

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TOWER ROAD SCHOOL**

Boston

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120688

Headteacher: Mr. D. Loyd

Reporting inspector: Lynne Read  
21199

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 224657

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ashlawn Drive  
Boston  
Lincolnshire

Postcode: PE21 9PX

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Mears

Date of previous inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
L Read, 21199	Registered inspector	Special educational needs	What sort of school is it?
			What should the school do to improve further?
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			School's results and achievements
D Haynes, 9505	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
P L Roberts, 7399	Team inspector	History	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		Geography	
J E Gibson, 18618	Team inspector	Art and design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Music	
K Johnson, 18370	Team inspector	The foundation stage	
		English	
		Religious education	
G Longton, 21910	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
M Galowalia, 20832	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	
		English as an additional language	
		Science	
		Information and communication technology	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Tower Road School is larger than most primary schools nationally, having 603 pupils on roll from the reception class to Year 6. There are four smaller classes in the reception year that share a common open plan base. From Year 1 to Year 6 there are three single age classes in each year group. Pupils in Year 6 are grouped by prior attainment into four sets for mathematics and science. Just over 11 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and this is a higher proportion than that found nationally.

The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is just over four per cent, well below the national average. This low figure is indicative of the school's commitment to early identification of problems and to the success of learning programmes designed to tackle them. There is a systematic movement of pupils onto and off the register as difficulties are overcome. Just over one per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need, which is broadly in line with the national average. The school has a strong commitment to full integration into mainstream education for all pupils, including those with physical disability. Pupils are drawn from varied housing and socio-economic backgrounds. Many parents choose to travel some distance and pass other schools in order to have their child educated at Tower Road. The school's good reputation results in great demand for places and it is constantly over-subscribed. Very few pupils leave or enter the school. The vast majority of those who do, are children of parents employed at the local hospital on short term contracts. The school does not have a nursery but maintains very good links with the local playgroups. Attainment on entry varies widely from child to child and across the areas of learning. Overall, it is broadly average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school achieves very good standards at the end of both key stages. Teaching is mainly very good, and a significant proportion is excellent. Leadership is very firmly focused on constant improvement. The school provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in reading and mathematics by the age of seven are well above the national average, in writing they are above and for science, they are very high indeed. At age eleven, standards in English are above the national average and well above for mathematics and science.
- Teaching is never less than satisfactory. In 33 per cent of lessons it is good, in 40 per cent it is very good and it is excellent in 13 per cent of lessons.
- Very good use is made of information gathered about pupils' learning to plan future lessons, especially in English and mathematics.
- Pupils have high standards of behaviour, very positive attitudes to learning and there are excellent relationships throughout school.
- Excellent strategic leadership is provided by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team and the governors for the work of the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and excellent for those who have a statement of special educational need.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good.
- There is very good provision of a diverse and interesting range of extra-curricular activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- Attainment in writing, by providing more planned opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and extend their skills across other subjects in the curriculum.
- The development of curriculum co-ordination in all other subjects to the good standard already in place for English 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 June, 1996. There has been good improvement since then in planning for the curriculum and the development of assessment systems. Teaching and learning objectives are clearly established and programmes of work ensure that pupils make sustained progress. The governing body is now very effective and has a strategic, active role in the leadership and management of the school. All members are involved in spending decisions and keep a close eye on the outcomes in terms of improved provision. Collective worship is held daily for all pupils, including those in the reception class. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is now implemented. Reporting to parents is fully in accordance with legislation. The curriculum co-ordinator's role for English and mathematics has been developed, with effective programmes of monitoring planning and lessons and direct involvement in target setting. Similar, appropriate provision, however, has not yet been extended to other subjects of the National Curriculum. This results in some anomalies in planning, time allocation and resourcing for these areas. The school has recognised this area of development as a priority in the school improvement plan.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	A	B	C
Mathematics	C	C	A	A
Science	C	D	A	B

Key	
Very high	A*
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

This year's test results for pupils aged eleven show that the number achieving the nationally expected level four is above average in English. For mathematics and science, the results are well above average. This represents very good improvement in mathematics from 1999 when attainment was average and in science, where results were below average. In English, the improvement in writing is below the national trend and this accounts for the relatively lower grade. Attainment for information technology is in line with expectations for similar aged pupils nationally. Standards in religious education match the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

The results for pupils aged seven show that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level 2 in reading are well above average and above average for writing. For mathematics and science, results show attainment to be well above average with very high achievements in science placing the school in the top 5 percent in the country. Again, this represents very good improvement in reading, which was average in 1999, but only satisfactory gains in writing. For mathematics, improvement is good and it is very good for science. Rigorous target setting and improved quality of teaching are largely responsible for the school's improved results in 2000. Evidence from work seen in the inspection confirms that these improved standards are maintained throughout the age groups. The school meets the targets set for English and exceeds those for mathematics and science.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are very well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school in lessons, on the playground and during extra-curricular activities.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent and make a significant contribution to the good rate of learning and to the school's vibrant, secure atmosphere.
Attendance	Attendance is consistently high and pupils arrive on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good with a high proportion of excellent teaching	Very good with some excellent teaching.	Mostly good with an almost equal proportion of very good and excellent teaching.

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

Teaching is never less than satisfactory throughout the school. In 13 per cent of lessons it is excellent, in a further 40 per cent it is very good. Thirty three per cent of teaching is good and 14 per cent is satisfactory. The high quality of teaching has a strong impact on the good standards that pupils attain, including those with special educational needs. Very good standards of teaching are evident in the reception class with an almost equal amount of excellent lessons. There is very effective teamwork amongst the teachers and classroom assistants that ensures excellent planning and activities that are carefully designed to cater for individual need. This allows pupils to make very good progress, especially in literacy and numeracy skills and in personal and social development. In Key Stage 1 observations the majority of teaching was very good with excellent lessons accounting for almost 10 per cent. At Key Stage 2, the majority of teaching was good with an almost equal amount of very good and excellent lessons seen. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good at both key stages with teachers developing skills in literacy and numeracy very effectively.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good, broad and interesting curriculum. Pupils have access to a wide range of learning opportunities both during and beyond the school day.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	For those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, provision is excellent with individualised programmes for support. All pupils have full access to all areas of school life. There is very good provision for pupils who are on the school's register of special educational need.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision. No specialist support is provided by the local education authority but teachers assess progress and set suitable targets for further learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for social and moral development from the reception class onwards is very good. For spiritual and cultural development it is satisfactory. There is a strong sense of community and pupils are proud of their school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good day-to-day practice ensures a high standard of pupil welfare. Effective procedures for assessing academic progress lead to the setting of appropriate targets and ensure that lessons build on prior learning. Positive strategies to promote good behaviour are very effective.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. It involves them in school life and encourages them to take an active part in their children's learning. In return, parents ensure that children arrive for lessons on time and are well prepared for a hard day's work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and direction for the work of the school. Together with the deputy and senior management team, he provides very good management. Curriculum co-ordinators, other than those responsible for English and mathematics, do not yet fully monitor provision in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors provide excellent leadership and very good management. They know the strengths of the school and the areas needing development. They are fully involved in planning for school improvement. They are totally committed to the aims of Tower Road and have a very strong role in shaping the direction of the school's work through long-term action planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are very good for English and mathematics and good for science. Teachers analyse test data to monitor pupil progress and attainment. Senior management and governors maintain an accurate overall view of performance and use it to inform whole school planning.
The strategic use of resources	The governors and headteacher manage school finances prudently, carefully linking expenditure to identified areas for development. The principles of best value are applied, with governors evaluating spending decisions in terms of improved provision but not in terms of gains in pupils' learning.

The school has a good number of staff to maintain the governors' priority of small classes and to teach the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and religious education. The accommodation is of a high standard and extremely well maintained due to the efforts of a conscientious site manager. The extensive grounds provide an excellent resource for leisure, extra-curricular activities and physical education. The purpose built sports hall and newly developed 'techzone' are notable features of the buildings and are well used to enhance pupils' learning. Day to day administration is very efficient.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The progress that their children make.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching.</li> <li>• Good opportunities for approaching teachers and good communications.</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour and discipline.</li> <li>• Attention to the development of personal skills and the rounded education that the school provides.</li> <li>• School leadership and management.</li> <li>• Pupils enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• The range and quality of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information on individual pupils' progress.</li> <li>• Information on the new teaching strategies (especially literacy and numeracy) and how they can help at home.</li> <li>• Access to extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The inspection team almost entirely supports the parents' very positive views of the school. However, inspection can not support the parents' view on restricted access to extra-curricular activities. The school provides a very interesting range of lunchtime and after school clubs of a social, sporting and academic nature that are extremely well supported by children from all year groups. This often leads to over-subscription but all pupils are entered on a waiting list and accommodated the following term or half term.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Results of the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds show the number of pupils achieving the expected level four to be above the national average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level five is above average for all the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. At the end of Key Stage 1, when pupils are seven years of age, the results show the percentage attaining the expected level two in reading to be well above average and above average for writing. For mathematics and science, results show the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level two to be well above average. High achievements in science place the school in the top 5 per cent in the country. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level three is well above the national average in reading, average in writing, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. There has been a very good improvement in attainment overall since the last inspection and especially over the last year. However, the rate of improvement in writing for eleven year olds is below the national trend and the comparative grade has gone from well above average to above average. The school has already begun to look at this issue. During the inspection, lesson observations, scrutiny of completed work and discussions with pupils indicate that improvements in the levels of attainment, across most areas and for all age groups are sustained. When compared to similar schools, attainment for eleven year olds is average in English, above average for science and well above average for mathematics.
2. Children enter the reception class with greatly varying levels of prior experience and learning. A significant number of children have speech and language difficulties. An analysis of the assessments on entry shows that approximately one third of the intake know most of their letter sounds and have above average skills in communication, language and literacy, whilst the remainder are average or below average. In mathematical understanding, most are competent in counting and recognising numbers but most do not have a sound concept of mathematics. For example, a significant proportion have difficulty in counting a set of objects accurately and with 1 to 1 correspondence. Children enter school with broadly average skills in creative and physical development. Their knowledge of the world is in line with what is expected for this age group but there are wide variations. Some children's knowledge is poor, whilst for approximately one third it is good. Most have satisfactory skills in personal development and quickly settle in to the routines of school life. Taking into consideration the balance of skills displayed, attainment on entry is broadly average. By the age of five, most pupils reach the attainment expected of them in all the areas of their learning with approximately one third working at an above average level in communication, language, literacy and mathematical understanding. This represents good progress.
3. At Key Stage 1, pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with very good progress evident in science. Many average and below average pupils make very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They have a useful range of reading strategies to tackle unfamiliar text and know the main features of fiction and non-fiction books. Their writing is sequenced into well punctuated sentences. In mathematics, pupils add and subtract quickly and accurately, using both pen and paper methods and mental computation. The higher achievers make satisfactory progress in writing. This could be improved by providing more opportunities

for writing in different styles in other areas of the curriculum. For information technology and religious education, standards are at the expected levels for the age group and progress is satisfactory. By the time pupils reach seven years of age, skills in physical education are above average and progress is very good. For all other subjects pupils attain standards that are at least in line with national expectations, and make good gains in their learning.

4. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress in English, although attainment in writing is below that of reading. This is because more opportunities are needed for pupils to consolidate their skills by writing for different purposes across the curriculum. Learning in mathematics and science is at least good and often very good. Pupils' reading is fluent with good levels of comprehension, including skills of inference and deduction. Writing is lively and thoughtful with good attention paid to maintaining the readers' interest. In mathematics, pupils' skills in mental computation are especially well developed. They are confident in organising and recording data. All pupils use effective strategies in solving problems and are careful to check the accuracy of their work. When the end of Key Stage 2 test results for the year 2000 are compared with the 1996 end of Key Stage 1 figures, they show good progress overall for this cohort of pupils. For information and communications technology, pupils make very good progress in communicating and presenting information but there are limited opportunities for monitoring and sensing, resulting in just satisfactory progress for this aspect. Attainment overall for this subject is in line with national expectations. Satisfactory progress is made in religious education, resulting in attainment that is in line with what might be expected by age eleven. For physical education, attainment is above national expectations and learning is good. In all other subjects, attainment is in line with national averages by the age of eleven with higher achieving pupils attaining appropriate advanced levels.
5. Consistent rates of learning that are never less than good in English, mathematics and science are evident in the school's test results at both key stages. The introduction of a whole school target setting process has led to accurate, analysed assessment of pupils' attainment, translated into the setting of challenging learning targets and complemented by an improved focus in teaching. As a result, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels two and four respectively at ages seven and eleven is largely well above the national average. However, the numbers of pupils attaining expected levels in writing is not as high as above average.
6. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make very good progress in relation to prior learning throughout the school. Specific needs are carefully assessed, a tailored learning programme is devised and there are regular evaluations of success. Some pupils in lower Key Stage 2 follow a 'catch up' scheme where progress is rapid. Those pupils who have a statement of educational need receive sensitive, unobtrusive support in all activities and make excellent progress in academic, personal and social education.
7. Pupils who have English as a second language have similar patterns of attainment to their peers by the age of eleven. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged and they achieve advanced levels of attainment.

8. Attendance at a wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances learning and achievement in some subjects, especially physical education. The completion of homework tasks, especially for the older pupils is another factor in successful learning.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good and contribute greatly to the positive learning environment that exists. This is a strength of the school. During lessons pupils are well motivated, work hard and respond very positively to encouragement. They behave in an exemplary fashion, sharing resources, listening to each other thoughtfully and offering constructive suggestions. Pupils follow instructions carefully, set to work quickly and usually meet set deadlines. They tidy away willingly after lessons and are very sensible when engaged in practical tasks. Parents commend the school highly for its success in developing very positive attitudes amongst pupils. In returned questionnaires, 94 per cent agree that the school helps pupils to become mature and 85 per cent say that behaviour is good. At the meeting, parents told how their children's enthusiasm for learning extends beyond the school day, with many pupils keen to attend extra-curricular activities and most eager to complete their homework assignments to a good standard.
10. The school's aims and values are clearly reflected in the pupils' behaviour in the classroom and around the school. Relationships amongst all members of the school community, regardless of ethnic or social background, are excellent. They are founded on a combination of mutual respect and trust. All staff know their pupils very well and celebrate the strengths and idiosyncrasies of each individual. Pupils respond positively to the consideration they are shown, demonstrating a healthy respect for the basic rules that exist. During the inspection, a lunchtime supervisor was observed dealing very effectively with the outcome of a minor altercation that was settled quickly and amicably. During lunchtime and after school clubs, excellent social relations are fostered, as pupils play competitive games or quietly chat about activities, such as calligraphy.
11. Pupils are polite and confident when communicating with adults. They have a very strong identity with the school and all treat the building and resources with great respect. To the pupils' credit, the premises are free from vandalism and graffiti and there is no problem with litter. No bullying or other inappropriate behaviour was observed. There have been no exclusions in recent years and this is another indication of the very good levels of behaviour.
12. Pupils are at ease expressing their feelings to the class teacher and in front of their fellow pupils, especially in personal, health and social lessons where they frequently offer thought provoking contributions. They show a healthy respect for the beliefs and feelings of others and, almost instinctively, offer help and support where it is needed. A notable feature of the school is the 'paired reading' project that takes place on four mornings before school starts. Older pupils give their time freely to help younger ones who need or request additional practice with their reading or spelling. All pupils who take part express great enjoyment and benefit. Parents also commented on the success of this initiative in the development of confidence and maturity, across all the age groups.

13. All pupils are well aware of environmental issues, with classes collecting waste paper at the end of each day for recycling. Pupils take responsibility for jobs around school. They prepare and clear the hall at assemblies and return the registers to the office after Monday morning registration. They start-up and close down the computers in the new "techzone", taking care to check all equipment is in order. Some pupils also have classroom responsibilities that help in the organisation and smooth running of the day. Through assemblies, religious education lessons and support of charities, pupils develop a wider perspective on life and an awareness of those less fortunate than themselves.
14. Attendance has been maintained at a similar, excellent level to that found in the previous inspection and is above the national average. There has been no unauthorised absence over the last year. Registration procedures are quickly and efficiently undertaken, with many teachers taking the opportunity to welcome each pupil individually at the start of the day. There are very few latecomers which is a further indication of pupils' eagerness and commitment.

### HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. During the inspection, 116 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and most of the teaching was very good. In detail: in 14 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory, in 33 per cent it was good; in 40 per cent it was very good and in 13 per cent it was excellent. This represents a vast improvement since the last inspection, as illustrated in the table below. The quality of teaching is now a major strength of the school.

	<b>1996 inspection</b>	<b>2000 inspection</b>
Good, very good and excellent teaching	44 per cent	86 per cent
Satisfactory teaching	44 per cent	14 per cent
Unsatisfactory teaching	12 per cent	Nil

16. The foundation stage caters for children up to the age of five and is more commonly referred to as the reception class. Overall for this age group teaching is mostly very good, with a high proportion of lessons producing an excellent grade. In detail; teaching in four out of ten lessons was excellent, in five out of ten lessons it was very good and in one out of ten lessons it was good. At Key Stage 1, teaching was mainly very good with nine per cent judged as excellent, 56 per cent as very good, 17 per cent as good and 18 per cent as satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 teaching was mostly good with an almost equal proportion of very good and excellent lessons seen. In detail, 11 per cent of teaching was excellent, 28 per cent was very good, 46 per cent was good and 15 per cent was satisfactory.
17. One of the major strengths of teaching at Tower Road that was observed in all lessons is the teachers' skills in establishing excellent relationships with the pupils. A secure, industrious atmosphere pervades the school and this encourages very good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Parents' returned questionnaires show that 95 per cent agree that the school expects pupils to work hard. The same sentiments were very strongly repeated at the parents' meeting.

18. Teachers have a good understanding of the most effective ways to teach literacy and numeracy and are successful in supporting pupils to develop skills in these areas. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well planned and structured, there is a good pace to learning and high expectations of both behaviour and independent working. Teachers' knowledge of information and communications technology has been greatly extended through a consolidated training programme.
19. Across the whole school, including the reception class, teachers make clear to pupils what is to be learnt, giving a clear focus to the lesson. They often conclude lessons with a focused session to assess learning, tackle any misconceptions and to congratulate pupils on their successes. These are very effective strategies in creating a purpose for pupils' learning, ensuring continued motivation and informing future lesson planning. Lesson preparation is very good. Carefully chosen resources are organised and are readily available, pupils' books and other consumables are always to hand and classroom routines are well established. The result is that the maximum amount of time is used for learning and this makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. In the Foundation Stage, pupils are constantly encouraged to use their skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematical understanding in all their work. In Key Stages 1 and 2, skills in literacy and, to a larger extent, numeracy are sometimes used to extend learning in other subject areas but the practice is patchy and these important areas are not sufficiently integrated into planning. This results in few opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their competence in writing.
20. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or who may be experiencing learning difficulty is very good throughout the school and enables them to make good gains in learning. The requirements of individual education plans are built into daily activities and designated teaching and support staff provide intensive, targeted sessions to meet individual and group needs. This ensures that all pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school community and that all develop good levels of self-confidence.
21. In the Foundation Stage, the four teachers and support staff work closely together as a team to meet learning targets. Pupils of differing abilities and prior experiences are very well catered for through a rigorous assessment process that directly informs the setting of future tasks. There is an appropriate balance between adult directed and child selected activity and staff often exploit children's own interests as a means of promoting and extending learning. Teachers pay great attention to establishing routines and to developing confidence and independence in their pupils. This sets a very firm foundation for later learning.
22. At Key Stage 1, classroom organisation and management is highly effective and efficient. An important feature of the teaching is the constant level of interaction that results in valuable feedback and assessment, good levels of support and the setting of new challenges. Work is planned to cater for pupils who have differing levels of prior attainment so that higher achievers are challenged and pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, either by adult support or tasks designed especially to help them meet their learning targets. There is a suitable emphasis on teaching the basic skills, including phonics. In one lesson, pupils were engaged in a 'class game' that involved identification of letter sounds at the beginning, middle and ends of words. This interactive activity led to very good progress and much enjoyment. Teachers are skilled in leading oral work and in extending pupils' thinking. They plan a good balance of practical and recorded activities to provide a rich level of experience and opportunities for independent learning. However, more opportunities are needed for pupils to extend their skills of writing rather than using worksheets to record.



Resources are generally used well but the computers in this phase are under utilised to extend learning in other subjects.

23. At Key Stage 2 directed and differentiated questioning is well used to involve all pupils. Oral contributions are valued and handled sensitively. Teachers often set open ended tasks that allow pupils to ask their own questions or to engage in research. Very good use is made of exposition and demonstration. A commendable feature of teaching for the older pupils is the challenging pace of lessons and the development of mental agility. For example, in one numeracy lesson, pupils worked at increasing speed and accuracy in mental computation, then went on to use the results of previous research to calculate mode and range. As an extension activity, the teacher then introduced the retrieval of raw data from a spreadsheet and revised work on mean and median. Excellent progress was thus achieved. Teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' books shows insufficient emphasis on the extension and enhancement of writing skills when studying other areas of the curriculum. For example, there are missed opportunities for pupils to recount experiments in science or events in history, to write instructions in design and technology, to use explanatory texts when writing about geographical phenomena or employ a discursive style in religious education.
24. Teachers make very good use of the school grounds and rich local environment, especially in the teaching of science, geography, history and physical education. Visiting specialists, such as the local archaeologist inspire pupils and provide additional expertise in the planning and delivery of lessons. Homework is well used to consolidate and practise learning. The employment of specialist teachers for swimming and extra-curricular music is very effective and produces good results.

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

25. The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum that gives all pupils access to a wide range of learning experiences both during and beyond the school day. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, health and social education. Issues relating to planning, the setting of teaching targets and learning objectives that were identified in the last report have all been fully addressed. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are successfully implemented.
26. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils under five years of age in the reception classes are excellent and a strength of the school. The curriculum for these very young children is based on the nationally recognised areas of learning and provides a solid foundation for later schoolwork. Children transfer very smoothly into the National Curriculum programmes of study when they enter the next class.
27. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum for religious education had only recently been introduced and did not meet statutory requirements. There have been good improvements here and learning now covers all areas of the locally agreed syllabus. Planning of the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 was a further issue with weaknesses identified in providing continuity and progression and in defining clear learning objectives. Again, substantial progress has been made in this area. The school has in place agreed schemes of work for each subject except personal, health and social education, which is in the draft stage. These are based on a combination of recommendations from the Government's Curriculum and Qualifications Authority, aspects of the National Curriculum guidance and commercial schemes. For literacy

and numeracy, planning follows the appropriate frameworks of the national strategies. There has been a recent, full review of schemes to ensure that pupils have a relevant, challenging and progressive programme of learning that builds effectively on prior attainments. Teachers within each year group plan together on a week by week basis, following the agreed schemes to ensure uniformity of approach across the three parallel classes. This also allows teachers to take consideration of their assessments in planning what to teach next. There are clear learning objectives and these are often communicated to pupils at the beginning of lessons, especially in classes for older pupils. The deputy headteacher, as curriculum leader, together with members of the senior management team monitor planning, checking time allocations and breadth of study.

28. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the National Literacy Strategy has been introduced successfully and continues to develop, for example through planned learning opportunities for older pupils to develop more extended pieces of writing. However, planned opportunities for writing in other subject areas are limited and do not allow pupils to consolidate skills in non-fiction work. The Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very successfully through opportunities for practical work, an emphasis on the use of mathematical language and by setting for the older pupils. The curriculum for physical education is particularly good and leads to sustained, good levels of progress. Opportunities and experiences are diverse and include tuition on the new climbing wall in the sports hall. The quality and range of classroom learning experiences in music for the older pupils are sometimes limited, especially in performing.
29. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school and ensures that they make very good progress. The statutory Code of Practice is in place and early identification of difficulty is possible through regular monitoring of learning in spelling, reading and writing. Carefully written individual programmes of study are effectively used to underpin planning. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 are following a 'catch-up' programme that is proving to be successful. Specialist help is secured wherever necessary and there is good liaison between these personnel, all teachers and classroom assistants. Progress is closely monitored and recorded and parents are kept well informed. The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity, in line with the policy statement.
30. Homework is very well used to supplement the learning programme, especially for the older pupils. A range of tasks is set, including some research and personal study assignments.

31. The range of extra-curricular clubs offered to junior pupils at different times of the day is excellent. All teachers and classroom assistants are involved and provision is wide-ranging, including a comprehensive programme of sporting activities, environmental, art, recorder and foreign language clubs. Sporting activities include inter-school competitions and national coaching award schemes. All activities are equally accessible to both girls and boys and a substantial number of pupils take part. The clubs are well organised and provide excellent opportunities for personal development. Parents acknowledge and praise the school's considerable efforts in providing such a varied range.
32. Health education starts in the reception class and is largely planned for within the science curriculum at both key stages. It includes a formal programme of sex education for pupils in Year 6. A drugs awareness policy is in draft form but there is no written guidance for teachers to follow, as was the case at the time of the last inspection, although staff have recently undertaken some drugs awareness training. The good links that the school has developed with the community contribute effectively to pupils' personal and social education, and learning experiences. These include visitors to the school such as a parent who shared her cultural traditions and demonstrated skills of creating Indian 'Rangoli' patterns for Year 2 pupils. A former pupil who has reached his hundredth birthday comes to enhance the history curriculum. Experts in various fields, such as archaeology or medicine also provide enriched opportunities for learning. Visiting specialists provide additional tuition for a number of pupils learning to play a musical instrument. Visits are undertaken to enrich learning, both in the local and wider communities such as the local town centre and Gainsborough Old Hall. The annual residential visit to an outdoor education centre for the older pupils provides further opportunities for them to develop skills in physical education, outward bound activities and to experience a further dimension to learning. Not least, the school's many sporting events help pupils to broaden their learning experiences through contact with other schools and pupils. Good links exist between education providers in playgroups and reception teachers that help to ease the transition into school. Effective links are maintained with the many secondary schools to which pupils transfer at age eleven.
33. Provision for social and moral education is very good and is a strength of the school. For spiritual and cultural development it is satisfactory.
34. Spiritual awareness is promoted through daily acts of corporate worship where opportunities are provided for some reflection and prayer. Assemblies are very well prepared and include opportunities for pupils to take part in the proceedings. Pupils of all faiths respect each other's beliefs and values and there is an atmosphere of harmony throughout school. Pupils are encouraged to make sense of their personal experiences and feelings through thoughtful discussions in the classroom. They demonstrate wonder in their learning. For example, some children in the reception class were very excited to spot a kingfisher for the first time. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 were thrilled when they succeeded in creating a mystical feel to their musical composition. Some opportunities for spiritual development are provided across the curriculum although there is scope for further development here, especially in art, music, and religious education.

35. The ethos of the school provides strong moral guidance for the pupils and provision in this area is very good. Within the well-ordered school community, everyone is respected and there is a strong sense of personal worth and high self-esteem. There is a positive approach to good behaviour and an emphasis on courtesy and consideration. Staff work together to enable pupils to develop a clear sense of right and wrong through the simple and minimal list of school rules. They actively promote a sense of responsibility, fair play and honesty in their pupils.
36. The provision for social development is very good. Social awareness is actively fostered both in lessons, during playtime, at lunchtime and in extra-curricular activities. All adults act as good role models in developing a strong sense of community and belonging. There is a good emphasis on building and maintaining excellent relationships throughout school at every level. Pupils are encouraged to show sensitivity for the needs of others and are always willing to offer help. Opportunities to share resources, work collaboratively and to take account of others' views and opinions are provided from the earliest stages. Pupils' awareness of the wider community is enhanced through invited speakers and visits within the local area. Pupils learn the important virtues of citizenship through their personal and social education lessons and by working for charitable organisations. They follow the example of their teachers and are always pleasant and welcoming. The annual residential visit provides a good opportunity for the older pupils to extend their social relationships through living and working together away from home and school.
37. Pupils' cultural awareness is supported by the study of the customs and traditions of the locality. Visits to museums and heritage centres help to develop an understanding of national culture. Through curriculum studies, pupils have opportunities to appreciate the work of famous artists and musicians. In history and geography they learn about past civilisations and how societies differ. Pupils are introduced to the richness that exists in the diversity of cultures by the study of world faiths in religious education. Provision for the development of cultural awareness is satisfactory. However, there is scope to extend pupils' experiences of cultures from around the world by providing a better selection of books in libraries, creating displays with a specific cultural emphasis or by allowing better access to some of the school's interesting stock of artefacts. There is no co-ordination of provision for cultural development at the moment and this results in a lack of focus and missed opportunities.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

38. The caring ethos of the school is manifest in its daily routines and interactions between staff and pupils.
39. Teachers and non-teaching staff are very watchful and responsive to individual needs. The supervision of pupils is very good at all times. Parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts in this area. At the parents' meeting, there was high regard and praise for the quality of supervision of pupils on the yard before school and the 'handing over' session at the end of the day. Teachers escort their pupils onto the yard at the end of lessons and check that an adult is waiting before allowing them out of the grounds. This is also a time when parents and teachers may readily pass on information, allowing for very effective liaison, and for problems to be tackled early. Lunch time supervisors provide a high standard of care. They carry out their responsibilities diligently and are strategically placed near doorways, cloakrooms and on passages so they have a good view of what is going on. There is dedicated time for teachers and supervisors to meet in order to maintain good communications.

40. The school has good day-to-day routines to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all pupils. The head teacher is the child protection officer and ensures the necessary contacts are maintained with outside agencies and that teaching and non-teaching personnel are aware of their responsibilities. The staff handbook is clear and ensures that all staff know what is required of them in the organisation and operation of the school. First aid provision is good and pupils know exactly who to ask and what to do should any need arise. Effective liaison with outside agencies provides specialist support where needed. Members of staff are fully trained to cope with identified needs of the children. During one incident in the inspection, a pupil received excellent emergency care and was back in class, happily carrying on with work, before the end of the lesson. Consideration for the care of pupils is demonstrated in the way the recent immunisation programme was carefully organised. In addition to the medical team, there was always a familiar member of the school staff on hand to encourage, comfort and support the pupils. Regular, informal health and safety checks are carried out by staff, governors and the site manager. A more formalised approach is now needed to ensure that roles are clear, and to avoid duplication of tasks. Fire drills are carried out termly and reported to the governing body. Substances are safely stored. Checks to electrical, fire fighting and physical education equipment are carried out by relevant personnel. The interior and exterior standard of maintenance and cleanliness is excellent with good attention to safety details.
41. The school has now fully implemented a programme for personal, health and social education for all year groups. Pupils openly discuss their feelings and the benefit of friendships. The effects of bullying are openly discussed and pupils know what to do should they experience any form of oppressive behaviour. The success of the approach is evident as incidents of inappropriate behaviour are negligible.
42. The procedures for monitoring absence are satisfactory. Registers are maintained correctly using a manual system. With the exception of a short period on Mondays, they are retained in the classroom all week. This can create difficulties in following up unnotified absence, in case of emergency evacuation or if there is a need to verify an individual pupil's attendance.
43. Since the last inspection, the school has made major improvements in procedures and arrangements for assessing pupils' academic attainment and personal development. End of year tests in English and mathematics are used to track progress throughout the school. The results are carefully analysed to discover what the pupil knows and what needs to be taught next. For science, pupils' achievements are assessed at the end of each unit of work. All the information then informs curriculum planning. This rigorous target setting process, introduced this year, has led to some very pleasing improvements in attainment for all year groups. Results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged seven and eleven are also fully analysed and the results used to identify trends in learning, evaluate the school's provision and inform future planning for the curriculum. Analysis by gender is routinely carried out but not, at this point, by ethnicity. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils have additional, targeted support in literacy that is proving very effective in raising confidence and attainment. Careful assessment procedures lead to the early identification of pupils who have special educational needs. Each has an individual education plan that is reviewed and updated regularly as progress is made. Assessment of personal development is effective and unobtrusive. Half yearly records focus on personal development. Parents are informed if concerns are identified. The headteacher then monitors the progress of these pupils in conjunction with the classteacher. At present, pupils do not keep a file of personal achievements, although these are often recognised

in assembly time. The gold award system congratulates achievements in all areas of school life.

44. Annual reports to parents assess the performance of pupils in every subject and indicate the main targets for improvement in the core subjects. They meet fully with statutory requirements. The minor omission highlighted in the last report has been addressed. Parents are largely satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress but some would appreciate more.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

45. Partnership with parents is very good, as it was in the last inspection, and a further strength of the school. Many parents are helpers in classes and on school trips. They freely share their talents and skills with pupils and all say that they enjoy the experiences offered. There are well-written guidelines for helpers that make expectations clear and ensure consistency of approach. All adults are warmly welcomed into school and made to feel valued. There is no dedicated parents' room but helpers are free to use all the facilities within the building.
46. Parents' views of the school expressed in the parents' questionnaire and during the inspection are very positive indeed. They hold the school in very high regard. They value the open relationships with teachers and said they had every confidence in the staff's commitment and willingness to promptly address any issues that arise. Parents appreciate the school's open door policy. They say that opportunities for casual contact with the teaching staff are very good when parents deliver and collect their children at the start and end of the school day. In returned questionnaires, 97 per cent of parents said that their child enjoyed coming to school and this was confirmed through comments at the meeting. There was much praise for the range and quality of extra-curricular activities, with many parents seeing this as a strength of the school. Some felt that access to these clubs was restricted because of over-subscription but the findings of the inspection do not agree. Those pupils who are unsuccessful in gaining a place on first application are put on a waiting list and usually accommodated the following term. The high demand for places in the clubs is testimony to the quality of provision and tuition. Parents strongly endorse the aims of the school and express great satisfaction with the rounded education that their children receive, including the development of personal and social skills. Many parents of ex-pupils felt that their children were very well prepared for secondary school and that this had enabled them to settle in quickly. A total of 81 per cent of parents said they were well informed about how their child was progressing but some would like more information. There was particularly strong request for information about the national strategies for English and mathematics and ideas for parents who want to support their children's learning at home. The issue of homework was contentious, with some parents expressing satisfaction with the amount and quality set, others feeling it is not enough and another group saying there is too much. The findings of the inspection are that the completion of a range of homework tasks consolidates and extends learning in the classroom and makes a significant contribution to progress. For example, observation of one art lesson showed how it had been resourced and prepared at home, allowing pupils to maximise learning time in the classroom.

