beneficial to the children's progress.

51. The school provides some information of good quality to parents and encourages them to become involved in their children's work. Teachers are accessible and approachable which enables them to build up good relationships with parents. As soon as parents approach the school they are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school and their child's education. The friendly 'open door' policy is much appreciated by parents. A very well planned induction programme including home visits prior to children starting school ensures each family is well prepared for their child to start school. Activities on offer are communicated to parents through the well-presented newsletters. When needed, a translator helps in communicating with parents whose first language is not English. The school holds a good range of workshops for parents on different curriculum areas such as literacy and numeracy. For example, a parent governor led a very successful workshop, during the inspection, on helping children read at home. Good use was made of the electronic whiteboard to illustrate the information. Pupils' annual reports give very good detail in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology clearly highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in these subjects. However, the current format of reporting does not give the required information on attainment and progress in other subjects. The reports include targets related to areas where improvement is needed and these are discussed at parents' evenings. There are regular opportunities, formal and informal, for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. Parental attendance at progress meetings is good and improving. Parents of pupils with special needs are closely involved from an early stage and kept well informed about their children's progress.
52. The school has established effective relationships with parents, and staff are always keen to try new initiatives to maintain the good parental interest and involvement in their child's learning and the work of the school. Extra funding through the Education Action Zone has had a significant impact in providing various ways for parents and their children to learn together, for example, in sharing clubs for mathematics and books and a Saturday morning club. The school also runs an Information and Communication Technology Club for parents and their children, which is very effective in the way that it helps all the club members to learn together. These initiatives have developed greater interest all round, not only in learning about the focus of the club, but about learning in general. Courses held in school for adults have contributed greatly, giving parents skills and confidence to be effective contributors to their children's learning. Some parents have successfully trained as school support assistants and gone on to work in the school. There is a small number of parents who help regularly in class and many more are willing to help on educational visits. Parents are generous in their support of the fund-raising events held each year and help raise a good amount of money for school funds. School productions and weekly class assemblies are very popular with parents who feel very proud to see even the youngest children perform and lead the presentations with a great deal of confidence.
53. The school seeks parents' opinions both formally and informally and where possible they are approached singly or in small groups for their views.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The school is led in a most effective way. The headteacher, governors and staff all work well together in the job of raising standards. There is a real community ethos about the school's

management. The governors are all deeply involved in the daily work of the school and are consequently very knowledgeable about its strengths and areas for development. The headteacher is very capable at harnessing this enthusiasm and making sure that the school's aims are fulfilled excellently day by day. Relationships with parents are very productive and they are very pleased with the school and the way it is managed. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Planning is thorough and takes account of the most recent national guidance for nursery and reception age range. This impacts positively on children's learning. There are regular meetings between nursery and reception staff and all adults in the three classes work well together. The school has many strengths and these are attributable to the energetic teamwork and firm leadership that exist.

55. Four years ago, when the school was last inspected, the standards achieved, in English and mathematics, by seven-year-olds were low. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, who were relatively new in post at the time of the last inspection, and staff have worked very hard to improve this situation. Teaching, for pupils between the ages of five and seven, has greatly improved. Though there remains a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, it is being dealt with, and standards are rising. Much of the improvement in teaching has resulted from the implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. The staff welcomed these, as they represented a natural progression from the way that they taught, and have helped them become even more effective at the teaching of writing and mathematics. The pupils' results in writing were so good that the school has been recognised nationally for its success. Reading has improved, but it remains a weakness. Pupils' test results in 2000 were predictably low. Nevertheless, the school's has raised its standards faster than most schools over the last four years as a result of the strong leadership.
56. The headteacher has just returned from a year away from the infant school, managing the junior school, which receives Shadsworth's seven-year-olds. Five key members of teaching and non-teaching staff, at the infants, left at the end of July 2000 which presented the returning headteacher with a great deal to do to maintain standards. This process has been managed extremely well with the minimum of disruption for the pupils. Temporary staff have been introduced to the school's way of working, and monitored frequently, and are largely successful in maintaining the school's high standards. The headteacher, and other key staff, offer very constructive support for teachers who need help in managing pupils with emotional difficulties.
57. The school has had a programme for monitoring teaching for several years that has proved thorough and effective. The headteacher and subject leaders have successfully carried out this work. The governors are aware of this process and how it fits in with their monitoring of standards in general. Subject leaders have presented their findings and plans for improvement to governors at committee meetings. This wide ranging programme was continued while the headteacher was absent, but, wisely, it is now more limited in focus to support temporary staff and those who have changed year group and assumed new responsibilities.
58. The governing body has made some good improvements to the school since the last inspection in the areas for development identified in the previous report. Standards have been raised in reading, writing and science as demonstrated by the results of national tests for seven-year-olds since 1996. Pupils' attainment in the art of explaining their ideas and talking to others about their work, in general, have not slipped back, but there is still more work to do in this respect and standards should be higher. Teaching has been well monitored to ensure that teachers' plans are fully implemented and that pupils capable of higher attainment are well catered for. Communications with parents have been improved significantly, a fact that was expressed on all

of the 143 inspection questionnaires that were returned. The school has been successful in making written communication with parents more readable and appealing.

