

INSPECTION REPORT

MOORSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Skelmersdale

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119303

Headteacher: Mr. Mark Millar

Reporting inspector: Sheila Pemberton
20810

Dates of inspection: 20th –24th November 2000

Inspection number: 225086

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Back Lane Holland Moor Skelmersdale Lancashire
Postcode:	WN8 9EA
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R. Ford
Date of previous inspection:	5 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sheila Pemberton Inspector number: 20810	Registered inspector	English Art Under fives English as an additional language	What the school should do to improve How high standards are How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
Roger Williams Inspector number: 9895	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents/carers
Ted Cox Inspector number: 25623	Team inspector	Mathematics, ICT Design and technology Music Special educational needs.	
George Halliday Inspector number: 22881	Team inspector	Science Religious education Geography History Physical education Equal opportunities	How good curricular and other opportunities are

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils:	131 - 67 boys, 64 girls (smaller than most primary schools)
Age range:	4 to 11
Pupils with English as an additional language:	None
Pupils entitled to free school meals:	48.22 per cent (well above average)
Pupils with special educational needs:	22.7 per cent (average)
Pupils with statements of special educational needs:	5.7 per cent (well above average)
Average class size:	25.8

Attainment on entry to the reception class is lower than in many schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is recovering rapidly from a long period without stable leadership. In a short time, its new headteacher has achieved a lot by bringing teaching into line with recent national strategies in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils' achievements in mathematics are steadily beginning to improve. Although standards in English and science are still too low, pupils are getting a better education than they did when the school was last inspected. Because of these improvements to teaching and learning, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Its governors have recently appointed a well-informed and energetic headteacher who knows what is needed to move the school forward.
- Pupils enjoy their time in school. Most are keen to learn and get on well with one another.
- Teachers are good at supporting pupils' personal, moral and social development.
- Links with the community and other schools and colleges provide the school with good opportunities to widen pupils' experiences.
- Its good relationships with parents have a positive effect on their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Pupils' reading and writing, particularly in the juniors.
- More able pupils could do better in mathematics and science.
- Pupils are not doing well enough in information and communications technology (ICT).
- Systems to track pupils' learning so that teachers can plan their work at the right level.
- Shortages in resources that limit teaching and learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

From the last inspection in 1996 until May 2000, very little improvement took place in the school. In the important area of finance, however, governors acted quickly to make sure that the school had enough money in its budget to keep going. Standards in English, mathematics and science remained very low, but improved at the same steady pace as in most other schools. Teachers continued to provide pupils with the same good guidance for their personal growth that was seen at the last inspection. The rate of change improved when the new headteacher started work on improvements from the last inspection. The headteacher knows where to go for good advice and uses it to move the school forward in a carefully planned way. Teachers have clear programmes to use when planning pupils' work. As a result of recent staff training, standards are rising at a brisk pace in mathematics. The teaching of ICT is improving and staff are about to have training

that will improve their own and pupils' skills with computers. For the first time, the needs of more able pupils in classes with more than one age group are being addressed this term in all subjects.

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	D	E	D	A
mathematics	D	E	D	A
science	E	D	E	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Standards are still not high enough in English. The spelling and punctuation of many older pupils is too inaccurate for their age. Most pupils in the infants are doing well enough with reading, although some of them could manage to read more difficult books than they are doing at present. Standards have improved in mathematics since the last inspection. With the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, they are now satisfactory for many pupils in the infants and the juniors. Although standards in science are still too low for seven and 11-year-olds, they are beginning to rise. More able pupils are still not reaching the levels of which they are capable in mathematics and science because the work is not challenging enough for them. In Year 6, teachers are taking steps to improve pupils' attainments in English, and the standards reached by able pupils in mathematics by providing extra lessons to improve the performances of less and more able pupils.

Standards are still not high enough in data handling and control technology although pupils are doing well when they use computers for their writing. By the time they are seven and 11, most pupils reach satisfactory standards in religious education, art and design, and design and technology. Standards have also been maintained since the last inspection at a satisfactory level in geography, music and physical education. They have risen, and are now satisfactory in history.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy all activities in school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Mainly satisfactory. The behaviour of four to seven-year-olds is good. In some lessons in the juniors a group of boys disturbs other pupils' learning with their restless behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Most pupils' relationships with one another and with teachers are good and are helpful to their learning and personal growth.
Attendance	It is lower than in most schools nationally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Of the teaching in lessons during the inspection, 2 per cent was very good, 37 per cent good, 54 per cent was satisfactory and 7 per cent unsatisfactory. Teaching in English and mathematics is mainly satisfactory.

Strengths in teaching and learning: improvements to the teaching of mathematics result in improvements to pupils' learning. Firm control of behaviour allows most pupils to do their best in lessons. Good relationships between teachers and pupils encourage pupils to work hard. Changes to teachers' planning provide pupils with a wider range of experiences. New arrangements for teaching pupils in classes with more than one age group give them a better chance to work at a suitable level for their age.

Weaknesses in teaching and learning: teachers are not giving enough attention to spelling and punctuation to improve pupils' writing. The teaching of reading is not always good enough to support the learning of pupils who find reading difficult. The work provided for more able pupils in mathematics and science is not challenging enough for them to do their best. Marking and the use of information from assessment are not used well enough to move pupils' learning forward, particularly in English.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although the school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, there are weaknesses in its provision for ICT. A satisfactory range of activities is available outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The help provided for pupils with special educational needs has a satisfactory effect on improving their learning and behaviour.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. It is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of the personal needs of its pupils. There is room for improvement in the use of assessments of pupils' learning to provide work that meets their needs and more challenging work for more able pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Until very recently the school lacked consistent leadership and management. In a short time, the headteacher has brought about some of the changes to the school's provision that were identified at the last inspection. There is still room for improvement in the work of key staff, but they are working hard to support the headteacher in improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil all legal responsibilities. They give their full support to the headteacher and share his determination to give pupils a good education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher knows what needs to be done to raise standards and to improve different areas of the school's provision.
The strategic use of resources	The staff, accommodation and resources available to the school are put to satisfactory use for the benefit of pupils. The school suffers from a shortage of resources for teaching and learning. It does its best to get best value from all spending but is only just beginning to understand the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.• The school is well-led and managed.• Their children like going to the school.• They think that most of the teaching is good.• Parents are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best.• They feel that the school works closely with them.• Their children are making good progress.• Parents are pleased that teachers help their children to become mature and responsible.• The school provides an interesting range of activities for their children outside lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents would like more homework for their children.

Inspection findings confirm parents' positive views about the school. They support the views of parents who would like more homework for older pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When they join the reception class, many children's early achievements in reading and mathematics are below those expected for their age. In their first term in school, many of their achievements in personal, social and emotional education are good for their age. More able children make good progress in reading. However, because of the variable quality of support they receive in school and a lack of help at home, a significant group of younger children are slow at starting to read. Children's progress is satisfactory in language, and in mathematical and creative development. Although children's physical development is mainly satisfactory, restricted access to large outdoor equipment limits their achievements. A lack of resources also limits children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. Despite being low in English and mathematics and very low in science, the standards reached by 11-year-olds in national tests in 2000 were higher than at the time of the last inspection. Standards also rose at the same rate as standards nationally. Although more able pupils did well in English, very few did as well as could be expected in mathematics and science. Too many pupils reached a level that was too low for their age in English, mathematics and science. As a result, standards were below the national average in English and mathematics in 2000, and very low in science. A much better picture emerges when the school's results are compared with those achieved by 11-year-olds in similar schools. Standards were well above those of pupils with similar backgrounds in English and mathematics, and comparable with them in science. Girls did better than boys in English and science in 2000. Boys' performance was better than girls' in mathematics. The school met its targets for English in 2000, but failed to reach its targets for mathematics.
3. As for 11-year-olds, the standards reached by seven-year-olds in national tests in 2000 were higher than at the time of the last inspection. Although more able pupils did well enough in reading and writing, the standards they reached in mathematics and in science were too low. Most pupils did as well as pupils in other schools in writing and science but in reading and mathematics standards were below average. Seven-year-olds did much better in reading, writing and science than pupils in similar schools. They were above the average reached by pupils with similar backgrounds in mathematics. As in Year 6, girls did better than boys in English and boys did better than girls in mathematics. The school's analysis of the results of national tests is at too early a stage to include the achievements of boys and girls

Inspection findings

4. Standards are still not high enough in English. This is mainly because of the difficulties older pupils encounter in the use of basic spelling and punctuation. While standards in spelling and punctuation are satisfactory in Year 2, they have a detrimental effect on the writing of many pupils in Year 6 who still produce work without capital letters and full stops. Although satisfactory, the reading of many pupils in Year 2 could be at an even higher level. This is because the texts provided for many pupils provide little challenge to develop their skills. The performances of many pupils in this year's Years 2 and 6 are improving in mathematics and for the first time since the last inspection, standards are satisfactory. This results from the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the better teaching it has produced. Standards in science, although still too low for seven and 11-year-olds, are beginning to rise in Years 2 and 6. However, more able pupils are still not doing well enough in mathematics and science. This is because the work teachers provide is often too unchallenging to move pupils' learning to higher levels.