47. There is a hard working Parent Teacher Association that organises fundraising and social events for parents and children. Not only are members successful in boosting the school's resources but they also help to support a community atmosphere. Overall the standard of information provided for parents is good. The school prospectus is well presented and helpful. Together with the governors' report, it provides a comprehensive overview of school life and developments. The annual reports to parents are well received and parents' evenings are very well attended. However, whilst the report contains details of academic progress, there is no consistent approach to target setting and there is no provision for pupil or parent comment on the form. Regular newsletters contain a diary of events and details of course and topic work to be covered each term. Induction arrangements for children entering the reception class are very good. They visit the reception classes in the summer term before starting and their parents are invited to the school during the first term to see a video of how their children have settled in to school life.
48. The school has successfully implemented a home/school agreement and has taken the initiative to introduce an Internet agreement that seeks parental consent for access and outlines pupil responsibility when on the Internet.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

49. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, setting very high expectations and continually driving the school forward. He is instrumental in maintaining a supportive environment in which staff and pupils feel secure and valued. He is expertly and actively supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team. They are very successful in promoting an environment where pupils work hard, enjoy excellent relationships, and show respect for peers and staff. All staff and governors are firmly committed to the school's aims that include an emphasis on personal as well as academic development. An analysis of the large number of returns from the parents' questionnaires show that 95 per cent are satisfied that the school is well led and managed, a view that was strongly endorsed at the parents' meeting itself.
50. The delegation of responsibilities to key staff is effective and efficient. The school management team meets with the senior team weekly to discuss issues and plan action. Communication and monitoring are facilitated through the year group communicators who check that school policy is carried out on a day to day basis. There is good, two-way communication through this system of management that ensures problems are identified early and prompt, appropriate action taken. This extended management team creates and sustains a strong ethos that is shared and supported by staff and appreciated by parents.
51. The management team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Effective arrangements for the monitoring of performance have led to focused staff development and to the successful tackling of whole school issues. This year, for example, all staff were involved in a review of attainment for eleven year olds in English and mathematics that led to the setting of challenging targets for improvement. Teachers made a detailed analysis of each individual pupil's work and devised specific learning goals. Staff development and meetings were dedicated to extending expertise in identified areas of the two subjects. The success of the initiative is shown in the improved levels of attainment, not simply at the end of Key Stage 2, but across the school.

52. The deputy headteacher provides strong, well-informed leadership and management for the curriculum. There is regular scrutiny of teachers' plans to check for breadth, balance and time allocations. All subject schemes of work have been reviewed in light of changes to the National Curriculum in 2000. The English and mathematics co-ordinators have a thorough knowledge of provision and attainment in their subjects by visiting classrooms, examining planning and monitoring pupils' work. This represents partial improvement for the issue highlighted in the last report. However, other co-ordinators do not have such a good day-to-day overview or opportunities to influence future planning. They do not have sufficient knowledge of how their subject is actually planned and delivered on a day to day basis, which leads to some inconsistencies in approach. Most are not fully aware of strengths and weaknesses in resourcing and do not have direct access to funds to purchase new equipment and materials where a need arises. At the present time, because of staffing issues, some teacher's curriculum expertise is not well matched to subject responsibility. The development of the curriculum co-ordinator role is identified as a priority area and proposed action is clearly documented in the school improvement plan for 2000 and 2001.
53. The governing body, with its valuable range of expertise, is committed to ensuring the highest quality education for all pupils and works closely with the headteacher to achieve the school's aims. Governors know and understand their roles clearly and maintain a successful approach to meeting their statutory responsibilities. The proceedings of the governing body are efficiently conducted and committees are well organised. The main thrust of their recent work has been curriculum and attainment issues, supporting the whole school improvement programme. There is a very positive and productive relationship between the governing body and the school. Teachers are welcomed at governors' meetings when they present progress reports on their areas of curricular responsibility. Governors have confidence in the headteacher but expect him to be accountable. Some parent governors act as helpers and are frequent visitors to classes. Governors come into school to experience teaching and learning and to forge good relationships with pupils and staff during the annual dedicated week. Overall, they have a very good working knowledge of the school and this directly informs their decision making. Their high level of effectiveness represents a major improvement since the last report.
54. The school is staffed by a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers who are effectively deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum and to support pupils with special educational needs. All the teachers have high levels of professionalism, dedication and commitment. Staff work closely together in well motivated teams, led by a year group communicator. They plan all their work conscientiously, sharing experience and expertise. Experienced teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils' learning, especially those who have special educational needs. There are established arrangements for staff development guided by the school development plan. Recently, the main focus for training has been on English and mathematics, resulting in improved learning and attainment across all age groups. This is reflected in the higher levels of attainment in the tests for pupils at ages seven and eleven. The school has also invested in substantial training for staff in the area of information and communications technology. This has led to much improved provision and learning in this subject since the last report. An experienced tutor mentor provides good support for newly qualified teachers who have a planned programme of induction. This includes professional development through lesson observations, staff training and visits to outside agencies, where appropriate. Tower Road school is very well served by appropriately skilled non-teaching staff, all of whom are totally committed to its aims and policies. Lunchtime supervisors provide a high standard of care at midday and know the pupils well. The site manager uses a considerable range of



expertise to ensure that the buildings, grounds and resources are very well maintained. His enthusiasm and efforts are greatly appreciated by staff, governors, parents, and pupils alike. Together with his industrious team of cleaning staff, he also ensures a very high standard of cleanliness at all times. Administrative support is very effective and efficient. The school secretaries make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, discharging a wide and diverse range of responsibilities.

55. The extensive accommodation and grounds provide a spacious, bright and varied environment for learning. There are very good facilities for the delivery of all programmes of study contained in National Curriculum 2000 and for a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. There are plentiful areas for displays of work which are well used to celebrate pupils' achievements and to create focal points for discussion and appreciation. Great care has been taken in planning extensions to the building, resulting in a uniform architectural design and access to all areas for pupils with restricted mobility. The wildlife garden and pond provide an excellent resource for the teaching of science. Facilities within the new 'Techzone', enhance provision for the teaching of information technology. Once the new adjoining non-fiction library is complete, the area will provide an excellent base for personal research and study. The recently developed sports hall together with the gymnasium provide excellent venues for physical education, sport and assemblies.
56. Overall, resourcing is at least adequate for teaching and learning but there are wide variations between the subject areas. Resources are excellent for physical education, very good for music and good for information and communications technology and religious education. In English, resources are satisfactory although there is a need to improve Key Stage 2 class libraries and to extend the range of books which represent cultures from all parts of the world. At Key Stage 1 the supply of practical resources for the teaching of phonics is limited. Looking at the provision for special needs pupils, many of the reading books are old and they do not cover the full range of text types, such as non-fiction, poetry and traditional tales.
57. Appraisal systems, supported by management and co-ordinator monitoring, are in place and are effective. The headteacher and governors are currently in the process of developing new strategies in line with the model performance management policy.
58. School development planning is thorough and illustrates clear educational purpose. Funding is linked to priorities, with implementation strategies, timescales and success criteria specified. Both staff and governors are involved in the planning process and in the evaluation of the initiatives taken. This shared involvement ensures that the plan is a useful management tool.
59. The school's finances are carefully monitored and controlled. Spending is closely linked to priorities identified in the school development plan. There is a clear, delegated limit to spending and governors exercise their strategic over-view of the school's financial planning very effectively. The finance committee receive regular financial updates to enable them to monitor the budget closely. The relatively large carry-forward from last year's budget is intended to cover commitments to capital items already made and to ensure staffing levels, since there are some uncertainties surrounding transitional funding arrangements. Best value principles are very well applied to all purchases and contracts. Governors monitor the impact of spending decisions by checking that new materials and equipment are in place and are well used. They do not, however, routinely evaluate the benefits in terms of pupils' learning. For example, governors have evaluated the impact of the new 'techzone' in terms of improved provision for information and communications technology but are not aware of gains in pupils'

attainment. There are systematic procedures in place for the ordering, receipt and payment of goods and services. Procedures for dealing with cash and private funds are safe and effective. Specific grant funding is appropriately allocated and money provided for special needs pupils is very effectively used.

60. The school is well organised with established and efficient routines making excellent use of information and communications technology. All statutory requirements are met. The excellent quality of leadership and strong senior management are major factors in the level of provision and the standards achieved. This area is a significant strength of the school.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

61. **In order to improve even further, the school should:**

**1 Improve standards in writing to the high levels achieved in reading, mathematics and science by:**

- providing planned opportunities for extended writing in subjects other than English in both key stages.  
(paragraphs 23, 84, 100, 118)

**2 Improve the co-ordination of curriculum provision of other subjects to match the good level achieved in English and mathematics by:**

- ensuring that there is a co-ordinator in place for all subjects; (paragraph 52, 109, 127)
- careful matching of teacher's expertise and experience to subject leadership; (paragraph 52)
- providing co-ordinators with opportunities to check and intervene in curriculum planning to ensure consistency of approach across the school; (paragraph 52, 109, 114, 121, 127)
- providing co-ordinators with opportunities to check that resources are of suitable quality for their intended use; (paragraphs 52, 109, 114, 121, 127)
- providing co-ordinators with opportunities to gain an overview of delivery of their subject. (paragraphs 52, 99, 109, 114, 121, 127, 131)

**In addition, the governing body should consider the following for inclusion in its action plan:**

- providing a better range of good quality books for class reading areas; (paragraph 84)
- providing bright, attractive reading books for lower attaining and special needs pupils that cover a good range of genre, including non-fiction; (paragraph 84)
- providing a wider range of practical resources for the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1, and for lower attaining and special needs pupils in Key Stage 2; (paragraph 84)
- providing better equipment and more opportunities for pupils to extend their skills of monitoring and sensing in information technology to the high standard achieved in processing and presenting information; (paragraph 127)
- developing provision for spiritual and cultural education to the same high standard as that seen for moral and social education; (paragraphs 34, 37)
- evaluating spending in terms of improved pupil learning. (paragraphs 59)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	116
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13	40	33	14	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		601
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	Nil
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	49	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	46	45	48
	Girls	35	34	37
	Total	81	79	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (81)	92 (86)	99 (88)
	National	83 (79)	84 (83)	90 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	45	48	49
	Girls	36	36	37
	Total	81	84	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (85)	98 (87)	100 (89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	41	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	35	39
	Girls	32	35	35
	Total	66	70	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (78)	92 (69)	97 (76)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	28	30
	Girls	27	26	26
	Total	50	54	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (74)	71 (71)	73 (73)
	National	70 (67)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	NIL
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	3
Indian	6
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	NIL
Chinese	NIL
White	577
Any other minority ethnic group	NIL

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	215

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	974,995
Total expenditure	1,008,195
Expenditure per pupil	1677
Balance brought forward from previous year	116,000
Balance carried forward to next year	82,800

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	601
Number of questionnaires returned	327

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	42	3	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	42	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	47	9	1	12
The teaching is good.	60	36	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	41	10	2	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	35	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	29	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	44	42	7	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	67	28	2	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	1	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	32	6	1	14

Parents praised the feeling of warmth and welcome at the school. They all agreed that their children love coming to Tower Road. Some parents gave examples of the high quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs. All parents present said that all members of staff were easily accessible. They had full confidence in the class teachers and in their ability to resolve issues effectively and quickly.