59. The school's development plan contains very good detail about what the school needs to do. The governors have been closely involved in its production and have linked its implementation well to the school's budget. The headteacher's successful leadership and the governors' involvement in the management of the school ensure that they know the school's strengths and weaknesses. This clear understanding of what the school is good at and what it needs to do to improve extends to all co-ordinators who consistently speak knowledgeably about their action plans and ways of monitoring the success of their work. This depth of leadership is a strength of the school.
60. There is an appropriate number of teaching staff who are deployed very effectively to form an enthusiastic and committed team. There is also a strong band of classroom support assistants who work extremely well with teaching staff and have a good impact on pupils' learning. They are particularly good at making sure that all pupils are able to achieve well including those that speak English as an additional language and those that have a special educational need. The accommodation and resources for learning are generally good. The school possesses a very well appointed nursery and a spacious hall that is well equipped for physical education, and quiet study on a purpose-built mezzanine floor. Computers and an electronic whiteboard are well used in a Year 2 classroom, but other computers are underused in some classes, not offering pupils maximum opportunities to extend their learning.
61. The school makes good use of available grants, including those from the Education Action Zone. These grants are largely designated for specific purposes and have been put to good use. Funds available for information and communication technology, for example, have had a positive effect on standards. Funds for special educational needs are used effectively, mostly to employ staff. Staff and governors closely monitor the benefit from these monies.
62. The headteacher and governors manage the school's finances very well. The school's bursar works closely with the governors to make sure that the budget is closely monitored throughout the year. The governors make sure that money is spent wisely by always researching how to spend it and choosing the goods and services that represent the best value for the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. The headteacher, staff and governors, with support from the local education authority, should:

- Improve standards in speaking even further. To do this they should (Paragraphs 2, 4, 22, 58, 78, 87, 104, 121):
 - plan for more structured opportunities in which pupils can talk about their learning in all subjects and areas of learning.
- Keep more detailed records of attainment, progress and targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics in order to help raise standards even further. To do this they should (Paragraphs 48, 49, 50, 96):
 - create a record for each year group from the nursery class onwards that contains recorded levels and targets for improvement, for each child, up the age of seven.

Other areas for improvement identified during the inspection are:

- pupils' attainment in history for pupils between five and seven years (Paragraphs 4, 7, 23, 105);
- the use of computers in classrooms to consolidate learning (Paragraphs 60, 90, 114);
- the recording of any assessment information after a lesson or a series of lessons (Paragraphs 25, 91); and
- reporting pupils' attainment in the foundation subjects (Paragraph 51).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
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
0	21	41	31	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	184
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	117

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	62

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	30	26	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	23
	Girls	21	22	23
	Total	40	40	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (76)	71 (78)	82 (80)
	National	86 (82)	88 (83)	93 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	19
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	41	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (79)	72 (79)	73 (85)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	133
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	0	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: Y1 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26

Education support staff: Y1 – Y2

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	287

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	433254
Total expenditure	427422
Expenditure per pupil	1960
Balance brought forward from previous year	56787
Balance carried forward to next year	?

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	213
Number of questionnaires returned	143

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	20	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	66	28	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	31	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	32	8	2	7
The teaching is good.	84	15	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	22	1	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	10	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	15	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	69	27	1	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	81	16	0	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	79	20	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	31	5	0	13

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. There has been a marked improvement in standards and achievement since the last inspection, and this reflects the high quality of curriculum opportunities provided, and the effectiveness of teachers and non-teaching staff in meeting children's needs and stimulating their learning.
65. The majority of children begin nursery with well below expected levels of skill in speaking and listening, mathematics, and personal and social abilities. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 most children are below what is nationally expected of children at this age in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. However, they are meeting the expected standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and physical development.
66. At the time of the inspection 29 children attended nursery in the morning and the same number in the afternoon. Of the 56 children in the two reception classes only seven children had reached five years of age at the time of the inspection. Children are allocated to one of two reception classes according to when their fifth birthday falls, with the younger children in one class and the older in the other.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Most of the children enter the nursery with very immature skills in personal and social development. They find sitting still and paying attention very difficult; they have low self-esteem and poor communication skills. They make good progress in both the nursery and the reception classes so that by the time they enter Year 1 they have achieved the nationally designated Early Learning Goals. Good progress is due to skilful teaching of both younger and older children, where confidence, self-esteem and relationships are very well fostered. The nursery teacher takes every opportunity to develop confidence and relationships, as, for instance, in registration where each child is encouraged to make a positive response to their name being called out, even a slight smile or nod. Teachers work hard to establish routines and develop firm but encouraging relationships with children. In the reception classes children are encouraged to develop greater independence and responsibility in, for instance, undressing and dressing themselves for physical education or choosing a book to read while they are waiting for other children to finish a task. Teachers and their nursery nurse are very sensitive to children's needs, and praise and reinforce children's achievements, helpful attitudes and behaviour. They develop a clear appreciation of what is expected of them and of what kinds of behaviour are acceptable and which are not. By the end of their time in the reception classes, children's confidence and concentration have improved, and they are relating positively to adults and other children. They behave sensibly and with some degree of independence in self-chosen activities and in teacher-directed tasks. A number still have limited speaking and listening skills, however.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Children are not yet on course to reach the expected level by the age of six despite the good teaching that they receive. The majority of nursery children have weak speaking and listening skills and have difficulty in communicating with others about anything other than simple needs. They are very lacking in confidence and need a great deal of support and encouragement to speak and join in rhymes and songs. They find it very difficult to sit still and follow a story.