5. The school is raising standards in English and mathematics through *booster* classes. These are not only for less able pupils in Year 6, but also for those who are capable of reaching a higher level in both subjects. In addition to supporting pupils' learning in mathematics in the infants, the headteacher plans to work with pupils in Year 2 to add strength to the quality of their reading and writing. In addition to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the school has begun to implement a new programme of work for science. Although very new to teachers, the programme provides them with guidance to raise standards by covering all aspects of the subject.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress with help from teachers and qualified support staff. When the coordinator for special educational needs and trained members of the school's support staff work closely with pupils with learning difficulties in groups outside the classroom, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. On some occasions, the reading of pupils with special educational needs is left mainly to support staff. While this may work for some pupils, if support staff lack the skills needed to provide helpful strategies for improving reading, the gap between these pupils' reading and the level expected for their age increases. Good support is provided for the learning of pupils with physical disabilities. The school acts very promptly in ensuring that they receive all essential help to reach the standards of which they are capable. When pupils with behavioural problems work in close contact with support staff, they receive firm guidance to settle down and do their best with their work.
7. Pupils make satisfactory use of ICT to process their writing but not enough use is made of computers for pupils to improve their spelling. Pupils' skills in mathematics are used to satisfactory effect to develop their understanding of the passage of time in history, and for measurement in design and technology. Although older pupils read reference books in different subjects, their lack of knowledge of classification and reference systems limits the acquisition of information.
8. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 make satisfactory progress in word processing, but their achievements in data handling and control technology are no higher than at the last inspection. This situation results from a long-term lack of equipment that is currently being remedied. Standards in religious education are maintained at the same satisfactory standards as at the previous inspection. With a new programme of work in place, pupils in the infants are aware of the importance of Christmas as a Christian festival. In the juniors, pupils understand the place of symbolism in Christianity and other major religions.
9. Standards in art and design are satisfactory. A strength of achievement that is not reflected in Year 6, lies in the observational drawing of pupils in Year 2. In both the infants and juniors, pupils appreciate the work of artists from different times and cultures. Standards remain satisfactory in design and technology. Pupils plan their projects carefully before tackling them with a range of tools and materials. While standards in geography are still typical of those reached by many seven and 11-year-olds, they have improved to a satisfactory level in history since the last inspection. Older pupils' understanding of geography is effective because it is framed in their understanding of world events. In both geography and history, pupils' work is extended effectively through fieldwork and enquiry.
10. Standards in music remain typical of those reached by many seven and 11-year-olds. While all pupils are good at listening to music and interpreting the work of a variety of composers, older pupils' achievements are good when performing with untuned percussion instruments. Outdoor and adventurous activities add strength to satisfactory standards in physical education. Pupils' achievements in swimming are good in the juniors. The skills of older pupils are not good enough in gymnastics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The previous inspection report commented on pupils' good attitudes, and these are still evident in the school. The interest and enthusiasm for learning of children in the reception class provide a basis for the good attitudes most pupils in the school demonstrate in lessons. Many pupils work hard and concentrate, even when unsupervised. However, boys who have poor attitudes to learning spoil this good working atmosphere in Year 4. Their restlessness takes up too much of the teacher's time and by affecting the concentration of other pupils it reduces their access to a full curriculum. Such behaviour is the exception rather than the rule. Pupils' attitudes are more typically represented by those demonstrated during a swimming lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils worked so hard that they made very good progress in improving their performances. Many pupils enjoy taking part in the sporting activities the school provides and contribute fully to the school as a community.
12. Behaviour was good at the time of the last inspection. Because of the poor behaviour of some older boys it is now satisfactory. The school has a new policy in place to deal with any incidents of bad behaviour. The policy is not fully effective because support staff are not using it and there is some inconsistency in the way that it works in practice. With clear rules and consistent treatment most children in the reception class fulfil their teacher's expectations of good behaviour. Most pupils in the school are polite and courteous. For example, they hold doors open for one another and for adults, and generally behave well in lessons, at lunch times in the hall and in the playground. The headteacher has initiated a new system of awards to encourage pupils' personal development. This has a good effect on their attitudes and behaviour by building up pupils' self-esteem and confidence. No pupils have been excluded from the school recently and there is no evidence of persistent bullying. It is strongly disapproved of and dealt with swiftly on the rare occasions it happens.
13. The school has maintained pupils' satisfactory personal development and good relationships from the time of the previous inspection. The school works hard to promote and develop co-operative attitudes amongst pupils. This starts in the reception class, where the teacher encourages children to say *I like helping you* when they work together. The headteacher has increased the range of responsibilities for older pupils. They are very keen to accept responsibility and thoroughly enjoy answering phones at lunchtime, helping teachers with photocopying and showing visitors around the school. Pupils won a major award for citizenship at the northwest finals of a national competition. Relationships, generally, are good. Older pupils, for instance, look after infants at mealtimes and playtimes. Most pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and are helpful to pupils with physical disabilities.
14. Attendance is below the national average and is similar to the level reported at the time of the last inspection. The school works with parents and the educational welfare officer to improve attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Of teaching in lessons during the inspection, 2 per cent was very good, 37 per cent good, 54 per cent was satisfactory and 7 per cent unsatisfactory.
16. As a result of weaknesses to the school's leadership, teachers had few opportunities to improve their expertise following the last inspection. Because staff missed essential training for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, they were unable to put these strategies into place at the same time as most other schools. Consequently, a delay to teachers' efforts to raise standards in English and mathematics had an adverse effect on pupils' achievements. With the arrival of the new headteacher, teachers boosted their understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies so that both strategies are securely in place and standards are rising in mathematics. Some weaknesses still exist in teaching English. Too little emphasis is placed on developing the skills of spelling and punctuation for pupils to improve their writing. Also, teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to write in English and other subjects. Limitations that still exist to teachers' expertise in ICT will be addressed by training that is planned for the spring term.
17. Teaching is more effective in classes containing pupils from different age groups as a result of the input of the headteacher. This reduces the problems teachers face in providing suitable tasks for pupils in different age groups in English and mathematics. It does not, however, reduce the difficulties pupils experience when some teachers provide them with the same task in mathematics and science regardless of the levels at which they are learning. As a consequence, more able pupils are not provided with the challenges they need to move their learning forward.
18. Expectations of pupils' behaviour and ability to learn are at their highest in the reception class. This gives children the confidence and self-esteem that underlie their learning. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils are established effectively in the reception class, where children's personal, social and emotional development is prioritised to good effect on their attitudes to one another and staff. When the school's behavioural policy is not applied consistently, a group of boys in Year 4 get out of hand, waste the teacher's time and disturb the learning of other pupils. For the most part, teachers' firm control of pupils' behaviour leads to good attitudes to learning. Their determination that the learning of well-behaved pupils should not suffer from the effects of unsatisfactory behaviour is at present causing discussion about temporary exclusion from school.
19. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection. With the benefit of new national programmes of work, it now covers all appropriate work in different subjects, with the exception of ICT. As a result, pupils have access to a wider range of knowledge and skills. Planning in the reception class provides children with activities that help them to meet the goals for their early learning. While most teachers are aware of pupils' attainments, few record them effectively enough for use when planning future learning. It is not until they reach Year 6 that pupils' achievements are recorded in sufficient detail. The marking of pupils' written work provides pupils with encouragement. It lacks the guidance pupils need to help improve their learning. A difficult problem facing teachers lies in a lack of resources for many subjects. In ICT, for example, teachers make best use of new machines, but are hampered by a shortage of software to cover all aspects of the subject.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is mainly satisfactory. It is usually good when pupils are taught individually or in small groups by support staff. Work with support staff is not beneficial when unqualified staff teach reading to pupils who need expert help to establish their skills. As a result, the gap between the learning of these and other pupils widens until their reading falls behind expectations for their age. Teachers often fail to compensate for this weakness in the work of support staff and consequently, the pupils affected lack access to a suitable curriculum and teaching that meets their

needs. When the special educational needs co-ordinator teaches English and mathematics to pupils who experience difficulties with their work, good strategies and resources have a strong impact on pupils' learning. Teachers make satisfactory use of individual education plans to provide pupils with additional support. However, the plans do not always provide enough detail of work to be done. This means that sometimes pupils are provided with work that is too difficult.