Areas of school improvement commented upon includes: smaller class sizes, the new computer area, the sports hall and facilities and wider range of extra-curricular activities.

Some parents said that they would appreciate an additional parents' evening and more information on educational initiatives (especially the literacy and numeracy strategies) so that they can more effectively help their children at home.

## **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**

62. Children enter the foundation stage, often referred to as the reception class, during the September following their fourth birthdays. Most gain early learning experiences at a local nursery and play-group before starting school. Overall attainment levels are broadly average when children come into reception but there are very wide variations in their prior learning. Due to the excellent provision for them and the very high standard of teaching they receive, children make consistently good progress towards early learning goals.
63. Excellent links have been established with parents. All are very supportive of the school and appreciate the opportunities to discuss progress or concerns with teachers at the beginning and end of the day.
64. The day-to-day organisation of children's learning is excellent. The four class groups are fully integrated in activities that embrace all recommended areas of learning. Children are sometimes given opportunities to select activities and work independently. Other tasks are carefully directed and supported by the teacher in order to develop key skills in a systematic way. The provision of opportunities for children to actually plan their own activity programme is not yet in place and could further develop their independence. Assessment and monitoring of children's progress are very good. Teachers and assistants know the children very well and work as a highly effective team to provide a vibrant and stimulating learning environment.
65. There is very good liaison with the local playgroup. As part of the children's induction programme, they are invited for a classroom visit during the summer term before they start school. Parents of children under five express great satisfaction with the provision in this phase of education and are pleased with the way their children have settled into school routines and are enjoying their early learning.

### **Personal Social and Emotional Development**

66. Children enjoy coming to school. They settle quickly into daily routines such as registration and show very good development of social skills. Teachers and classroom assistants provide a welcoming and secure learning environment. During group discussions children take turns to speak and listen politely to others. After physical education lessons children dress themselves without fuss and with a minimum of support from adults. They respond to the high expectations teachers have of them and manage buttons and zips efficiently, tidying clothes away into their bags. Children show increasing levels of self confidence, for example when selecting the activities which interest them. They handle construction kits, computers and books skilfully, often sharing texts with friends. Children are confident when interacting with adults, easily engaging in conversation, asking for help or bringing a book to share. The teaching of personal and social skills is very good. All teachers lead well-focused sessions during which children explore feelings and relationships with others. Very good teaching was seen in a lesson where children reflected on how to show kindness towards others. The teacher's skilful reading of 'percy the park-keeper' helped children to think about how they might help people who are distressed.



## **Communication Language and Literacy**

67. A significant number of children have speech or language difficulties when they start school. The excellent support they receive and the quality of interaction with adults ensure that all make very good progress towards the targets set for them. Children's speaking skills are encouraged through role play. For example a group of children used three teddy bears to re-enact the story of Goldilocks, each confidently re-telling their part. Children enjoy a range of activities that are specifically prepared to encourage discussions. Books are plentiful and easily accessible. A comfortable reading corner has been created where pupils enjoy some quiet time to browse. The listening centre is a popular choice where pupils follow stories on tape. Early reading skills are developed very well through the teaching of letter sounds. Letterland characters are used to make learning more meaningful. During the week of the inspection the focus was the letter 'h'. This sound was reinforced at every opportunity for example when children explored 'happy' feelings and listened to the story of the 'The Little Red Hen'. Nursery rhymes set to music and interactive games such as 'Simon Says' encourage pupils to listen to initial sounds of words and pick out rhymes and rhythms.
68. Very good teaching of the letter sound 'c' involved groups of pupils who needed extra support. The teacher used a story and colourful picture very effectively to extend children's letter recognition and their vocabulary by introducing words such as 'conjuror', 'curtains', and 'clapping'. Most children are beginning to write their own names accurately. They trace over letter shapes or practice forming them in sand, using a brush. However, there is no permanent area where children can independently consolidate their developing skills in writing.
69. The teaching of language and literacy is excellent. Assessments are used very carefully to ensure skills are taught systematically. Teachers and assistants talk to children continuously to extend their understanding and development of language. The teachers' story telling is lively and animated, so that children develop a keen interest in books.

## **Mathematical Development**

70. Most children can count when they begin reception class, but their understanding of mathematical concepts is not so well developed. They make very good progress because of the very good teaching and excellent curriculum provided. Most are in line to meet the early learning goals by the time they are five and a higher attaining group will exceed those targets.
71. Most children recognise numbers to five and are beginning to count to, and back from ten. More able children count confidently to twenty and can say what comes 'before' or 'after' a given number. There is very good reinforcement of number work in the activities provided. For example children practised counting with one to one correspondence by 'hooking' fish from a dish and counting spots to match the numbers shown on a board. Assessments are used intelligently to ensure that children make good progress. Mathematical understanding is taught effectively through computer programmes, and through other areas of learning. For example, some children were matching the number and size of dishes and spoons to the 'Three Bears'. A 'shape man' created from coloured squares and rectangles formed an interesting link between mathematical learning and creative development. Children begin to understand the basic concept of 'measures' when exploring the capacity of bottles and jugs in the sand tray

72. The teaching of mathematical development is excellent. Teachers use effective strategies such as encouraging children to show the numbers five and ten with their fingers when counting to reinforce understanding. They encourage children to join in games. For example when teaching the properties of shapes, the clue 'it has four sides all equal', prompted an immediate response of 'square' from the quick thinking group. Teaching is brisk and the teacher skilfully assesses knowledge and understanding by questioning all children in the group.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of The World**

73. Children have widely varying levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world when they begin their reception year. Most know the names of some everyday things that are within their personal experiences but their knowledge of the wider world is less well developed. When examining an Autumn collection, for example, children could name carrot, potato, and pumpkin but did not recognise acorns. Provision for development on this area of learning is excellent and early years staff seize upon every opportunity to extend the children's experience of the natural world. Squirrels are regular visitors to the nature area outside the classroom and there was a moment of wonder for the children when a kingfisher perched above the pond. Children are beginning to work with computers with some confidence. They use the keyboard and mouse effectively to find their way through programmes that support their number and language skills. There are very good opportunities to explore the possibilities of a range of construction materials and to copy structures. Children's knowledge and understanding of the passage of time are promoted very well. A display of baby clothes alongside those for the average four year old simply and cleverly illustrates growth and change.
74. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. All reception staff conscientiously seek opportunities to support and extend children through practical and meaningful experiences. Visitors to the reception class add an extra dimension to learning. These include officers from the ambulance and fire services and a local veterinary surgeon.

### **Physical Development**

75. Children have sound basic skills in physical development when they enter the reception class. However, many find manipulation and accurate use of smaller equipment difficult. Children make very good progress over the year, showing increasing levels of confidence and co-ordination of movement. They are on target to meet the early learning goals in this area by the time they move into Key Stage 1. Manipulative skills are encouraged by using construction equipment and malleable materials such as clay, dough and wet sand. A selection of different brushes and pencils are readily available for use and children handle them with increasing skill and creativity. Children begin to show attention to detail when cutting out with scissors. Their developing levels of accuracy and control are evident when they are gluing and sticking their own creations. The children move freely and safely around the early years area. During physical education lessons they use space well and show consideration of others around them. Children consolidate and extend the skills of running, skipping, hopping and balancing. They appreciate the effects of exercise on the body and learn to rest at appropriate times. An attractive outside play area is well used to promote physical development. There is a very good range of outdoor equipment, including tricycles and pedal toys. Provision and teaching are both excellent for this area of learning.

## **Creative Development**

76. Children's creative development, is average for their age on entry There is excellent provision and children make good progress. Children choose resources to make pictures. For example they cut out, colour and stick paper 'feathers' on to their Little Red Hen pictures or decorate the Three Bears' Cottage. The properties of paint are explored when children create 'hedgehog' hand print pictures. An interesting range of percussion instruments enables children to explore sounds and rhythms independently. They sing while beating out the rhythm of Humpty Dumpty and find ways to create new sounds by experimenting with the instruments. Children's paintings displayed show appropriate expression and awareness of colour. There are planned opportunities for children to explore three dimensional media such as clay or when building 'junk' models. Teaching is always very good and often excellent. In a music lesson the teaching assistants demonstrated use of percussion instruments very effectively to support and encourage children's learning. By the end of the lesson all children were able to sing and beat out the rhythm of Hickory Dickory Dock. Staff sensitively suggest ideas for children to try, but also allow sufficient freedom for children to develop their individual talents.

## **ENGLISH**

77. The 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds show that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 2 is well above the national average in reading and above in writing. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 for seven year olds is well above the national average in reading and average in writing. These results represent good progress in reading since 1999 when results were average. However, in writing they represent a drop in attainment since the national comparative grade then was well above average. When compared to similar schools, attainment in reading is above average and in writing it is below average. The school has identified the reasons for this and has rightly taken measures, such as targeting the teaching of specific groups of pupils and putting a stronger focus on writing within the literacy hour.
78. For the eleven year olds, the percentage gaining the expected level 4 in English in 2000 is above the national average. Overall, this represents a dip in standards for writing. The school has identified writing as a priority area for improvement over this academic year. The number gaining the advanced level 5 in English is also above the national average. When compared to similar schools the results indicate average attainment. Over time standards show a steady improvement when compared with the national trend. Lesson observations during the inspection indicate that high reading standards are maintained and that writing is gradually improving.
79. Standards in speaking and listening throughout the school are high. Pupils express their ideas clearly and listen well to others. All readily engage in conversation about their work. In a Year 2 lesson a group of pupils read very confidently and with good expression to the rest of the class. In Key Stage 2 pupils talk at length about a range of topics and respond sensitively to their classmates' ideas. They speak with clarity and assurance. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils showed maturity when discussing a video extract from Macbeth. Their ideas were thought-provoking, relevant and contributed well to the overall level of understanding achieved. Progress for all groups of pupils is good.