Both the teacher and support staff are very effective in promoting children's language and literacy development and employ a variety of strategies to interest and involve the children. The teacher, for instance, used toys and puppets well in a re-telling of Goldilocks and The Three Bears, and dramatised the events effectively through gesture and voice. Older children, in the reception classes, can identify a number of initial sounds in words and relate letters to sounds. Most children can identify a few words from their first books, but are not always confident in recognising them when reading the story. A number of low attainers have no strategies yet for telling a story from pictures. Most children are developing an understanding of writing as communication but many have limited skills in writing recognisable words, even in copying an adult's writing; most learn to hold their pencils correctly, but letter formation is weak.

69. Teaching of literacy is good with many good opportunities created to encourage children to listen carefully and to talk about what they are doing and about their experiences outside school. Children are helped to enjoy the pleasures of story, rhyme and song. Both teachers and nursery nurses are very effective in supporting and extending children's language in role-play and through discussion in activities that children have chosen themselves. Good use is made of the literacy strategy in ways appropriate to children of this age. In a reception class lesson, for example, the teacher skilfully helped the children follow and enjoy the story while at the same time reinforcing their understanding of handling books. Teaching reinforced effectively key vocabulary and the order of words through varied strategies and games that held the children's interest and concentration.

Mathematical development

70. This area of the curriculum is well taught and children make good progress, but they are still not fully achieving what is expected of them by the age of six. Children in the reception classes can organise objects into sets, know a number of two-dimensional shapes and understand positional words like 'on top of', 'under' and 'next to'. They can count up to 10, and some beyond, and most can add one more. They can create simple patterns using practical apparatus. These pupils are beginning to understand how to use words like 'heavy' and 'light' and record their observation in drawings. Overall, resources were effectively used to introduce and reinforce understanding, and pupils were able to observe how objects that were the same weight would balance. Some good opportunities were provided for pupils to consider what might happen when an object was put in the weighing scales. One pupil thought that if you put a tin in both pans, both sides of the balance would go down. The children's ability to use mathematical ideas to solve practical problems is limited. A good range of activities and resources was available to help children reinforce their learning through structured play. Children enjoy their work in mathematics and display positive attitudes in all lessons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Children enter the nursery with very limited general knowledge about the world. Nursery and reception class teachers work hard to broaden children's knowledge and experience and range of vocabulary, and by the end of the reception year children are achieving appropriately for their age. Children enjoy learning about the world around them and become very involved in the well-planned activities. Good opportunities are provided for first-hand experience around the school building and grounds, and in the immediate locality, to help children observe and note particular features. Stimulating learning activities are organised in the classroom to help children examine objects and materials and find out about living things. In the nursery the teacher had created a very stimulating and well-resourced area for children to build an 'arctic landscape'. Through this activity children were developing their understanding of different and remote

places and what they are like. They extended their descriptive vocabulary and exercised their creative skills in constructing a landscape choosing from a variety of materials. The teacher helped them appreciate how we can find out about the world by looking in books, as well as drawing out their oral language. Children in the reception classes have found out about how wheat is made into flour and then used for making bread. These older pupils have well-developed computer skills and positive attitudes towards using the computer. The teaching of skills in information and communication technology is particularly good and very good use is made of the electronic whiteboard. Children are beginning to control the mouse very well and with some support can operate simple programs.

Physical development

72. The teaching of physical development of children is good, and children are on course to reach expected levels by the end of their time in the reception class. The nursery has an appropriate outdoor area where pupils can climb, run and use wheeled vehicles. In addition they have access to the school hall for dance and use of small apparatus. Children in the reception classes have good opportunities for developing skills in physical education lessons in the hall, but fewer opportunities are available for outside play. However, these older pupils can use space well and are aware of others when they are carrying out an activity. They are beginning to control their bodies well when stretching, curling, jumping and hopping. They listen carefully to instructions and try hard, demonstrating good attitudes to their work. Most children are developing greater control in holding and using pencils and paintbrushes and in activities involving cutting and sticking. A number are still not very skilful in using scissors. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to practise and improve and use their skills in a wider range of activities.

Creative development

73. In both the nursery and reception classes children learn to experiment with colour, texture, and sound and express their feelings through painting, singing and instrumental work. They learn the basic techniques of colour mixing and applying paint, and of singing and playing with greater control. For example, a group of nursery children enjoyed creating collages using a variety of exciting green coloured materials. Their results were very dramatic since they had been skilful enough to get some strands of material to stand proud of the background. Children in the reception classes know the difference between loud and quiet and are able to clap or play an instrument with the appropriate dynamic. They were also able to follow simple pictorial directions to play a pattern of loud and quiet sounds. Teaching is effectively planned and well organised and this ensures that children's learning is well developed. As a result of the good teaching they receive, children are on course to meet, by the end of the year, the expectations for their age.
74. Teaching of both age groups is good. Non-teaching staff work very well with the children and make a good contribution to their learning. All staff works very hard and are particularly effective in promoting children's personal and social skills, and in ensuring that all children are equally provided for. Children with special educational needs are well supported. The recording of children's progress, even in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is not formally undertaken. The school is planning to provide a system for this, but its omission at the moment has a limiting effect on the progress made by children.