21. The homework habit is established in the reception class, where the teacher encourages children and parents to share books at home. The effectiveness of this strategy is felt throughout the school when parents become involved in their children's learning. Although teachers are aware that some parents are unable to assist their children's learning, they do little to compensate for this deficiency by providing extra help for the children involved. A strong input is made into the reading of pupils in Year 6 by the teacher's efforts to interest them in reading after school. Teachers of older pupils miss opportunities to provide them with a wider range of homework to extend their learning in different subjects.

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

22. The curriculum promotes pupils' learning and their physical and moral development effectively, with the exception of ICT, where a lack of resources and staff expertise limits full coverage of all aspects of the subject. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for the learning of children in the reception class. The opportunities provided for their personal, social and emotional development have a good effect on the personal growth of four and five-year-olds. Although standards in music remain satisfactory from the time of the last inspection, improvements to pupils' achievements are limited because the school lacks guidelines for teaching the subject. The curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education continues to be good. It is integrated effectively with sex education and science. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Most pupils are included equally in all activities and opportunities, with the exception of those whose learning is disturbed by a small group of boys in Year 4.
23. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the same curriculum as other pupils. Since the last inspection, when provision was good, support for pupils' special educational needs deteriorated to a low level. There were no individual education plans to define difficulties and to target improvements to pupils' learning and behaviour, or to support their physical disabilities. It is only since the arrival of the headteacher that provision has improved to a satisfactory level. The school now places high priority on provision for pupils with special educational needs. Levels of support staff and help from outside agencies have improved. The coordinator is aware that some individual education plans, which were written recently as a stopgap measure, lack sufficiently detailed targets and strategies for helping pupils.
24. There was a good range of after school clubs at the last inspection. This is still the case, with the exception of musical activities. Older pupils can extend their interest in literature through a club that provides them with the works of well-known writers of children's books. In Year 6, pupils who want to improve their learning are given extra tuition through an optional class after school. This initiative is popular, not only with pupils who benefit from extra help for their learning, but also with pupils who are keen to do additional work. Pupils can choose from a good variety of sporting activities. Their skills in football and netball are improved at a club led by a coach from a local sports' development initiative that is very well supported. All these activities extend pupils' physical fitness, self-esteem and ability to

work in teams. Educational visits and visits to a residential centre, extend pupils' experiences and make a good contribution to their learning and personal development.

25. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. It is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development. This provision remains as it was in the last inspection.
26. Spiritual development is promoted mainly through religious education and daily collective worship. Lessons in religious education include discussions, which often contain a spiritual aspect. This happened in Year 3, when the teacher introduced pupils to religious symbolism through their special possessions. When pupils in Years 4 and 5 discussed religious images, some expressed ideas such as *Light gives you guidance*. Because collective worship is often stronger in moral than spiritual content, opportunities are sometimes missed to set a calm atmosphere with music. Usually, however, pupils listen intently to well told stories and consider their meaning in discussion. They sing hymns and pray thoughtfully and respectfully. Prayers are also said at the close of day. The school has yet to develop spiritual awareness in lessons, although instances of this do arise. In music, for instance, pupils closed their eyes to absorb the mood and feeling of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*.
27. Provision for moral development is good. Staff provide a strong moral code and develop it in assemblies. They raise pupils' awareness of the difference between right and wrong from their earliest days in the reception class, so that older pupils have no difficulties when discussing *What does being good mean?* Staff promote moral values effectively by explaining the importance of abiding by rules, playing fairly and taking responsible decisions. They take time to reason with pupils in trouble. Because pupils in Year 6 helped to draw up the school's code of conduct, they consider themselves responsible for carrying it out. Occasionally teachers are not firm enough in ensuring that some pupils abide by rules such as listening with respect to others and waiting their turns in discussion.
28. The school makes good provision for social development. Positive relationships between pupils and staff make a strong contribution to pupils' awareness of the rights and needs of others. Social development forms an important part of teaching and learning in the reception class. From their first days in school, children are taught the importance of the social conventions that make life in school run smoothly. Staff are good at promoting values such as courtesy and respect for others. They encourage pupils to work together responsibly and fairly, especially in investigative work and in physical education. The school's programme for personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to developing co-operative attitudes. In one lesson, pupils were encouraged to consider the effects of their actions on others. The school promotes positive social attitudes when it recognises pupils' achievements in *citizenship*. It provides opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to behave responsibly in an unfamiliar social setting when they visit a residential outdoor activities centre.
29. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own and other cultures in art, history, geography, music, English and religious education. They study the work of artists, authors, poets and composers from different cultural traditions, and learn about life in ancient civilisations and modern societies. The school uses local facilities, such as *Promenade Concerts* at a nearby secondary school and drama workshops and performances at an Arts Centre. Pupils are taught about Christian traditions and the beliefs of other faiths in religious education. Although they visit the Arts Centre to learn of Indian culture through music, dance and story, their exposure to other cultures is limited.

30. The school works hard to develop its role as a community resource. The last inspection found that its efforts were satisfactory. Since then, this role has improved to a good level. Courses in the school for parents and other adults extend their own education and improve their ability to support their children's learning at home. The school takes every opportunity to involve pupils in local and national events and competitions. An example of this was their participation in the North West Health Challenge, where a group of pupils won £200 for school funds. Links with Skelmersdale College are particularly valuable. They have resulted in a state of the art computer suite for the use of pupils and the community. Pupils also benefit from visits to the college to see plays. Links with local shops and supermarkets provide sponsorship for visits, such as a trip by older pupils to the Millennium Dome. A recent initiative to tidy senior citizens' gardens added to pupils' awareness of their responsibilities to society at large. A good range of visitors from the community contributes to pupils' learning and understanding of the world.
31. There are good, constructive relationships with other schools. The school feeds several local secondary schools, and transfer arrangements for 11-year-olds provide them and their parents with plenty of opportunities to find out what is on offer. These arrangements allow parents to choose the school that best meets their children's needs. A local secondary school contributes to pupils' understanding of algebra, by providing a learning package to be taught by the teacher in Year 6. This gives pupils early access to secondary mathematics. These good links help to widen pupils' experiences and to promote their personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school is a safe and caring place. Its procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are satisfactory, as was the case during the last inspection. Governors and all staff, except the headteacher, have recent training in child protection procedures. A member of the governing body also shares the responsibility for child protection. Discussions with pupils show they are aware of how to behave if their safety is threatened. The headteacher has a great deal of expertise in health and safety, and together with governors is currently reviewing the school's policy, with particular emphasis on risk assessments. The school attends to pupils' medical needs with care. Arrangements for fire and electrical safety, and first aid are satisfactory. Parents of new pupils are warmly welcomed and encouraged to help ease their child into school. Parents of young children ready for the reception class are invited to informative meetings and are also visited at home. This sympathetic treatment leads to a good start to children's education.
33. Arrangements for checking and improving attendance are satisfactory. The headteacher and school secretary examine attendance figures regularly and follow up absences and lateness with parents or carers. There is an annual award for good attendance. The educational welfare officer visits the school every month and checks attendance registers. Any problems are discussed at a meeting with the headteacher.
34. Satisfactory arrangements exist for checking pupils' behaviour and encouraging positive behaviour. With help from teachers, the headteacher has introduced a new behaviour policy, and is taking the lead role in developing this important area. As yet, not all staff use the policy fully. This weakens its effectiveness and leads to inconsistency in applying sanctions. Support staff who are responsible for statemented pupils with behavioural problems, sometimes control these pupils' behaviour too rigidly without giving them opportunities to make their own decisions about their actions through reasoning and self-realisation.