80. Pupils' achievement in reading is good at both key stages. Those who have special educational needs achieve standards that are appropriate in relation to prior learning. Guided reading is used effectively at Key Stage 1 and there is a good match of texts to pupils' prior attainment and developing skills. Skills such as the recognition and articulation of letter sounds are well developed and help pupils to tackle unfamiliar text, supporting the good rate of progress seen. Most pupils recognise the features of both fiction and non-fiction texts and know how to use contents and index to find information. All take reading books home regularly and are well supported by parents. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils read fluently and show good levels of comprehension. Most recall in detail what they have read and skills of inference and deduction are very well developed. Pupils state their preferences for favourite books and authors, justifying their views. They extend their reading experiences by borrowing from the town as well as the school library. They understand classification systems and can locate information when they need it. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, due to the very good quality of teaching and the positive attitudes fostered by the school.
81. At Key Stage 1 pupils practice writing in logically sequenced sentences. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds effectively when spelling simple words. By the end of the key stage writing is well structured. Capital letters and full stops are used consistently to demarcate sentences. Many pupils are also using speech, question and exclamation marks correctly. Writing shows a good range of fiction and non-fiction work. Year 1 pupils wrote imaginative lines based on popular nursery rhymes. There were good examples of Year 2 writing about Grace Darling. Handwriting is well formed and legible. In Key Stage 2 pupils write imaginatively in different styles. Their work is lively and thoughtful. They use simile and metaphor to create effect, often modelling their writing on work of significant writers. They experiment with writing in different genres, including poetry and playscripts. Pupils have a secure grasp of punctuation and grammar. Year 3 pupils write evaluative pieces about poems they select, identifying specific words, phrases and techniques used by the author. More able writers show good awareness of the reader and choose words carefully for greater effect. For example, a Year 3 pupil's story ended with '...She declared that it had been the best trip ever'. In Year 5 pupils write their own poetry in the style of Lewis Carroll and draft out plans before describing imaginary characters. By Year 6 pupils' writing is often lively and thoughtful. Many pupils show an awareness of the reader in their choice of vocabulary. Pupils improve the quality of their writing by including alternative words to 'said' when writing dialogue or by using alliteration in their descriptive work. Pupils coped well with the challenge of writing stage directions for the 'Pied Piper of Hamelyn' and worked imaginatively when creating 'spells' in the style of the three witches in Macbeth. Most pupils spell accurately, using a range of appropriate strategies. Handwriting is generally of a high standard, with some pupils developing their own style. In Key Stage 1, 50 per cent of teaching is very good or excellent with just over 30 per cent being good. At Key Stage 2, 40 per cent of teaching is very good with an equal amount being good.
82. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual programmes of learning are used to plan work and pupils have additional sessions for reading and spelling. A targeted 'catch-up' programme for younger Key Stage 2 pupils enables them to make significant gains in their learning. They make very good progress. Resources for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs are just adequate but most of the reading books are old and do not cover the full, recommended genre range, especially for non-fiction. More practical resources and games are also needed for the teaching of phonic skills.

83. The literacy hour has been successfully implemented in the school. The high quality of teaching has a direct link to the high standards of work seen in the school. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use it very effectively to plan and prepare lessons. Expectations are very high. Consequently pupils are challenged by the pace of learning and the work prepared for them. Careful planning ensures that tasks are matched to pupils' prior learning and are set at appropriately differentiated levels. Excellent relationships are established. As a result pupils are attentive, understand what they have to do and work hard. Resources are used very effectively to support pupils' learning and time is never wasted. During guided writing at Key Stage 2 teachers demonstrate effective techniques and support pupils in their compositions, extending thinking and encouraging the use of more complex sentences to create the desired effect. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well taught in their groups and in classrooms. Pupils who learn English as an additional language attain standards in line with all pupils. Their rate of progress is equal to that of their peers and they generally show levels of competence expected for their ages. Literacy is taught very well and there is a very strong emphasis on the use of specific language in all subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils explain how they split words into 'phonemes' (letter sounds) in order to spell accurately. Year 3 pupils explain the 'factors' involved in plant growth and how they 'isolated one variable' (light) in their experiments to 'explore the effect'. However planned opportunities to practise extended non-fiction writing in other subjects are missed. For example in a Year 6 lesson pupils used worksheets to record knowledge about Judaism when they might have used the opportunity to write an explanatory text. In Key Stage 1, there is little evidence of pupils writing about past events in history or recording experiments in science.
84. The drive towards higher attainment in English is managed very well by the co-ordinator and senior staff. There is no dedicated governor for literacy but the subject is thoroughly discussed at full governing body meetings. Detailed, accurate analysis of pupils' test results shows what pupils know and what they need to learn next. This enables the focused setting of work that ensures good rates of progress. The success of the strategy is seen in improvements in reading and in some aspects of writing. However, further consolidation and practice of writing skills across the curriculum are needed if the school is to meet its aims in moving the present nationally comparative grade from 'above average' to 'well above average'. For example, tasks for writing are not always purposeful or focused on the consolidation of what pupils are learning at the time. Information and communications technology is very well used at Key Stage 2 to support learning in English. Pupils make oral presentations using 'Powerpoint' facilities. They produce, edit and publish articles to a very high standard using a range of word processing applications. Resources are satisfactory overall but could be improved. There are insufficient, practical, up-to-date, resources for the teaching of phonics at Key Stage 1, and much of the material is old and uninspiring. The quality and range of books in class reading areas at Key Stage 2 are variable, but are not satisfactory overall. Some classes have a good selection of material by recognised authors that is well displayed and inviting but in other classes, many books are old, well worn and unattractive for young readers. The selection and quality of dictionaries for older pupils are not satisfactory. Some are old, have loose or missing pages and there is a shortage of dictionaries that contain word derivations to support word work in the literacy hour.

## MATHEMATICS

85. At the end of Key Stage 1 the proportion of seven-year-old pupils reaching the expected standard in the 2000 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average. The proportion reaching the higher level 3 was also well above the national average. When the test results are compared with schools from similar backgrounds pupils' attainment is above the average. The proportion of eleven year olds reaching the expected standards in the 2000 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average. The proportion reaching the higher level 5 was above the national average. When the test results are compared with schools from similar backgrounds, pupils' attainment remains well above the average. This is a significant improvement from the results of 1999 when attainment for seven and eleven year olds was average. Over the last four years the school's rate of improvement in mathematics was broadly in line with the national trend. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Inspection evidence indicates that overall standards are above national expectations and pupils are making good progress in both key stages. This is due to the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, rigorous target setting and the improvement in teaching since the last inspection.
86. By the age of seven, pupils attain very good standards in shape, space, measures and number. Number skills acquired in the reception class are steadily built on as they move through the school. In Year 1 pupils' confidence is improved as they are given tasks well matched to their ability. They add and subtract numbers mentally up to 20 often using pupils to act as counting points as they sit in a circle. By the end of the key stage most pupils readily identify geometrical shapes such as cylinder, sphere, cube and cone and know their properties. They have a good understanding of addition and subtraction.
87. By the age of eleven pupils have very good skills in mental computation and progress is good in all areas of mathematics. This is closely linked to the very good teaching and thorough planning of the subject. Year 3 pupils study time using analogue and digital clocks. They write the time shown on a variety of clocks using work sheets carefully suited to their ability. Year 4 use a grid to learn about co-ordinates. They accurately chart letters from information provided by the teacher. They end the lesson by challenging each other to complete a game based on understanding and knowledge gained. Year 5 pupils generate data, organise and record it. They know how to make a tally chart and construct a graph, labelling the axis correctly. In Year 6, pupils use number fans to present answers to challenging mental questions giving all pupils an equal opportunity to take an active part in the lesson. They quickly add and subtract large numbers accurately. Pupils challenge each other, which helps them consolidate their skills. In one Year 6 class pupils suggested sums with very high numbers for the class to solve, for example 26,111 take away 4,112. The class was very keen to answer and rose to the challenge very well. Pupils readily explain the strategies they have employed to find answers, and often inspire others to try a new strategy. In another Year 6 class pupils used calculators to estimate then find answers to problems set. One boy managed to work out the answer to an exceptionally difficult question included by the teacher to stretch those pupils with high ability.

88. Progress is good for all pupils throughout the school and very good for pupils with special educational needs. There is appropriate emphasis on mental work at both key stages. In all year groups pupils develop a range of strategies for solving problems, which are closely linked to the topic of the week. Work is modified to match pupils' knowledge and understanding and resources are well prepared, accessible and support the planned activities well.
89. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are very good. In three lessons observed they were judged to be excellent. Pupils are always ready to begin lessons on time and are very enthusiastic. They enjoy the challenge of new work and try hard to apply their learning to problem solving activities. They easily recall what they have learned earlier. Most pupils concentrate well and sustain this until the end of the lesson. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 move to their set groups very well. They are obviously used to the routines and there is no wastage of time.
90. Overall the quality of teaching throughout the school is very high. The teaching in 95 percent of lessons observed was good or better with 38 percent very good and 19 percent excellent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. The high quality of teaching makes a vital contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers have a deep knowledge and understanding of mathematics. They have embraced the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy very well in their planning. Learning aims are clear and shared with pupils. As a result, pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Lessons are well paced with very good use made of all available time. This is particularly true of plenary sessions at the end of lessons, during which teachers use questioning skills effectively to consolidate and to assess pupils' learning. In the Year 6 class where they were using calculators, the teacher's enthusiasm and humorous approach drew a very good response from the pupils. Teachers' marking is effective. Day-to-day assessments are rigorously made of pupils' progress and teachers plan well together in each year group to provide work at different levels of challenge that is closely matched to pupils' prior learning.
91. The curriculum teaches all aspects of mathematics and fully satisfies statutory requirements. Numeracy skills are developed through learning in other subjects. This includes using co-ordinates in geography, time lines in history and measuring plants and drawing graphs in science. These opportunities should be included in the new mathematics policy now being prepared. Although teachers use information and communications technology to some extent in their mathematics lessons, there is a need to develop this in a more systematic way throughout the school.
92. Teaching and learning are well supported by good management and thorough planning. The school's mathematics policy is being revised in the light of Curriculum 2000. The scheme of work is closely linked to the National Numeracy Strategy while taking into account the school's own needs.
93. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject co-ordinator receives good support from her assistant. The co-ordinators both received excellent training through the National Numeracy Strategy initiative and have effectively passed on their knowledge to all other members of staff. They carefully monitor the subject by observing lessons and discussing with teachers their strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers' planning is checked and resources are maintained. Good assessment procedures are built into the scheme of work. National Curriculum tests are taken at the end of each key stage and additional tests are undertaken in Years 3, 4, and 5, the results of which are carefully analysed to inform future plans.

94. Resources are of good range and quality and are suitable for the effective delivery of the curriculum. They are well stored and easily accessible.

## SCIENCE

95. The 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds show that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 2 in science is well above the national average. Results are so high that they place the school in the top 5 percent in the country. These results show a good level of improvement since 1999 when results were above average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 for seven year olds is above the national average. For the eleven year olds, the percentage gaining the expected level 4 in science in 2000 is well above the national average and shows a marked improvement from the 1999 tests when results were below average. Those gaining the advanced level 5 in science is above the national average. When compared to similar schools the results indicate a comparative grade of well above average for the seven year olds and above average for the older pupils. The steep increase in improvement is due to direct action taken this year. Older pupils are now taught in four sets and there is rigorous use of continuous assessments to plan focussed teaching that builds precisely upon prior learning. The present inspection found that these factors are having a significant and positive impact on pupils' attainment. Consequently, the school has now very effectively overcome the under-achievement noted in the last inspection.
96. At Key Stage 1 pupils have a sound understanding of living things and have a growing awareness of the need for a healthy diet. They learn about electricity and experiment with making circuits for the current to flow. Higher attaining pupils predict outcomes and check them with the actual results. At Key Stage 2 pupils build upon this good foundation of learning. Standards are above average. In Years 3 and 4 pupils study the human body. They know that muscles work in pairs, contracting to make movements. In experiments, they accurately measure contractions in muscles of the upper arm and record their findings. They investigate the effect of light, water and temperature on plant growth. Higher achievers begin to explain photosynthesis. Pupils learn about materials and classify matter into solid, liquid and gas. They explain clearly how, in a liquid, the particles are arranged further apart than a solid and this allows the liquid to flow. Older pupils examine and learn about teeth, investigating shape, size and location in the mouth. They experiment with some foods and learn about the function of different teeth, explaining the main function of the front ones is for cutting. With appropriate guidance and challenge pupils turn hypotheses into investigations. For example, they prepare and conduct a fair test to find out what causes a solid to dissolve more quickly. They correctly use scientific terms and higher achievers have a good command of terminology. All boys and girls including pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The slight variation in attainment between the genders seen in past years is no longer evident.
97. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated, engage in their tasks with interest and endeavour and work very effectively in a collaborative situation. Equipment is treated with care and all show good respect for the environment and living things.