ENGLISH

75. Pupils are making good progress, particularly in writing where their achievements in 1999 were recognised nationally. Pupils' attainment has improved rapidly since the time of the last report in 1996, where standards achieved by seven-year-olds, in reading and writing, were well below those found in other schools. The teaching pupils have received over a number of years has contributed to this improvement in writing, in particular. In fact, in 1999, pupils' writing was judged to be as good as in any other school nationally, particularly in the number of pupils that reached the higher level of attainment. This is a significant achievement for a school that takes so many children with very low skills at the age of three in the nursery class. Achievements in reading have not been so dramatic, but despite attainment remaining below the national average, good progress has been made since 1996. The school's results in national tests in 2000 were very low, but the staff predicted this temporary downturn as a result of a high number of pupils, in that year, who needed extra support in their learning. The school does well when compared with other schools with a similar intake of pupils. For example, in 1999 they were well above average, for reading and writing, by comparison and in 2000, when results were weak compared to national expectations, they scored above the level achieved by similar schools.
76. Attainment for pupils currently in Year 2 is below national expectations in all aspects of English. Even though standards are low, pupils, including those with special educational needs, do make good progress in reading and writing as a direct consequence of good teaching. Teachers have placed great emphasis on writing and the school's success in raising pupils' achievements has resulted in the school's designation as a Beacon school for writing in 1999. This is a national award to recognise schools whose pupils achieved higher than expected standards in writing. The literacy hour is having a positive impact on attainment in English, especially in reading and pupils make good progress in these lessons. As seen in the previous inspection, there is still a need to raise the level of attainment in speaking.
77. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from carefully devised work that develops the skills identified in their individual educational plans. Organisation of groups in the literacy hour and the additional support, which is available in the classroom at all times, contributes significantly to their success. Teachers involve these pupils sensitively and well in whole-class activities. Pupils make good progress because of this support and the sensible match between their tasks and their level of attainment. Those who speak English as an additional language are progressing well because their support is so well targeted.
78. When pupils enter the school, their speaking and listening skills are very poor. Although their listening skills develop well, speaking skills, despite the many opportunities which teachers make for them, are limited. In the literacy hour, they sustain their listening well both to the teacher and to other pupils. They are keen to show what they have learned but have a limited fluency. Teachers use the plenary session in the literacy hour to help pupils develop their confidence when they present their work to the class. Pupils' limited vocabulary prevents them from participating in sustained discussion and they need much prompting. The good classroom attitudes that result from the school's effective and consistent approach to behaviour improve and reinforce their listening skills.
79. By the age of seven, pupils' reading skills are below average, but they make good progress. Higher attaining pupils master a range of strategies for reading and can read accurately, confidently and with some expression. They can define the main points of their stories. They use pictures, initial sounds and the context to help them when they come to a word they do not know. Average and below average pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds, which help them to work out what unfamiliar words say. They are willing to try and will correct themselves when they realise that the sentence does not make sense. They too make good use of the clues in the

pictures. Some pupils with special educational needs have great difficulties with reading because of limited knowledge of sounds and important early words. Nevertheless, they express a liking for books. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to practise their reading skills and share their books with their parents. The school makes good use of home and school diaries to involve parents and motivate pupils to higher attainment.

80. The school has responded well to the literacy hour. It is proving to be a successful way of teaching with many benefits to pupils' learning in all aspects of English. Pupils enjoy reading together as a class and are eager to join in. They appreciate, when their teacher shows them how a passage should be read, the significance of full stops and commas and this helps them to read with expression. In a very good Year 1 lesson, the teacher read the narrative of 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' and the pupils joined in the refrain and the Troll's speech. Other adults in the classroom read the part of each goat. This provided an enjoyable reading experience for the pupils who took pride in their contribution. Teachers use non-fiction big books to give pupils a wider range of reading experiences. Pupils in Year 1 read a book about a fire-fighter together with their teacher. The teacher skilfully used the text and pictures to encourage pupils to summarise facts. They learn about content pages and realise that they can quickly find what they want to know. The National Literacy Strategy has made a good contribution to teachers' planning, the grouping of pupils and the provision of work at a level appropriate to pupils' needs. It is enabling most pupils to experience success.
81. Pupils' attainment in writing is below national expectations, but compares well with that of pupils in similar schools. By the age of seven, above average pupils can write independently at some length. They are aware of full stops and commas but do not consistently use them accurately. They are aware of speech marks and can use them in the correct place. They communicate meaning in narrative well using interesting vocabulary. Their writing is lively and there are clear links between ideas. Some descriptive phrases make the writing more interesting to read. Average pupils use appropriate vocabulary and show a growing awareness of the need for punctuation in their writing. Below average pupils communicate in simple phrases showing an awareness of capital letters. Work is marked and commented on to encourage pupils to improve specific areas next time they write. All pupils regularly have spelling lists to learn and spellings are tested regularly. Higher attaining pupils quickly transfer these skills to their writing. Average and below average pupils need frequent reminders of the spelling of important key words. Pupils are taught early on the techniques of joining up their handwriting. Above average pupils make good use of their handwriting skills and their writing is clear and legible. Average and below average pupils find it more difficult to keep their handwriting to a uniform size. Some pupils with special educational needs have difficulties with pencil control and as a result some letters are ill formed.
82. The pupils respond well to their teachers. They have positive attitudes and their behaviour is good. These attitudes and behaviour contribute effectively to pupils' personal development and successfully promote learning. Pupils listen attentively. The literacy hour provides appropriate opportunities for group work and pupils co-operate well. They enjoy the plenary sessions, which support the development of their confidence. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers make effective use of the literacy strategy techniques. As a result, they teach basic skills well. Support staff are deployed well to make sure that pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are included in all the activities. These pupils make good progress because of this support and the activities, which are well matched to their ability and their level of attainment. The whole-class sessions at the beginning of the literacy lessons are particularly well taught, with teachers making the introduction to the work enjoyable. They help pupils to recall previous work and set the scene for the work to

come. By detailed questioning, the teachers assess their pupils' understanding well. There are some occasions, however, when questioning is not sufficiently focused. Teachers use information and communication technology well to support the teaching of English. Pupils are encouraged to use computers to retrieve information on topics by use of CD-ROM encyclopaedias and dictionaries. Pupils word-process simple sentences and short stories after redrafting work using correct spelling and punctuation.

83. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed. Since the previous inspection, under her leadership, writing has been a school improvement project for two years. Pupils' skills and interest in writing have benefited.

MATHEMATICS

84. Pupils' attainment has improved rapidly since the time of the last report, where standards achieved by seven-year-olds, in national tests, were well below those found in other schools. The increase is a result of the kind of teaching they have received consistently over a number of years and the effective introduction of the National Strategy for Numeracy. In fact pupils achieved higher results, in 1998, than would have been expected for their age. The school's results in national tests in 2000 were very low, but the staff predicted this temporary downturn as a result of a high number of pupils, in that year, who needed extra support in their learning. Now, the school is back on course again and most pupils achieve what would be expected for their age. The school does well when compared to other schools with a similar intake of pupils. For example, in 1999 they were well above average by comparison and in 2000, when results were weak compared to national expectations, they still managed to perform in an average way compared to similar schools.
85. The attainment of pupils by the time they are seven is generally satisfactory. Some pupils do much better. For example, in 1999 one in four pupils did better than most pupils of their age in the national tests. This demonstrates the powerful impact that teachers have had on pupils' learning, particularly in arithmetic for those capable of higher attainment. The achievement made by different groups of pupils is also good. For example, the school has a number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and several pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The support for these pupils by classroom assistants, learning support assistants and a pupil support mentor, funded by the local Education Action Zone, is very good.
86. The consistently good teaching has been responsible for these achievements. Teachers and pupils enjoy interesting and lively mathematics lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress as well as the higher achievers. Very occasionally, teaching is not satisfactory. This is due to weak management of disruptive behaviour. The headteacher's regular system of monitoring teaching and providing support has identified this and is already improving matters in this respect.
87. At its best, teaching is very well organised and pupils make very good progress during the lesson. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils, who were investigating coin values and how many coins made up a coin of a higher value, all achieved the results in good time and some even went further to suggest more sophisticated ways of counting their money. Busy work and the encouragement to find different ways to solve problems are the keynotes of successful lessons. In the most successful lessons teachers make sure that pupils have a chance to practise explaining how they achieved an answer, for example. This kind of practice in speaking and listening is not consistently applied and, in some cases, learning is not as good because of limited opportunities.

88. Pupils' interest is maintained as new ideas are taught in a variety of stimulating ways. At the time of the previous inspection pupils' knowledge of clockfaces and time was weak, but now, with the introduction of the electronic whiteboard, they are very successful at this task. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher made very good use of this whiteboard to teach graphs and then went on successfully to teach time by reading traditional clockfaces. Varied and stimulating teaching like this manages to keep the pupils engaged and interested for long periods.
89. Pupils are usually quick at arithmetic. Teachers provide well-paced mental arithmetic sessions, which help pupils to remember number facts and acquire agility when adding or subtracting. The subsequent group work tasks, in arithmetic, are well matched to pupils' levels of attainment, but work relating to shape, space, and measurement is not so well matched. Pupils tend to be set relatively the same work in these aspects of mathematics. This affects the learning of those pupils capable of higher attainment because not enough is demanded of them and the work in this aspect of mathematics is not broad enough.
90. The quality of teachers' planning is generally good and the wide range of activities chosen contributes positively to lively lessons. Computers are used well in some lessons, but there is no guarantee that they will be used in every class, or that the co-ordinator will be able to monitor their use, since they are not mentioned in the teachers' plans.
91. Over the past few years, teachers have carried out good analysis of test results to see where their teaching could be sharper or more effective. This has contributed well to the raised standards in that teachers have become very clear about what pupils need to do to reach, or exceed, expected levels. Teachers mark work very carefully in a way that is designed to boost pupils' self-esteem. There are some very good examples of teachers jotting comments on pupils' work about what they have achieved and what they need to do next. This system of marking is not yet consistent throughout the school with one or two teachers still just ticking and adding words of praise. A useful system of keeping a written record of pupils' achievements from year to year has been started. Teachers are able to see how pupils are making progress through school. This system is not yet detailed enough for teachers to be able to target improvements for every pupil to ensure that they make consistently good progress from the reception class to Year 2.
92. The management of the subject is good. Education Action Zone funds have been well used to provide additional staff training in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. They have also been used, very well, to create a mathematics games club after school where parents, children and staff meet together to just enjoy mathematics. The monitoring of teaching has also provided information that the school has used well to maintain the quality of teaching and raise standards. The key to this school's managerial success in creating better achievement is the rigorous analysis of results and self-review over many years.