35. The school makes good use of outside agencies, such as speech therapists, educational psychologists, social services and school medical services to support pupils with special educational needs. It has introduced a helpful statement of concern to act as an early warning about pupils who may have learning or behavioural difficulties. Although information from assessments in the reception class, and the results of national and other annual tests are used to measure pupils' achievements, teachers are not using them carefully enough to provide work that always meets pupils' needs.
36. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are unsatisfactory. The school is at an early stage of using information from tests to raise standards since the results of tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 were analysed for the first time last term. Although pupils' spelling and reading are tested annually, this does not measure pupils' achievements often enough to provide an accurate picture of their learning or to raise the standards they reach in English. Reading records note the many books read by pupils but do not contain information that could help teachers to address the difficulties pupils meet. No assessments are carried out to measure and to improve pupils' achievements in subjects such as ICT. In science, pupils' work is assessed at the end of each topic but no regular assessments take place to find and fill gaps in pupils' knowledge.
37. Not enough use is made of information from assessment to plan pupils' work. Although teachers analyse the results of national tests for seven and 11-year-olds to gain a general picture of pupils' attainments they do not track their individual progress as they move through the school. As a result, teachers lack detailed information of pupils' earlier achievements to plan improvements to their learning, or to provide targets to encourage pupils to do their best. Pupils' work is marked promptly but, while teachers congratulate pupils on good work or say that their work could be better, they seldom explain how pupils could improve their work. Better use is made of assessment in Year 6, where the teacher keeps comprehensive records that are used to provide pupils with individual targets for improvement. These targets are agreed with parents and pupils and are amended regularly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has recently resumed the good partnerships with parents found at the time of the previous inspection. Parents have good, positive, views of the school and are pleased with its work. Many of them appreciate that a long period of instability to the school's leadership is at an end, and that the school is under new management. The headteacher works hard to win parents' confidence.
39. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory. Although none help in classrooms at present, they support the school in a variety of ways, such as raising funds and attending school fairs and events. The headteacher has published a booklet called *Parents in Moorside* for the parents of new pupils and of children who are ready to join the reception class. It gives parents ideas about how they can contribute to the partnership between home and school, and of ways to support their children's reading. In the summer term, the parents of new children are invited to meetings that inform them about the school's organisation and ease their children's early days in school. At the same time, the teacher from the reception class visits new children at home to establish good relationships with them and their parents.
40. A group of parents is keen to introduce a new Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association. Parents and friends of the school come into school every morning to sell toast and drinks to pupils at break times. This initiative provides a useful service while raising funds for the school at the same time. The school houses a community education programme run by Skelmersdale College. Courses are designed to instil confidence into parents and by

providing them with new skills, encourage them to take a more active part in their children's education.

41. The school provides good information for parents. It sends out weekly newsletters that include essential information about classroom organisation, curriculum matters, special events and the names of pupils who are *Stars of the Week*. Annual written reports are informative and make straightforward reading. Parents appreciate the quality of reports and think that they provide good information about their children's progress. The teacher in Year 6 includes parents and pupils in setting annual targets for pupils' academic and personal improvement. This brings a greater level of involvement in their children's learning for those involved and they sign an agreement to that effect. Parents with concerns find it easy to contact teachers informally and agree that their worries are always resolved.
42. Some parents think that the school sets too little homework for older pupils. Inspection findings agree that although the amount of homework is satisfactory for most pupils, additional homework for older pupils would prepare them for the homework expected in the secondary school. The contribution made by some parents to their children's learning is satisfactory. Parents who read with their children at home make a good contribution to their children's learning in school. They feel free to ask for books and the school is very helpful and encouraging of their efforts. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are not always involved in their learning, or in reviews of individual educational plans. Many parents support home-school agreements and the school keeps in touch with parents who are not involved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. Governors have done well to appoint a new headteacher who has the attributes needed to address past serious weaknesses in the school's leadership and management. Because of a lack of consistent leadership, many important areas of the school's work received little attention in recent years. The training of teachers to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies was neglected. As a result, pupils did not benefit from these initiatives until recently and the standards older pupils achieve in English are still too low. This situation is being dealt with in a systematic way by a headteacher who knows where to go to for advice and uses his former position as literacy consultant for the local education authority to address some of the school's ills. Although it is still too early to judge the effectiveness of recent initiatives, the school now has a basis for improvement that operates with varying degrees of effectiveness. Because very little was done to tackle issues from the last inspection, the headteacher pinpointed positive attitudes and good relationships for immediate improvement. As a result, clear frameworks are in place and are used with variable success to promote the self-esteem and good behaviour that pupils need if their learning is to improve.
44. the headteacher, with encouragement from governors and the involvement of staff, has written a plan to guide the school's development. The plan is a good one. It provides teachers with opportunities to use their expertise in subjects to advise and help others, as well as to check up on how well subjects are being taught. This is already providing helpful guidance to help staff to improve their teaching. The headteacher makes good use of the school's advisers to bring about rapid change. As a result, coordinators are now confident enough to observe lessons in English and mathematics, and to provide teachers with the sort of feedback that helps them to improve their practice. Over the next two years, development planning will gradually involve governors in curriculum initiatives through reports and discussions with curriculum coordinators. This will increase governors' ability to evaluate the success of new developments.

45. The headteacher feels strongly that he should lead from the front and be visible and active in moving the school forward. Because he teaches English and mathematics, and examines teachers' planning, the headteacher has his finger on the pulse of teaching and learning. Armed with secure knowledge of weaknesses in both subjects, the headteacher is determined to drive up standards and to build a team of teachers, governors and parents whose joint activities will benefit pupils.
46. Established governors fulfil their statutory roles. They work in committees to manage different aspects of their responsibilities, but think that the curriculum committee deals with the main area for improvement. The relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors is based on mutual trust and respect, and on open and constructive dialogue. Between them, they have knowledge of the difficulties the school has faced in the past, are doing their best to improve its current provision and have an eye on developments in the future. Governors intend to provide the headteacher with objectives for his work in the next year. By prudent management of finances, governors have retrieved a serious shortfall to the budget that existed at the last inspection. They have established a healthy and growing contingency fund to replace outdated resources and to cater for unforeseen emergencies.
47. The governing body shows its commitment towards pupils with special educational needs by providing extra staff to support their learning. However, governors do not take account of the quality of this support in terms of the effect it has on pupils' learning. As a result, some pupils gain little from the aid provided by untrained support staff, while others make good progress from the skilled support of experienced, well-qualified staff. Help is prioritised for pupils whose special educational needs were neglected until very recently. The headteacher took on the responsibility for coordinating the school's provision and spent his first term in the school checking what needed to be done. Consequently, individual education plans were written as a matter of urgency at the beginning of the autumn term. Now that they are in place, they are about to be reviewed and amended by teachers to take greater account of pupils' individual needs.
48. New computer programmes are put to good use to maintain careful checks on budgetary expenditure. The school's secretary maintains very efficient systems of financial control and provides regular updates for governors on the state of the budget. All specific grants are used for their intended purpose. While the school looks for best value before purchasing resources, the headteacher has not had time to judge the effectiveness of spending in terms of its impact on pupils' learning.
49. The school has sufficient qualified and experienced teachers and a good number of support staff to teach the curriculum effectively. Support staff work closely with teachers so that they understand their role. As far as their training and expertise allows, they make a positive contribution to the learning and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs. The school has generous accommodation for learning. Wide communal areas benefit pupils as library and resource areas, spaces for teaching and learning, and for practical activities. The school's spacious and attractive grounds are put to good use for maintaining standards in physical education and environmental studies. The building is kept very clean and is maintained to a satisfactory standard.