98. There is an equal amount of good and very good teaching across both key stages and there are many strengths. These include the setting of specific learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. Teachers are skilful in the use of questioning to inform, motivate and engage pupils. They constantly assess pupils' developing knowledge, skills and understanding in order to plan future work. The lessons are well structured and teachers make very effective use of the plenary session. There are high expectations of pupil behaviour and work output. Teachers have a secure knowledge of science and pay good attention to safety issues. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with peer support when appropriate and are fully integrated into the lesson. Teachers are aware of the needs of the pupils for whom English is an additional language. They provide good language models, for example, during discussions.
99. The curriculum covers all programmes of learning for science and there is a good balance between instruction, investigation and experimentation. The role of the co-ordinator has been partially developed since the last inspection but there is still room for improvement, especially in the monitoring of provision. Resources are adequate but some are difficult for the younger pupils to use. For example, some pupils had difficulty with the strong crocodile clips, small screws in bulb holders and breaking wire when experimenting with electrical circuits. To their credit, they persevered and eventually managed to complete their tasks, but valuable learning time was lost. Detailed term by term planning is now followed and effective assessment procedures have been instrumental in raising attainment. Formal tests at the ends of Key Stages 1 and 2 are analysed and used together with teacher assessments to produce learning targets for the pupils.
100. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in science lessons are good but are limited for writing. Teachers often choose worksheet recording rather than allowing pupils to use their skills in writing recounts or explanations. The application of information and communications technology to learning in science is in need of further development.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

101. Attainment in art is in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Standards achieved for older pupils have improved since the last inspection, where they were judged to be lower than those expected nationally. Pupils' experiences cover all the programmes of study for art. Year 1 pupils create lively and spontaneous paintings of special people in the school. By Year 2, some of this spontaneity is lost however when they draw self-portraits before painting. Printmaking techniques are developed in this year and include simple repeat patterns. Year 2 pupils talked enthusiastically about how they made their prints and which they liked best. Good links with mathematics are made using a computer program to consolidate pupils' understanding of the concept of pattern. Pupils experiment with ideas when arranging their leaf rubbings. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge by encouraging pupils to design their own 'Rangoli' patterns and selected some of their ongoing work to demonstrate successful ideas to the class. Pupils develop imagination and creativity through their work and begin to explore a range of techniques.

102. At Key Stage 2, pupils work with a range of materials for drawing and painting, using their imagination and experience to paint swimming pool scenes. They work from direct observation of fruits and vegetables using smudgy pastels sensitively. Opportunities to work with a visiting artist have resulted in creative and imaginative freestanding sculptures by the last Year 4 group of pupils. In Year 6, the open nature of the investigations allows pupils to explore and develop their ideas, using the good range of resource materials collected at home and school. Investigations of photomontage by Hockney help pupils to develop ideas when creating their own imaginative collage designs, although their knowledge and understanding of how the artist used shape, form and space was sometimes limited. Most pupils are able to critically evaluate, modify and develop their work. Gains in learning in all areas of the curriculum, throughout the key stage, are satisfactory. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is at least satisfactory, with examples of very good and excellent teaching. Teachers manage pupils well and ensure a sustained focus to the lesson. Space and resources are effectively organised. However, learning outcomes are less successful where teachers' subject knowledge is less secure. For example, pupils are introduced to the work of famous artists but sometimes this is not effectively used as a starting point for developing their own ideas.
103. Pupils throughout the school respond well to their art lessons by listening very carefully and showing good levels of interest. They use their initiative and work independently where there are planned opportunities to investigate and develop their ideas.
104. Resources for the subject support teaching effectively but better quality paintbrushes are needed to help with the development of more sophisticated painting techniques.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. It was only possible to fully observe one design and technology lesson because art and this subject are linked together and each is taught for half a term at a time. Art is the main focus during the first half term of the new academic year. Nevertheless, it was possible to scrutinise curriculum planning and talk to some pupils.
106. At Key Stage 1 pupils have opportunities to design and make a teddy bear. They also make tiles and a pot out of clay, using their artistic skills to decorate and finish. Year 2 design and make a moving vehicle using construction kits. Pupils were very enthusiastic about the fruit salad they had made in food technology lessons. At Key Stage 2 pupils work on designing and making a magnetic game, utilising knowledge and understanding gained in science lessons. In Year 4 they evaluate a range of materials to make musical instruments. Older pupils prepare a Greek salad after discussing food used in festivals and celebrations. They construct a Greek theatre and were very keen to point out that they had designed it with moving curtains worked by cogwheels. With an eye on practicalities, Year 6 design and make a bag from textiles, which they use on their residential visit to Crystal Palace.

107. In the Year 5 lesson observed, the pupils were designing a Greek mask using a variety of resources. The work was linked to their museum visit the week before the inspection. Pupils enjoyed discussing the project and many showed high levels of understanding, realising the difficulties of translating two-dimensional photographs into three-dimensional models. They recorded their design ideas in readiness to begin making the models in the next lesson, showing good understanding of the problems involved. They made many useful notes of how they intended to create the desired effect. All pupils enjoyed the activity and sustained a high level of interest.
108. The teaching of the lesson was good. The teacher had planned a lively introduction that captured the pupils' imagination. Very good resources were provided to stimulate discussion and provide ideas. The lesson moved with good pace and pupils responded well to the teacher's suggestions. A parallel lesson, briefly observed in another Year 5 class showed that teachers plan well together and share their expertise, making lessons interesting and exciting.
109. The scheme of work for the subject allows steady progression in designing and making skills as pupils move through the school. Curriculum leadership requires further development for this subject when the new member of staff takes over next term. In the meantime, the deputy headteacher is effectively acting in a 'caretaker' role to support colleagues in their planning and delivery of design technology lessons. The school has improved provision for the food technology programme of study which was highlighted as an area for development at the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Attainment in geography for pupils aged seven and eleven is in line with national expectations.
111. At Key Stage 1, pupils make a study the school's environment. They express likes and dislikes, justifying views using appropriate language. Pupils show skills in simple mapping work. They recollect features of some of the places they have visited on holiday and talk about their journeys, highlighting the difference between localities. At Key Stage 2, pupils' mapping and fieldwork skills are progressively developed and they learn to make effective use of a globe, an atlas and a compass. They learn about the world's weather patterns and show a developing awareness of climate and its effects on people's lives. They identify hot and cold regions on the world map and understand how life has to be adapted for people living in desert areas. Most are well aware of the significance of rainforests in maintaining ecological balance. Pupils have a good understanding of the various forms of pollution and how they can be overcome to improve the local and global environment. They make a contrasting study of the local area with a village in Kenya, writing diaries imaginatively as they take on the role of an African child. Older pupils contrast their own locality with another in the same county, identifying similar and differing geographical features. They make a close study of water supply and an investigation of rivers. Some have a notion of lines of latitude and longitude and know that these are important for navigation.

112. Pupils enjoy their geographical studies at both key stages and are keen to learn. This was particularly evident in one session that focused on the lifestyles of Kenyan children where quality discussions and very good levels of concentration were observed. In another lesson, some pupils working in pairs helped each other in a constructive and sensible manner to pinpoint the exact location on a map of various buildings and landmarks of Boston.
113. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages, representing significant improvements since the last inspection. Teachers manage pupils well and enjoy positive working relations with them. They have a secure command of the subject. Resources are used very effectively, especially large maps and coloured photographs, to aid explanation and to focus pupils' thinking. Teachers involve pupils in the development of lessons by inviting pupils to proffer their own suggestions and ideas. High expectations are often set, for example in one lesson, pupils were expected to accurately describe features of the landscape according to whether they were of a physical or a human type. Lessons are well planned.
114. Co-ordination of the subject is not fully developed. However, the curriculum is closely planned across year groups and key stages with some indication of opportunities for developing pupils' numeracy skills, although there are few writing activities planned to extend literacy skills.
115. The use of information and communications technology features prominently in pupils' geographical studies. They have opportunities to access the Internet, send e-mails and use digital cameras. Pupils use CD-ROMs for personal research and experience data handling when gathering information. Visits are made to the local area at Key Stage 1 and to various places within the county at Key Stage 2 for map reading work and for extended investigations of rivers and the coastline. Learning is enhanced through visiting speakers such as shopkeepers, a local clergyman and the mayor, all of whom have valuable expertise to share with the pupils.

## **HISTORY**

116. Pupils of ages seven and eleven attain expected standards appropriate for their ages.
117. At Key Stage 1, they understand that the past is different from the present. They become acquainted with notable figures of British history including Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale. Pupils make a study of the Victorian era, including homes, jobs and children's lives. As part of the project on 'holidays in the past', grandparents of pupils come into school to talk about their own experiences.
118. At Key Stage 2, pupils broaden the scope of their work through learning about Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. They find out about the Tudors and engage in an extended historical study of the local area. In Year 5, they gain a good appreciation of similarity and difference in history when they contrast the insularity of the Spartans with the greater openness to trade and cultural influences of the Athenians. Work for the older pupils includes coverage of key historical skills such as appreciating developments over time and the use of documentary evidence. Higher attainers at this level are also aware that there is usually more than one explanation for events and developments and are beginning to identify bias in reports. Pupils record their work in different ways but there is little extended writing in evidence. Numeracy features in pupils' work on the growth of population in the local area.

119. Pupils demonstrate a very keen level of interest in the subject and maintain a high level of concentration throughout lessons. They relate well to teachers and also to each other. When engaged in collaborative tasks, they behave very well and are always ready to listen to the ideas and views of others.
120. The quality of teaching is mostly good, with some examples of very good teaching also in evidence. Teachers enjoy a secure command of subject and give clear expositions of the topics to be studied. Lessons are well structured with learning objectives clearly specified. In the best lessons, these objectives are communicated to pupils at the beginning. Teachers make profitable use of a range of resources to help stimulate enquiry and extend thinking. They also question pupils very effectively, especially about the cause and effect relationship. Provision for this subject is very good indeed. Excellent use is made of visitors to school to support pupils' learning. A former Tower Road centenarian provides a wealth of interesting recounts. Local residents come into school to speak to pupils about their recollections of World War Two. The local archaeologist extends pupils' experiences by simulating a real 'dig' and encouraging them to use their knowledge and investigative skills to identify and date 'discovered' objects. Teachers arrange field trips and visits to exploit the rich historical nature of the local area to support pupils' learning opportunities. Visits to museums of Roman and Egyptian history and to a Tudor country residence provide valuable, practical experiences.
121. The curriculum for history is planned across year groups and key stages to ensure progression and continuity in learning and good coverage of all topics. Learning objectives are clearly stated and include the development of skills and understanding as well as the acquisition of factual knowledge. The co-ordinator's role is not fully developed although she informally works very hard to ensure that all pupils have a very good range of meaningful, practical and relevant experiences in their learning. Some very good displays of artefacts, photographs and pupils' work in classrooms and on corridors help to maintain a high profile for the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

122. Attainment for pupils aged eleven is in line with national expectations and there are significant strengths in their achievements. This is an improvement from the last inspection when the attainment was judged to be below average. However, there are variations in pupils' attainment. Standards are above average in producing, processing, combining and presenting information. Opportunities for using information technology systems to control events in a predetermined manner and in sensing physical data are relatively limited and pupils are not as competent in this area as they should be. Attainment for pupils aged seven is in line with the national expectations and is similar to the standards found in the last inspection.
123. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to access programmes and follow on-screen instructions. They are adept in the use of the keyboard and mouse. Pupils develop ideas using text. They type a story, edit, save and print, using the spell checker. Good attention is paid to presentation as pupils change font colour, style and size. Pupils explore situations such as modelling a racing car. They plan and give instructions to make things happen, for example, successfully programming a floor robot. They enter, store, save and retrieve data. Information technology is sometimes used to extend learning in other subjects. For example, some pupils were engaged in a science programme that allowed them to make different electrical circuits and to experiment using the computerised simulation. However, cross-curricular opportunities could be further explored through scientific studies.