SCIENCE

93. In four out of the last five years of teacher assessments, standards in science have shown an upward trend. Similarly, the number of pupils attaining higher grades has increased. This indicates that generally the higher attaining pupils are achieving better than at the time of the previous inspection. Now most pupils attain what is expected of them and some do better. Standards are broadly typical of those found in other schools for pupils of this age. Achievement is good. The curriculum is much broader than previously because teachers give better attention to experimental science and pupils regularly work from first-hand experiences. For example, the pupils in Year 1 examined torches, lamps, candles and lanterns, when studying sources of light.

Pupils very much enjoy such activities and are eager to try things out for themselves. Most pupils in a Year 2 class were able to construct a simple circuit to light up a bulb. The pupils had satisfactory reasoning skills. In response to the challenge as to why some bulbs were brighter than others were, pupils commented on the power and size of the battery and the quality of the electrical connections.

94. The pupils are very responsible when handling the delicate equipment. Behaviour is good and they co-operate well with each other, sharing resources and taking turns. Although levels of adult support in classrooms are normally good, the teacher still expects pupils, especially the older ones, to work independently for some of the time, and pupils do so with sustained levels of concentration. For example, they word-process information they have found out for themselves about electric circuits. The additional adult support is often directed towards supporting children with special educational needs, who make good progress.
95. Teaching and learning is good. Teachers pay good attention to the safety issues associated with the subject, by explaining and questioning pupils about electrical dangers for example. Increasing use is made of information and communication technology to support the teaching of the subject. As part of the programme for finding things out for themselves pupils use both books and CD-ROMS. Science is usually taught as a long afternoon session and whilst this worked well in one lesson it was less successful in another lesson where there was too little gain in knowledge within the time available. In all classrooms, teachers have set up displays as a stimulus to the chosen topic, light and colour displays for example. Where teachers have added questions there is more challenge to pupils' thinking. Too little use is made in these displays to celebrate the scientific writing and drawing of pupils themselves. Nevertheless, pupils are encouraged to find ways of recording their own work in their exercise books and low level tasks of colouring in pictures, an identified weakness in the previous inspection report, have disappeared. An ever-increasing variety of ways of recording can be seen in the books of pupils as they move through school.
96. Over the past few years subject leadership has been very good. Improvements have been made to the curriculum and test results carefully analysed to find pointers of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching. There is a clear programme of work based on topics such as 'Ourselves' and 'Forces', which reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has gathered a good range of quality resources covering these topics to support the teaching and the commitment to giving pupils first-hand experiences in their learning. Too little attention is paid to recording and tracking either group or individual attainment in order to inform teachers effectively as to whether pupils are making the appropriate progress.

ART AND DESIGN

97. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection; judgements have been formed on discussions with teachers and pupils, analysis of teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' work. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in the acquisition of skills and their understanding of art as an expressive medium; this includes pupils with special educational needs. Work is generally of a good standard with some of high quality. Pupils are able to explore and experiment with a range of different media. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when art was judged to be sound and progress was satisfactory
98. Much of the artwork is based on a wide selection of artists' work. Teachers choose the examples very well to illustrate the technique they are teaching. This was the case, for example, when pupils studied the use of warm and cold tones and looked at the work of Chagall,

identifying the cold colours in his painting 'The snow-covered church.' L.S.Lowry's 'Street Scene' was used as a contrast to find colours that engendered warmth. In a similar way, when making clay pots, pupils studied the work of Clarice Cliff before they made colourful impressions of her 'Bizarre' collection using oil pastels. Pupils took great delight in explaining their work, which was of good quality. They build up a good understanding of famous artists and their work. They make a study of pattern seen in the classroom and on the skins of animals. They reproduce in a variety of media what they see. Their use of colour is good in all their painting. They experiment well with colour mixing of pastels.

99. Year 2 continue to be inspired by the work of famous artists. They study Van Gogh's self-portrait and produce their own collage self-portraits alongside the artist in residence. Some particularly good experimentation arose from their study of Gauguin's 'Rocks in the Sea'. They experimented with pastel chalks to represent the colour of the sky and marbling inks to capture the movement of the sea. They had fun flicking paint and sand to create the texture of the beach. They can confidently and accurately describe how they mix colours to get darker and lighter tones.
100. Art and design is co-ordinated well. Samples of work are kept that help teachers discuss how successful work is and how it could be improved even further. Resources are very good. The co-ordinator ensures that all staff have good knowledge of techniques by the provision of activity booklets which she has compiled. Another strength is that opportunities are made for pupils to work alongside outside specialists either in school or as a Year 2 class did at Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. There they learned about and practised their skills in origami and calligraphy. The co-ordinator acknowledges and celebrates pupils' efforts in attractive displays of their work around the school. Although pupils have sketchbooks they are somewhat under used. Areas for development include the use of information and communication technology and an enlargement of the multicultural dimension.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Attainment is in line with standards that are expected at the age of seven. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress. Pupils are given relevant experiences using a range of materials and tools to cover the designing and making process.
102. Teaching has a good impact on learning. Teachers are clear about the skills to be developed and they give clear explanations of the work to be completed, which allow the pupils to plan their work in a logical way. There was good emphasis on health and safety implications when a teacher stopped a lesson because she saw scissors being used incorrectly. The majority can use scissors carefully and can cut round zigzags and circles with reasonable accuracy and confidence. Teachers intervene effectively to help pupils with their difficulties and this enables all pupils to have a measure of success and create as good an outcome as possible. Since the last inspection, work has been set in a meaningful context. Teachers make many opportunities to develop links with other subjects. In science, pupils had studied healthy eating. In design and technology they designed a package for the food. They made clocks to complement their work in mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 have the experience of assembling and joining materials. They use construction kits well to find out about forces using cogs as mechanisms.
103. Pupils know that they need to plan for their work because teachers make increasing demands in respect of the presentation and complexity of their designs from a simple sketch in Year 1 to more involved stages of planning in Year 2. They evaluate their work, which may be just through drawing a smiley or sad face in Year 1 but in Year 2 they write a sentence. Teachers encourage pupils to make use of a range of resources including re-cycled materials and

commercial kits. Some pupils show their enthusiasm for the subject by bringing into school objects, which they have made at home, showing innovation in selecting materials, which are available to them there.