50. As a result of serious shortfalls to funding in the past a shortage of resources exists for most subjects. This lack of resources is particularly evident as the school puts new programmes of work into place to implement recent curricular developments. A very good increase to the school's resources for ICT takes the form of a newly established computer suite. New computers will be more effective in raising standards when the school purchases a wider range of suitable software. Resources are satisfactory for mathematics, physical education, art and design, and design and technology. Shortages of resources for English, science, history, music, geography, religious education, and the reception class, restrict opportunities for teachers to develop and extend pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should now:

- (1) raise standards in reading and writing by
 - providing training for support staff to increase their effectiveness in improving pupils achievements
 - improving the teaching of spelling and punctuation
 - increasing the range of pupils' writing in English and other subjects
 - making better use of marking to give pupils guidance
 - encouraging pupils to modify and to improve their own work
 - improving systems for assessing pupils' achievements

(paragraphs 4, 6, 16, 19, 20, 52, 59, 62 and 63 of the main report).
- (2) raise standards for more able pupils in mathematics and science by
 - improving systems for assessing pupils' achievements
 - using the results of assessment to plan challenging work that allows more able pupils to extend their learning in both subjects
 - providing opportunities for independent investigative work in science

(paragraphs 4, 17, 19, 54, 67, 70 and 75 of the main report).
- (3) ensure that work matches pupils' needs by
 - establishing a consistent system to track the learning of individual pupils
 - providing targets that help pupils to make progress

(paragraphs 36, 37, 52 and 65 of the main report).
- (4) improve the range and quality of resources available to support teaching and learning in the reception class, in English, ICT, science, history, music, geography and religious education,

(paragraphs 8, 22, 49, 53, 54, 65, 79, 80, 89, 100 and 101 of the main report).

Issue 3 is identified by the school for attention in its current development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%]	2%	37%	54%	7%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	131
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	57

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	35

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	92.1
National comparative data	94.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000 [1999]	8[10]	13[12]	21[22]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*[*]	*[*]	*[*]
	Girls	*[*]	*[*]	*[*]
	Total	19[15]	20[14]	20[15]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86[68]	91[64]	91[68]
	National	83[82]	84[83]	90[87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*[*]	*[*]	*[*]
	Girls	*[*]	*[*]	*[*]
	Total	19[16]	21[18]	20[21]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86[73]	95[82]	90[95]
	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 [1999]	4[13]	10[12]	14[25]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*[*]	*[*]	*[*]
	Girls	*[*]	*[*]	*[*]
	Total	10[14]	11[15]	11[18]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71[56]	79[60]	79[72]
	National	75[70]	72[69]	85[78]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*[*]	*[*]	*[*]
	Girls	*[*]	*[*]	*[*]
	Total	10[14]	11[15]	11[20]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71[56]	78[60]	78[80]
	National	70[68]	72[69]	79[75]

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

* When fewer than 10 boys or girls in a small class reach the expected level in any subject, the numbers are not published.

Exclusions in the last school year

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5 : 1
Average class size	25.8

Education support staff: Yr – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 -2000
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	£
Total income	253,002
Total expenditure	287,661
Expenditure per pupil	2,358
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,286
Balance carried forward to next year	14,139

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	129
Number of questionnaires returned	21 (16.3%)

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	38	0	0	5
My child is making good progress in school.	57	29	0	0	14
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	33	5	0	24
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	33	14	5	5
The teaching is good.	67	24	0	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	29	10	0	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	10	0	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	10	0	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	43	38	0	0	19
The school is well led and managed.	81	14	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	29	0	0	14
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	29	0	0	14

Pointers from the meeting of parents

- Parents are generally satisfied with the attainment of their children.
- There is confidence amongst parents that the school helps individual pupils to do their best.
- Parents are happy with the values and attitudes which the school promotes.
- Parents feel the school encourages and gets good standards of behaviour.
- Parents believe the school treats homework seriously and it is set regularly.
- Parents are satisfied with the way the school listens to their concerns and takes action.
- Parents are of the opinion that the school maintains standards and that liaison with them is now better.

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

51. The achievements of children in the reception class are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Children's early experiences of reading, writing and numbers depend mainly on whether they attend a private nursery in the building. According to the report of its recent inspection, this provides a good start to most children's education and prepares them very effectively for life in school. Once in school, children are taught in a spacious reception area with a group of the youngest pupils from Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development (PSE)

52. Most children's achievements are better than expected for their age in PSE development. The very good provision for PSE development reported in the nursery is evident in many children's confident approach to learning in the reception class. They are keen, cheerful and busy learners who respond to adults in a friendly, confident manner. Teaching is at its best in PSE development. This is because staff treat children with respect and affection, and make them feel safe within a framework of clear rules and expectations. Consequently, relationships are good. Children share tasks very amicably. When putting large jigsaws together, they point out pieces that fit the spaces to one another and talk about the pictures as they emerge. Staff are firm and kind when ensuring that children understand and carry out the rules and routines of the class. This accounts for children's very good behaviour. By working alongside children, staff give them the support they need to benefit from all tasks and to listen attentively to stories. Effective teaching encourages children to express their feelings and to listen with interest to one another. This happens, for example, when children sit together in a circle. Everyone takes turns to say a few words on a chosen topic and then passes round a snack politely, helping others to make a selection by holding a tray while choices are made. When given the chance, children are good at selecting their own activities. The teacher makes sure that children with special educational needs for their physical disabilities do as much as they can to look after themselves. As a result, one child lifted a large box of bricks onto the carpet before help could be provided and later put the box away with equal determination. Children have no problems dressing and undressing themselves or tidying away equipment when asked. They make good progress towards the objectives of PSE development.

Communication, language and literacy

53. Most children's ability to communicate with others is typical for their age. To achieve this, the teacher's planning contains lists of the vocabulary children need to speak clearly in all activities. Because staff encourage children to express their ideas and listen to them attentively, children are very forthright when expressing their views. At the start of the day, children leave their mothers with *Bye mum. See you*, and greet one another and staff with *Good morning*. Many children show their awareness of good manners with *Please* and *Thank you*. The fact that some children find it difficult to use clear language does little to stop them chatting confidently to staff and to visiting adults. Staff are good at identifying the needs of these children at an early stage and seeking outside specialist support. A lot of effort goes into introducing children to the skills and pleasures of learning to read. As well as reading stories in simple texts with confidence, some children make good progress in identifying one another's names on trays, the titles of books and the events of stories. Many make steady progress for their age by *reading* pictures and familiar words. After asking visitors to *Guess my name*, several children write their names with their fingers in the air. In addition to reading during the literacy hour, every child reads to support staff every day. In most instances, this arrangement is very helpful. It increases children's fluency and

confidence, and gives them additional time to practise their reading. In other cases, however, children who have few early experiences of reading are taught by those least qualified to deal with any initial difficulties they encounter. Because there is no system to assess children's early progress as readers, some who are already identifying the words that are repeated regularly in familiar stories are identified as slow learners. This widens the gap between children who have help for their reading both in school and at home, and those who receive the least help to compensate for an initial slowness to read. Teaching places clear emphasis on linking the sounds of letters to their names. In response, children use letters to make sense of new words. Although children make good use of opportunities to jot down clusters of letters, their progress in writing is slow. This is because there are few occasions or resources available to help them to produce their own writing.

Mathematical development

54. Most children's mathematical development is satisfactory. They enjoy activities that include number rhymes and counting games. Several more able children make good progress in counting everyday objects up to 10, and in recognising and writing numerals. For instance, two boys who decided that a burglar was breaking into their house showed confidence with numbers when they asked for the phone number of the police station, wrote down the numbers accurately and then dialled them before *talking to the police*. Most children make steady progress in recognising simple patterns by ordering plastic elephants by size and colour. Children's understanding of pattern and mathematical language improved when the teacher prompted them to look carefully for the *biggest, middle-sized* and *smallest* elephants. Children enjoy playing together in a shop of *Bits and Bobs*. Their play becomes more focussed when support staff join in and help them to compare the length of pieces of ribbon, and to buy and sell cards of coloured buttons. When this activity ended, a small group of more able children took it further by mimicking the way that their teacher works. One child held up a card of buttons and asked others to *Quickly, count the buttons on the card*. Mathematical development is restricted by a shortage of resources for independent and group activities. Although many planned tasks are enjoyable and suitable for most children, activities lack sufficient variation to meet the needs of children at different stages of mathematical development. Records of assessment are not clear or accessible enough for use to plan the next stage of children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

55. The reception class is very short of the variety of practical activities and attractive materials for young children to develop their own ideas through exploration, observation and prediction. As a result, children's knowledge and understanding of the world is limited and their progress towards the goals established for their learning is slow. At best, children's experiences are extended through construction with sand, dough, bricks and constructional toys. They know that the three-dimensional models they make from clay are strengthened and will become *shiny* when painted with glue. Autumn leaves collected in the school grounds, provide children with the chance to explore the sensations of scrunching and stirring them in a sand tray. Children understand that switches control machines such as computers and cassette recorders. Some of them show good levels of skill when using a mouse to dress a teddy on the screen of a computer.