124. Confidence develops further at Key Stage 2 as pupils combine text and picture. For example, they compose a poem, 'skeletons big, skeletons small, I like them all' ... and enhance the text with a picture of a skeleton they draw using 'paint brush'. Some pupils select from appropriate paint or draw programmes to paint in the style of a famous artist, using the stimulus provided. Older pupils gain very good levels of confidence in the use and application of tools. They are becoming increasingly competent in using 'Power Point' for multimedia presentations. They create, amend and combine a set of slides to develop their own show entitled 'all about me'.
125. Pupils are highly motivated and purposefully use computers and software. They work very well on their own or in pairs offering constructive criticism and enjoying each other's success. Their very positive attitudes help them to apply themselves intellectually and creatively to opportunities that are offered.
126. The quality of teaching is good. This marks a significant improvement from the last inspection when the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 was judged to be variable. One of the main strengths of teaching is good quality planning that reflects secure subject knowledge. Learning objectives are explicit and usually shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. Excellent use of good quality resources enhances learning, for example, the digital projector and interactive whiteboard are introduced to enable presentation of work to the class. Teachers are skilful in questioning techniques and offer confident explanations of the subject matter. Lesson preparation is thorough with all resources organised and ready for immediate use. All pupils are engaged productively throughout the lesson and there is no waiting time. There are good links between learning in information technology and in geography. Links with other subjects are variable and there is room to exploit cross curricular learning further, especially in science.
127. The curriculum covers all areas of learning and the school has adapted a model scheme of work to suit the needs of the pupils. The school has made a full review of its provision for information technology and embarked on major developments. The new purpose built 'techzone' is resourced with a good number of high quality, networked computers. This enables whole class teaching of the subject and is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Provision of equipment for monitoring and sensing is limited. Easy access to other high quality hardware, for example the digital projector, digital camera, scanner and interactive whiteboard further enhances opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. The planned research area that adjoins the 'techzone' will provide facilities for pupils to use CD-ROMS and the internet alongside reference books when engaged in personal study. The planned use of information and communications technology across the curriculum requires further development to allow full utilisation of pupils' skills. The subject is extremely well led and managed by the deputy headteacher, supported by other members of staff and the governors. There is no formal co-ordinator role and the success of the initiatives taken are due to the enthusiasm and hard work of key personalities. A more secure provision for future curriculum management is needed. Parent helpers provide very good support for this area, especially in Key Stage 1 where they offer focused support to small groups of pupils.

## MUSIC

128. Attainment for pupils aged seven and eleven is in line with national expectations but there are wide variations in achievement. For pupils who receive music tuition, standards are above average but for some of the remainder, skills in performing are not well developed.
129. At Key Stage 1 pupils clap and tap a beat on a variety of simple instruments when singing as a group. They listen attentively and keep a steady beat when clapping and show good control of the sounds made by different instruments, for example when performing on a glockenspiel. They listen to music with enjoyment, expressing likes and dislikes. Pupils identify a range of instruments and explore different ways to play them and create effect. At Key Stage 2 pupils use a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments in small groups to compose and develop their ideas in response to a picture stimulus. They improvise in a variety of styles, using contrasting musical elements such as quiet and loud, quick and slow. Pupils comment perceptively and constructively on how they liked the different group arrangements. For example, they remarked on 'the way that voices and instrument sounds fitted together' and 'the way they all began at different times'. The musical knowledge and understanding of some pupils involved in instrumental tuition exceeds the expected level for their age, as was demonstrated in a Year 4 lunchtime recorder club. Some Year 5 pupils rehearse and present their performances independently and creatively when rearranging a limited number of notes to create their own 'chime'. However, an equal number have difficulty in discriminating between the sounds of the different notes and in controlling the rhythm of their arrangements. Year 6 pupils listen carefully to a recorded song but only a few respond satisfactorily to the teachers' questions about the rhythmic pattern. When singing, they lack confidence and expression.
130. Teaching, although variable, is satisfactory at both key stages, with examples of excellent teaching at Key Stage 2 and very good teaching at Key Stage 1. Pupils' learning and progress relate directly to the quality of teaching they receive. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils improved their performance by controlling their beaters to achieve quality sounds following appropriate teacher intervention. Pupils learn well when lessons are well structured and paced, and where new learning makes intellectual demands. In Year 4 lessons, the open nature of the tasks enabled the pupils to compose, practise and perform expressively and imaginatively and they responded very well to the challenge. Interested pupils are able to extend their expertise by learning to play the recorder. A detailed scheme of work is followed but some teachers are not sure how to interpret planning in order to integrate the elements of performing, composing and appraising.
131. The subject has not been featured in the school development plan in recent years although a programme of training has been provided to help non-specialist teachers improve their skills. The newly appointed co-ordinator is developing a good overview of teaching and attainment in the subject and has already identified the need to improve pupils' singing skills. The quantity and quality of resources are very good; they are well organised and accessible to pupils. A good range of extra-curricular activities provides opportunities for pupils to extend their skills. Expert tuition in the playing of a good choice of instruments is available to pupils, and many take advantage of this provision to enhance their learning.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. During the inspection pupils were observed in gymnastics, swimming and games lessons, in which they make progress which is at least good and often very good. In one lesson taught by the physical education co-ordinator, the progress was excellent.
133. Pupils attain standards that are above national expectations at seven and eleven years of age. The full range of physical activity including dance and athletics is undertaken over the year and pupils have some opportunities to engage in more adventurous activities on their residential visit to Crystal Palace in the summer term. Year 5 spend a day taking part in water sports. There are opportunities for pupils in Year 3 to participate in swimming lessons and those in Year 6 have more advanced swimming tuition during the second half of the summer term. Most pupils achieve the level expected in swimming and many attain very high levels by the end of the Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and make progress in line with their peers. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 4 class when the teaching assistant was observed providing excellent support and encouragement to a pupil who was engaged in tasks that were well matched to ability. Throughout the school standards have improved since the time of the last inspection. This is due to a better standard of teaching and improved facilities.
134. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils quickly change into their physical education kit with the minimum of fuss. Year 1 and Year 2 were observed using the large hard surface areas outside for their games lessons. They follow a well structured plan to improve their skills in a variety of ways using bean bags and balls to practice throwing, catching and bouncing skills. Pupils show very good levels of co-operation, consideration of each other's space and very good sportsmanship. They refine and improve their skills through practice.
135. In Key Stage 2, pupils improve their throwing and catching skills. A few find the exercise quite difficult but make good progress during the lesson. Year 4 pupils combine their gymnastics lesson with an investigation in their science lesson where they had been discovering the effect of strenuous exercise on their bodies. Year 6 work on games skills, using balls of different sizes and weight and varying the throwing distance. Towards the end of the lesson the pupils in all year groups quickly divide into groups and play team games, employing the skills just practised. Year 6 pupils use the apparatus in the school's well-equipped sports hall to improve their confidence in the more difficult exercises involving inverted balances. Pupils make use of all the equipment, enjoy watching each other perform and applaud spontaneously when one of their number successfully executes a difficult movement.
136. The school organises a wide range of extra curricular activities, which are very well organised, and much appreciated by both pupils and parents. Teachers give a great deal of their time to organising these sessions. Very good training is provided for the large numbers of pupils who take advantage of these opportunities that are open to both boys and girls. During the week of the inspection over 200 pupils took part in basketball, netball, gymnastics, girls and boys football and table tennis. Competitive sports fixtures are arranged with other schools and these add further opportunities to extend sporting and social skills. The girls played a local school at netball, putting in some serious practice as they waited for their opponents to arrive.



137. Pupils' attitudes to these lessons are almost always very good. They clearly enjoy the opportunity to engage in physical activity and all pupils behave impeccably, even when they have to sit still, listening to the teacher or waiting their turn to demonstrate. They all follow safety rules without the need for adult prompting. Pupils understand the need to warm up before exercise and to cool down afterwards. They co-operate sensibly in small groups, showing good team spirit.
138. The quality of teaching is always good with over 50 percent of lessons observed being very good and two lessons, taught by the subject co-ordinator, being judged excellent. Teachers are always dressed appropriately and all have secure knowledge and understanding of the programmes of study. They are always safety conscious and vigilant. In most lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. Teachers encourage sustained effort from the pupils and insist that they strive for improved performance or press for a more imaginative response. Teachers provide a good variety of warm up exercises, often in the form of simple games which the pupils enjoy. All teachers have a very good rapport with their pupils that is built on trust. Good progress is made in most lessons. Very good gains in learning were noticeable in the Year 3 swimming lesson. There was good tuition provided by the headteacher, an assistant teacher and the two swimming instructors. With this small adult to pupil ratio and skilled coaching, very good progress was made in learning and in the development of pupils' confidence.
139. The co-ordinator has worked hard to address the areas for improvement suggested in the last inspection report. The facilities for physical education are excellent with large hard surface areas well marked out for a variety of games and extensive playing fields which are particularly well drained. The well equipped gymnasium and new sports hall provide opportunities for all indoor games and physical exercise. Pupils are very proud of the climbing wall recently added to the sports hall and talk enthusiastically of how it helps to prepare them for more adventurous, outward bound activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

140. Attainments in religious education, for pupils aged seven and eleven are in line with what might be expected for these age groups. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. All issues from that report have been successfully addressed. The school has improved the curriculum for religious education by seeking input from the diocesan director. Training was organised to increase staff expertise and this has had a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The range and quality of resources are much improved.
141. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reach the expected standards in their knowledge and understanding. They learn about Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter and about Christian worship, comparing this with events in the Jewish and Muslim calendars. Pupils know about leaders who influence world faiths such as St. Paul and Mohammed. They begin to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between religions by looking at the different customs, places of worship, symbols and significant artefacts. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of different faiths. They link themes such as the use of light as a symbol and explore its significance in different religious festivals and celebrations. They study religious leaders such as Guru Gobind Singh and Moses. Pupils learn about holy books such as the Qur'an and Torah. They know stories and parables from the Bible and use these as a starting point for discussion. The daily acts of worship supplement learning and provide some opportunities for reflection.

142. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They show their interest by being attentive in lessons and by confidently offering views and opinions. Responses to questions are thoughtful and relevant.
143. Overall, the quality of teaching seen is good with some very good features. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. This helps in planning and confident delivery in most cases. Examples of good teaching methods include a role play situation to help pupils towards a clearer understanding of the concept of 'fairness'. However, co-ordination for this subject is not fully developed and results in some inconsistencies in provision. For example, on one occasion, the fundamental links between the values of forgiveness and love were not fully explained. This detracted from pupils' fuller understanding of messages contained in old and new testament stories. Resources are good and where possible, enhanced by visits to local places of worship and visitors to school. Artefacts and videos are used effectively by teachers to enrich pupils' understanding.