104. Subject leadership is good. It is clear that there has been sustained development of the subject over time. There are very good resources and these are used well. However, there is insufficient use of professionally made models to give pupils ideas for their own work. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to talk about their work during and at the end of the lesson. This omission restricts their development in spoken English.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

105. Standards in geography are satisfactory and have been maintained since the last inspection. In history, pupils' progress is slower, and pupils' attainment is lower than that expected in most schools. It is restricted by pupils' weak skills in describing and explaining what happened in the past. For example, in one lesson they had difficulty in discussing how people communicated before the invention of the telephone. By the age of seven, pupils have a basic understanding of the differences between the past and their lives today, but have difficulty in going any deeper in their appreciation of the past.
106. Although no teaching was seen in geography, planning is well formulated and builds on earlier learning and good use is made of the local environment. Pupils interviewed were developing knowledge and skills appropriately. Teaching in history is lively and very well prepared, but teachers often struggle to help pupils understand how the past is different from the present and why people, years ago, acted like they did. Learning in geography is often more successful because it is about where pupils live and their current experiences and they find these easier to talk about.
107. In geography pupils have been introduced well to concepts of maps and journeys. They have explored fictional journeys from stories like 'Rosie's Walk' by P. Hutchinson, and used terminology like 'house', 'path', 'river', and 'woods'. They have drawn maps of the school and its grounds. They have developed their understanding of co-ordinates and used this knowledge to indicate where the 'buried treasure' is located on an island map.
108. In history, teachers often create stimulating lessons. The ways in which teachers explain things and ask questions are good and the pace and structure of lessons are well judged. Good use is made of resources like books, artefacts borrowed from the local museum, photographs, CD-ROMs and videotapes. Teachers are very effective in ensuring that all pupils are fully involved in lessons, and pupils with special needs are well supported by teaching and resources. This leads to satisfactory achievements, taking account of the pupils' prior attainment. However, the majority of pupils find great difficulty in understanding the concepts of 'past', 'change' and 'chronology' and in appreciating the different ways in which we can find out about the past. Many have difficulty too in formulating their ideas orally and in writing. Consequently, despite the best efforts of their teachers, their progress is slow. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson observed acquired some knowledge about who Alexander Bell was and what he invented. They had great difficulty, however, in considering, even in simple terms, how people contacted one another before the telephone was invented and the impact of this invention upon society. They were also limited in their skills in recording their knowledge in writing.
109. Both subjects are very well led and managed. The school's curriculum in these subjects has already been modified to take account of the new National Curriculum. There are good

resources in terms of books, artefacts and other materials and they are used well. Effective use is also made of the local environment and visits to place of historical interest further afield.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. The standards attained by pupils are typical of those expected for pupils of this age. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant improvements in both the schools' resources and the expertise of staff. Consequently teachers' expectations have risen and pupils' achievements are good.
111. Using the recently installed electronic whiteboard, teachers can clearly demonstrate and pupils eagerly participate in stimulating whole-class lessons. The teaching and learning is good. The teachers' good subject knowledge and their confident use of the equipment enables them to develop pupils' skills in small steps of learning. In lessons, pupils are attentive, interested, well behaved and keen to have their turn. They are enthusiastic about working with computers. In these sessions pupils with special educational needs participate effectively in the work and make satisfactory progress.
112. In Year 2 pupils quickly learn how to save their computer-generated drawings. Most pupils understand the sequence of events needed to save a piece of work. Some pupils, when working by themselves at individual computers, can confidently save work with the minimum of oversight by an adult.
113. Teachers, often with the support of the subject co-ordinator, incorporate information and communication technology into lessons across the curriculum. In science, pupils are able to retrieve information from CD-ROMs on such topics as forces. In mathematics pupils use computer systems to draw a variety of graphs based on data they have collected. For example, they make graphs of their favourite colours. However, these activities are not often written into the planning, which restricts the subject leader's ability to monitor the work being undertaken.
114. Pupils' work indicates a satisfactory range of experiences. In graphic work, there is much interesting work. One pupil successfully created a beautiful image of a church by using a repeating block pattern. Other pupils make good use of the potential of the software to create interesting symmetrical patterns. In word-processing there is clear progression in the work between Year 1 and Year 2. They progress from skills such as being able to use capital letters and full stops, to the ability to change the size and colour of the text. Some of this work is effectively supporting their work in literacy. However, in many classrooms, insufficient use is made of the computers to consolidate the various aspects of pupils' learning.
115. The subject benefits from very effective leadership. The systematic programme of training, provided by the co-ordinator for teachers and classroom assistants, has considerably enhanced the confidence of all staff. The current development plan is a comprehensive document and there is clear evidence of a broadening of the curriculum in the past few years. Funds from a variety of sources have been spent wisely. The school now has a favourable number of modern computers that use similar operating systems which benefits pupils learning. There is no system in place to track pupils' progress, but the school has already begun to give consideration as to how it might address this area for development.