Physical development

56. Children's physical development is mainly satisfactory for their age but could be better. It is limited by a lack of large equipment for outdoor play that allows them to develop control and co-ordination by balancing, climbing and playing safely on wheeled toys. Despite this restriction, most children make steady progress in gaining awareness of space and others. Staff are careful to ensure that children understand the importance of moving around the building and classroom in a controlled and sensible way. They usually remember to make way for others, to line up and to hold doors open so that the whole class can walk into the hall with ease. Because staff observe their activities closely, children are careful to follow the rules of hygiene by washing their hands. Their teacher helps children to recognise changes that happen during vigorous exercise by telling them to put their hands on their chests to feel the rapid beating of their hearts. They explain the after effects of exercise by saying that they are *hot and tired*. Support staff make it possible for children with physical disabilities to take part in all activities.

Creative development

57. Most children's creative development is typical for their age. A strength of teaching lies in the teacher's planning and provision for music. With good levels of skill, children are taught a range of traditional rhymes that they sing in tune. They extend their enjoyment of *The Grand old Duke of York* by clapping in time to the music. Not only does the teacher provide children with a range of blocks and beaters, but also explains the difference between the sounds made by wooden and metal instruments. Because their teacher is in good control of their behaviour children manage to take part, wait their turns patiently and pass on instruments sensibly. They learn to play instruments like Indian bells and triangles and most strike instruments on the beat. With continuous reminders from staff, most children name colours accurately. Their progress towards the goals planned for the end of their time in the reception class is steady, although there are few opportunities for children to select their own tools and materials, or to experiment and use their own ideas in art, music and dance.

ENGLISH

Standards in national tests

58. The results of national tests in English for 11-year-olds in 2000 were below the national average. More able pupils did well enough in English, but too many pupils achieved a level below that expected for their age. Standards have risen since the last inspection when they were very low. With the exception of 1999, when they were well below average, standards have remained low but have risen at the same rate as standards nationally. Pupils' performances in English were well above those of pupils in similar schools. Although the standards reached by girls are lower than those of girls in most schools, they did better in national tests than boys. The school met its targets for English in 2000.
59. The standards reached by seven-year-olds in national tests in 2000 were higher than at any time since the last inspection. More able pupils did well enough in reading and writing and pupils did as well as pupils in most other schools in writing. In reading, however, standards were below average and many pupils reached a lower level than expected for their age. As in Year 6, girls did better than boys in English and pupils did much better in reading and writing than pupils in similar schools.

Inspection findings

60. In the second part of the autumn term, standards in English are still not high enough in Year 6. Because of the school's commitment to raising standards, teachers are doing their best to improve this situation by providing *booster* classes, not only to improve the performances of less able pupils, but also to ensure that more able pupils do their best. Considerable amounts of time are allocated to supporting the learning of less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs. However, the effectiveness of this support depends too much on the skills of individual support staff. Although some of it is good, it is not always good enough to deal with the difficulties some pupils encounter with their reading. Teachers give the task of reading with pupils who are experiencing the greatest difficulties to the least qualified staff. For example, pupils who find it difficult to identify new words are often told the word rather than being encouraged to use their knowledge of the sounds of letters to build the words themselves.
61. Because teachers are good at explaining the objectives of lessons and clarifying new ideas, pupils understand what is expected and most do their best to carry out tasks. Most pupils listen attentively in discussions, and to explanations and instructions from their teachers. When pupils in Year 6 were asked to write suitable questions for visitors to the class, the effort they put into devising searching questions demonstrated their attentiveness to the teacher's directions. To make sure that pupils fully understand the objectives planned for their learning, teachers use the final part of lessons to go over the work. In Year 2, for instance, the teacher used the session effectively to review and extend pupils' knowledge of words with the same sounds but with different spellings and meanings.
62. Although pupils throughout the school use spoken English to express their ideas with reasonable confidence, their vocabulary is limited and this weakness is reflected in the unadventurous vocabulary most of them use in their writing. The texts provided for pupils' reading are in many instances out of date and in poor condition. It is not until Year 6, that pupils have access to a range of texts for independent reading. As a result, many pupils lack interest or knowledge of the work of a wide range of writers and miss the challenging ideas and vocabulary to influence and improve their speech and writing. Some older pupils are unsure of ways to access information from reference books or how to use library classification systems. This restricts pupils' ability to carry out independent research in English and in other subjects.
63. When teaching is lively and carried out at a brisk pace, pupils do their best to come up with original ideas for their writing. In a lesson in Year 5, the teacher's relationship with pupils was the key to their good behaviour and effort. As well as wanting to please their teacher, pupils worked competitively for rewards. While teachers frequently remind pupils to pay close attention to spelling and punctuation, both aspects of writing are weak throughout the juniors. The use of simple punctuation such as capital letters and full stops shows little improvement by the time most pupils reach Year 6. Marking of their writing contains little of the guidance from teachers that leads to improvement. Opportunities for pupils to modify their own work are missing.
64. Weaknesses in writing are due in part to a lack of different programmes for teaching spelling. Computers are used effectively for word-processing but new spelling programmes are still being trialled. Pupils in the infants have too few opportunities to write at length in different subjects and in a variety of different forms. Although many seven-year-olds achieve average, or slightly below average results in national tests in writing, limited opportunities for independent writing in different forms prevent them from doing better. The school's home reading scheme is helpful to the learning of pupils who read with their parents at home. A considerable proportion of pupils, however, receive little or no help at

home. Although teachers are aware of this situation and understand the effect it has on pupils' performance, they do little to compensate for a lack of parental support.

65. A lack of leadership to ensure that teachers received sufficient, expert training limited their initial ability to implement the National Literacy Strategy. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, teachers have benefited from considerable support from local education authority advisers. As a result of recent checks on the quality of teaching, much of the teaching during the literacy hour is satisfactory and aspects of it are good. In the juniors, the school has resolved difficulties arising from the need to teach pupils in mixed age classes. Since the headteacher now teaches English to pupils in Year 5, there are enough staff to teach pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 with others of their own age. This means that teachers of older pupils focus their attention on one age group only and provide them with programmes of work from the National Literacy Strategy that are planned for their age. The headteacher intends to increase his teaching commitment in future to provide similar arrangements that will extend the achievements of pupils in the infants.
66. The co-ordinator for English devotes considerable effort to assessing and tracking the progress of pupils in Year 6. Other teachers in the juniors are aware of the benefits of clear records of assessment that will allow them to match pupils' work more accurately to their needs. There is no consistency in the way that teachers record or use the results of tests or day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning. As a result, teachers are unsure of what is successful about their teaching or of the underlying causes of gaps in pupils' achievements. With increasing experience of the National Literacy Strategy, improvements to outdated resources and a revival of a whole-school commitment to improvement, the school is in a satisfactory position to raise standards in English.

MATHEMATICS

Standards in national tests

67. Although the standards reached by seven and 11-year-olds in national tests in mathematics in 2000 were below average, they rose in the infants and the juniors and were higher than at the time of the last inspection. Very few more able pupils in Years 2 and 6 did as well as they should in mathematics. Although the school failed to reach its targets for mathematics in 2000, pupils did better than pupils in similar schools. Boys did better than girls in mathematics in Years 2 and 6.

Inspection findings

68. Standards in mathematics are beginning to rise with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the resulting improvements it has brought to teaching. Although many pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are achieving satisfactory standards, there is still room for improvement to the attainment of more able pupils. This is because the work teachers provide often fails to challenge them enough to reach higher levels. The identical work is discouraging for less able pupils because it is often too hard. The school is taking steps to put this right. At present, pupils who work just below the expected level in mathematics receive extra help for their learning in *booster* classes. *Booster* classes will also be provided for more able 11-year-olds before national tests in 2001 to ensure that their work reaches a high level. Additionally, more able pupils in Year 5 are taught alongside pupils in Year 6. This good initiative provides these pupils with work at a level that challenges their thinking and leads effectively to higher levels of attainment. The school works closely with a local secondary school to introduce more able pupils to demanding work in algebra.

69. Strengths are evident in the learning of pupils in Year 6 in calculating square numbers up to 12^2 using a multiplication square. They quickly recognise and predict patterns as numbers increase. As their confidence grows, pupils calculate numbers up to 15^2 and explain their methods. They carry out mental calculations to answer sums such as $4^2 - 2^2$. Younger pupils in the juniors put numbers into sequence. They learn the rules that show how sequences grow and are fascinated when some sequences, such as 1,2,4,7,11..., do not continue as they expected. When pupils in Year 2 put numbers into order, average and more able pupils begin to understand place value. However, less able pupils find this difficult and many write 35 instead of 53. Pupils who understand how numbers are used to put things into order, sometimes write 5^{st} and 6^{st} instead of 5^{th} and 6^{th} .
70. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory and is good in some lessons. The basic skills of mathematics are usually taught to a satisfactory level, although not all lessons place sufficient emphasis on mental mathematics to improve pupils' response to problems. Teachers make satisfactory use of pupils' skills in mathematics in lessons such as history, and design and technology. In a good lesson, the teacher maintained a brisk pace when questioning pupils about fractions and assessed how much they knew before moving on to the next step of learning. An element of competition in this lesson caught pupils' imagination and they worked more effectively as a result. Teaching is less effective when pupils are allowed to disturb others by calling out the answers to questions. Most pupils, however, have good attitudes to mathematics and some are very enthusiastic about the subject.
71. Teachers encourage pupils to work hard by praising their efforts. They pay attention to individual pupils who find new work difficult. A weakness in teaching results because most teachers do not assess pupils' work thoroughly enough or use the information from assessment to ensure that the work they provide always meets pupils' needs. An exception to this was seen in Year 6 where the teacher keeps comprehensive records of attainment and tracks pupils' progress from the results of regular tests. This good practice provides pupils with individual targets for their learning that are agreed with parents and pupils. Reports on the progress pupils make towards their targets are sent home regularly.
72. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs improves their understanding of mathematics. Several less able pupils from Year 1 responded with enthusiasm to the positive and energetic approach of their teacher when learning to count from 10 to 20, recording their answers and going on to identify odd and even numbers. The learning of pupils with special educational needs improves when they are taught in small groups with work that is tailored to their needs. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 gained confidence with simple multiplication when encouraged to think of practical ways to use it, such as sharing packets of crisps. These pupils were so keen to learn that when they saw the pattern made by the 11 times table asked if they could learn that table too.
73. In addition to the appointment of a co-ordinator for mathematics, the headteacher is making good use of the advisory services of the local education authority to bring about rapid improvements to the school's provision for mathematics. Advisers have checked the quality and effectiveness of teaching and increased the skills of the co-ordinator. The school has identified weaknesses to pupils' learning in order to fill gaps in teaching. This determination to improve gives the school satisfactory opportunity to raise standards.

SCIENCE

Standards in national tests

74. Although standards in science in national tests in 2000 for 11-year-olds rose in line with the national trend and were above the level reached at the last inspection, they were still very low when compared with those reached by pupils in most other schools. More able pupils in Year 6 did not do well enough in science. Very few of them reached the same satisfactory level they achieved in English. This is partly because teachers have received no training in science during recent years, and their knowledge and understanding of the subject are not strong enough. Teachers' assessments show that seven-year-olds reached satisfactory standards in science in 2000. As in Year 6, the results achieved by more able pupils in Year 2 were not high enough and were below those of more able pupils nationally. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools, pupils' performances are more favourable. They were comparable with the results of 11-year-olds with similar backgrounds and very high for seven-year-olds. Girls in Year 6 did better than boys in 2000.

Inspection findings

75. Recently, the school has begun to implement a national programme of work for science that allows teachers to plan what pupils need to learn more accurately. This enables teachers to cover all aspects of the work in science and through this to improve and to extend pupils' attainments. The school's adaptation of national guidelines helps teachers to plan work that meets the needs of pupils in classes with more than one age group.
76. However, teachers do not take full advantage of this improvement because they normally plan the same work for all pupils in a class, regardless of their age or understanding of science. Instead, teachers expect more able pupils to achieve better results than others and provide extra support for pupils who find the work difficult. Because more able pupils do not receive challenging work, they do not learn as fast as they should. For instance, in a lesson where few pupils gained any new knowledge, the most able completed the same mundane task of drawing various forms of exercise and listing which parts of the body would benefit. As a result, they took little interest or care with their work. On the other hand, when challenged to interpret a *scatter gram*, the most able pupils in Year 5 achieved good results. This showed that while they understood that children's height increases with age, they also recognised there is not always a correlation between age and height.
77. A positive feature of teaching is the emphasis given to investigative work. However, teachers' lack of expertise in their approach to investigations hinders pupils from making enough progress. They control activities and direct pupils too tightly in investigations instead of training them to achieve confidence and independence. So, by the age of 11, pupils have not had enough opportunities to turn their ideas into a form that they themselves can investigate. As a result, pupils in Year 6 needed the close support of the teacher and two classroom assistants to carry out a simple investigation. They had no chance to turn their ideas about dissolving solids into an investigation; this was largely done for them. There was no opportunity for them to make predictions as a matter of routine, or to use the results of the investigation to draw scientific conclusions.
78. By the time pupils are 11-years-old, they have not been prepared to record their ideas or the results of investigations in a scientific way or by using scientific vocabulary in discussion or in writing. For instance, most pupils in Year 2 were unable to explain the benefit of physical exercise in the positive sense of keeping *healthy*, but rather in the negative sense of preventing people from *getting fat*. When pupils in Year 4 use the school grounds to look for mini-beasts and habitats; they record the association between the two

and miss the point of investigation. Consequently, in Year 6, pupils need guidance to record their work by using a planning format, but are still unable to manage it effectively.

79. Teachers set the scene for lessons by telling pupils what they are going to learn and do. This is done effectively when they hold pupils' interest with motivating explanations and engage them in discussion. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were keen for an investigation to begin and remained enthusiastic throughout. During the introduction to one lesson, constant interruptions from a small group of boys slowed down other pupils' learning and reduced their interest. In another lesson, the lack of an interesting introduction caused a fuss and resulted in some pupils talking out of turn. This set the tone for a lesson where pupils made little progress.
80. Until the appointment of the new headteacher, the school took little action to improve the teaching of science. This has changed with the introduction of a new programme of work that helps teachers to plan activities that meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes and to raise standards in Year 2 and Year 6. Because of past financial problems, resources for science are no longer adequate. However, the school is currently in a better position to provide the equipment teachers need for effective lessons. The subject lacks clear procedures to assess pupils' learning in science. This is also true of teachers' marking, which is not constructive enough to help pupils to improve their work. Nevertheless, the commitment of headteacher and staff to improve teaching and learning, to renew outdated resources combined with more effective planning put the school in a satisfactory position to raise standards.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

81. The standards reached by seven and 11-year-olds in ICT are typical for their age in word processing. This was also the case at the last inspection, when teaching concentrated mainly on word processing but provided pupils with little experience of other aspects of the subject. The situation has improved but gaps still exist in data handling and control technology. This is because the subject has been starved of resources and the school has managed with out-of-date computers and a lack of suitable software. As a result, not enough use is made of computers to improve pupils' skills in ICT or their learning in other subjects. A strength of attainment lies in pupils' understanding of how computers affect their lives and their use in domestic, industrial and commercial applications. Very few pupils with special educational needs, whose learning would benefit from the use of computers, have sufficient access to the equipment they need to improve their achievements in English and mathematics.
82. Because of the current emphasis on word processing, 11-year-olds type accurately, select different styles of font, and alter its size and the way it is presented to make their work more attractive. Many pupils type with one finger but move quickly round the screen using a mouse and arrow keys. They use the space bar, return and backspace keys confidently but most use the caps lock key to make capital letters rather than the shift key. When setting down poems and recipes, pupils centre the text on the line to improve the appearance of their work. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 enter commands to move a pointer round the screen to draw a series of connected shapes and type letters to enter a *Jamtastic* competition. In Year 3, pupils improve their computer skills using an adventure program.
83. By the age of seven, pupils' keyboard skills are sufficiently developed for them to work with a limited amount of software. They use the mouse and arrow keys accurately, and operate the space bar and shift keys to write their names. Pupils enjoy using computers and treat them with respect. Throughout the school, they use two very different operating systems

with confidence. These exist in the form of out-of-date computers and modern personal machines where pupils select their own programs from a list on screen and close them down correctly. Pupils in the juniors load work from their personal disks and save it when completed. Many older pupils are so interested in ICT that they ask to stay in at playtime to work on computers and behave sensibly without supervision. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the advantages of computers in school and at home. They use them both for homework and to research information during lessons. One pupil sent off an application by e-mail to NASA asking to become an astronaut!