MUSIC

116. The pupils are making satisfactory progress and standards are at the expected level. Performance overall is not as good as at the last inspection when pupils' attainment was above average. This reflects naturally occurring differences between years and some variability in quality of teaching.
117. By the time they are seven, most pupils sing with enthusiasm and hold the melody and rhythm well. This results from well-organised weekly hymn practices as well as from teaching in lessons. Younger pupils are keen to listen to music and to join in performing and composing activities. They explore different ways in which sounds can be made and appreciate repeating patterns. Most can identify short and long sounds in a piece they have listened to and can perform long and short sounds on percussion instruments. Teaching engages pupils' attention well with material that relates to topical events like bonfire night. For instance, in a lesson observed, the pupils listened and identified long and short sounds in Handel's 'Water Music' and then had to compose fireworks music of their own, exploring different sounds made with foil. The children responded enthusiastically to the listening, performing and composing activities and their learning progressed well. Occasionally learning is not so good. For example, in a lesson with older pupils, teaching was slow in pace, and consequently the initial keenness to play the instruments soon dissipated and pupils became restless. This led to unsatisfactory learning. Pupils, however, know the names of a range of instruments, can play both tuned and untuned instruments appropriately, and understand simple aspects of pitch, duration and dynamics. A number were able to appreciate that it is possible to play both short and long sounds on the same instrument; as, for instance, in allowing the triangle to resonate and then stopping it with your fingers.
118. The subject is very well managed. Curriculum development is good and arrangements to introduce the new National Curriculum are well advanced. Good professional training opportunities are provided; for instance, recently a music specialist from the local education authority worked with all year groups to extend the teachers' appreciation of different teaching methods. Two recorder groups meet regularly after school. Pupils that attend learn well and this successfully extends the curriculum. Recent visits by professional musicians have introduced children to instruments from around the world and to the music of Africa and this has had a good impact on pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Pupils make satisfactory progress and they achieve standards that match those found in other schools for pupils of this age. This standard has been satisfactorily maintained since the last inspection in 1996.
120. Teaching is satisfactory and it has a reasonably positive effect on pupils' achievements, but it could be better with a greater emphasis on involving pupils in the assessment of their own work. The strength of the teaching stems from the very well organised programme of work for gymnastics, games and dance that has been implemented since the school was last inspected. This results in lessons in which pupils have the opportunity to explore a wide range of basic skills. They have confidence at these skills in lessons that are well organised to include all pupils irrespective of physical ability. Class assistants are deployed well to help pupils, who find the activities more challenging, to get the most out of the work. This has a positive influence on pupils' learning whether they are throwing and catching balls or finding different ways to travel along a bench. Achievement of physical tasks is often good in these well-organised lessons. The look of concentration on the faces of pupils as they roll down the apparatus and land neatly

on the mat indicates how well they are trying and succeeding. Pupils have been well trained to exercise safely. They help to get out and put away the equipment showing good sense.

121. The main drawback to the teaching is that lessons rarely contain opportunities for pupils to discuss how well they have done and what they thought of other pupils' performances. The assessment of pupils' work is identified in teachers' plans and lessons contain many examples of teachers doing the talking about what is going well and what could be improved, but pupils are not involved enough in this part of the lesson.
122. The good relationship, which exists between teachers and pupils, ensures that pupils enjoy the lessons, concentrate well and work hard. Occasionally, pupils get too excited and chatter too much while the lesson is proceeding and the teacher is explaining. This has a limiting effect on their learning. They accomplish the tasks, but do not concentrate so well on the finer points for improvement. For example, in a dance lesson where the pupils were recreating the movement of fireworks the sparkler and rocket effects could have been so much better had the pupils listened properly to the teacher's comments.
123. Lessons are very well augmented by other activities during the school day that have a positive effect on pupils' learning in general. They have enjoyed sessions designed to keep them fit, Indian and Caribbean dance demonstrations, parachute games and sports days.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. Pupils' attainment at age seven is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject is well led. The Agreed Syllabus has been introduced successfully, with some revisions, by the co-ordinator since the previous inspection. Teaching is sound and pupils' achievements are generally satisfactory, but good in lessons where pupils' powers of explanation and discussion receive due emphasis and are developed well. They learn about Christianity, Hinduism and Islam in lessons, which are usually well planned and follow the syllabus closely. Pupils enjoy learning about these religions, and their involvement and attitudes are often good.
125. Pupils in Year 2 know that Diwali is a celebration in India and by Hindus in this country. They know that people light candles and they can talk about the story of Rama and Sita. They are aware that not everyone celebrates Diwali. They know that Christmas celebrates the birth of God's son. They know that people who believe this are Christians. They have awareness that God is everywhere, even in Scotland as one pupil recalled. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used first-hand evidence when she asked a pupil of Indian descent to show how she had celebrated Diwali.
126. Year 1 pupils recognise the importance of names. They know that God is called by other names in other religions. They were able to identify positive qualities in their friends in the class. Pupils gain the confidence to express themselves in lessons that place a great emphasis on discussion. The way that speaking is developed is a strength of this subject. However, because there is so little written work, particularly in Year 2, it is difficult for teachers to gauge pupils' progress overtime. Pupils currently do not have enough opportunities to record what they know.