84. The ease with which pupils start computers, select programs and save their work results from teaching that is at least satisfactory. Teachers use effective strategies to ease pupils' access to new computers. In a good lesson, where pupils learned to use the spell checker, the teacher introduced the lesson in the classroom. This meant that pupils were not distracted by new equipment and surroundings. By the time they were ready to use the computers, pupils knew what they were expected to do and gained good understanding of how to check spellings, and of instances when spell checkers are unreliable.
85. The school is on the brink of raising standards in ICT. This is reflected by the speed with which it took up the offer of co-operation with Skelmersdale College and adapted a room to create a computer suite. Experts from the college established a community room that gives pupils generous access to a wide range of up-to-date machines. The school's next priority is to equip computers with software and other resources to improve pupils' achievements in ICT and other subjects. To further improve pupils' learning, the co-ordinator has checked teachers' expertise and arranged training for those whose skills need improving. Without systems to assess the skills of individual pupils, teachers find it difficult to cater for their different needs. Many classes in the juniors include pupils who lack understanding of the function of some keys on the keyboard, while others use e-mail skilfully to write to relatives, friends and government institutions around the world. The school has recently introduced nationally agreed programmes of work that will ensure that all aspects of ICT are taught fully once missing resources are acquired.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

86. The school has maintained standards in religious education since the last inspection. By the time pupils are seven and 11-years-old, they reach standards that are typical for their ages and match the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
87. Recently, the school has introduced new guidelines for planning lessons that are based on the locally Agreed Syllabus. Teachers use these guidelines effectively so that pupils' learning increases step by step as they become older. For instance, teachers in both infant classes used the same theme of *gifts* for their lessons, but adapted it imaginatively for their own pupils. They each told the story of the *Three Wise Men* as a basis for discussion. In one class, pupils thought of suitable gifts for a baby and considered the significance of the wise men's gifts for Jesus. In the other, the work was more demanding when older pupils reflected on gifts that poor people might give a baby. On the teacher's suggestion of a *smile*, or *happiness*, pupils put these gifts into a *precious box*. This imaginative approach helps young pupils to reflect on personal qualities.
88. Teachers continue to develop pupils' ability to reflect on new ideas as they get older. When pupils in Years 3 and 4 saw the precious objects that some of them brought from home, the teacher reminded them that a seemingly insignificant object could still be a precious possession. Although pupils found difficulty articulating their thoughts, the value of these discussions lies in the opportunities they provide for pupils to communicate with one another by expressing their ideas. Several pupils in Year 5 voiced some interesting

thoughts as they shared beliefs such as, *Light and darkness show the life and death of Jesus on the cross*. The balance between discussion and pupils recording their ideas is tipped heavily towards discussion. Although this imbalance provides pupils with good opportunities to improve their spoken language, it means that they have less time to improve their writing by gathering their thoughts together before recording them. As a result, pupils in Year 6 wrote about the *Journey of Life* as narratives without spiritual or reflective content.

89. Teachers' firm control of behaviour and their positive relationships with pupils hold pupils' attention during discussions that are sometimes lengthy. Thus pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are usually good. In one lesson, however, the disturbing effect of several boys set a restless atmosphere. This had an adverse effect on pupils' learning until the teacher finally quelled the problem.
90. The school has made a satisfactory start to improving its provision for religious education by implementing a new scheme of work. There is, however, much to be done since resources are not sufficient to meet the needs of the scheme, and there are few opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship and to listen to the ideas of representatives from various faiths. However, given the work already carried out and the commitment of teachers to raise standards, the school is in a good position to improve pupils' learning in religious education.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Standards in art and design, which were good for seven and 11-year-olds at the last inspection, are not as high in the current Year 6. What is effective in the subject is the observational drawing of pupils in Year 2. Several seven-year-olds have produced high quality work in pencil that reflects the appearance of figures in an African three-dimensional plaque. They have captured the facial features of the figures very accurately and their drawings provide details of objects and patterns from African culture. Similarly, most pupils take great care when reproducing portraits of medieval dignitaries to represent not only the facial characteristics of people from the past, but also the fine detail of their clothes, hairstyles, jewellery and possessions.
92. Both seven and 11-year-olds are learning about the work of artists from different times and traditions. Teaching which is focussed on portraits, gives pupils in the infants a taste of the work of Picasso that extends their ideas of portraiture beyond the boundaries of their own experience. Teaching in the juniors is at its most effective when teachers establish links between art and other subjects. In Year 6, for example, the teacher linked the images of figures in motion that pupils produced in art to their learning in gymnastics where pupils concentrated on the appearance of muscles under stress. When asked to produce figures in the style of cave artists from ancient times, many 11-year-olds found it difficult to draw representations of the body that show any improvement on those produced in the infants. This weakness in the achievement of older pupils results from a long-term lack of the guidance and training teachers need to improve their own expertise in art and design.
93. However, teachers' planning for art and design has undergone recent improvement and modification as a result of the school's adoption of a new national programme of work. This initiative provides teachers with ideas that produce a wide range of experiences for pupils and methods to develop their artistic skills in a systematic way. The influence of cohesive planning is evident in the work pupils in different year groups produce on the same theme. Portraits of people that show weaknesses in the achievements of pupils in Year 6, demonstrate the greater observational skills of pupils in Years 4 and 5. Improved planning also overcomes any repetition of work in classes with more than one age group

and has all the ingredients needed to raise standards in the subject to the same high level as at the previous inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Since the last inspection, standards in design and technology have improved from a low level and are now satisfactory for seven and 11-year-olds. This was evident in Years 4 and 5, when pupils designed a photograph frame. They did this effectively by using suggestions from a prompt sheet provided by the teacher. The effectiveness of this strategy lay in asking pupils to consider how they would use the frame, make it functional and decorate and finish it. Pupils showed skill in scoring thick cardboard and bending it to make a stand for the frame. The project involved pupils in improving techniques in cutting and gluing and used their artistic skills to decorate the frame.
95. With a new programme that uses national guidelines in place, teachers have sufficient skills to teach the design process. As a result, pupils plan all projects carefully before setting to work with tools and materials. One project in the juniors was effective because it used pupils' scientific knowledge to design and make a buzzer for the classroom door that is still working. When pupils explained how they made maracas out of paper mâché they understood why different types of glue were needed. Older pupils' knowledge about fixing materials improved when they made a millennium tapestry to decorate the piano in the hall. This project introduced pupils to work with a sewing machine, which they used to attach their designs to the hanging. Pupils built buggies to roll down slopes and made land yachts powered by sails. In both projects, they learnt to fix wheels and axles. Although it is too early to judge how effectively teachers will use the new programme of work to raise standards in design and technology, it places them in a satisfactory position to provide pupils with a good range of experiences and a satisfactory variety of tools and materials.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

96. The school has maintained standards in geography since the last inspection and improved standards in history. Now, standards in both subjects are typical of those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds nationally.
97. Planning for geography and history has improved since the recent introduction of new programmes of work. This helps teachers to plan work that gradually increases pupils' understanding of both subjects. As a result, most pupils enjoy geography and history. The good relationships they share with one another and their teachers are reflected in their positive attitudes to work. A good feature of teaching is the emphasis teachers place on *What's in the News*, to develop pupils' understanding of the geographical context of world events. In Year 6, for instance, the teacher used news about recent floods in the United Kingdom to start a discussion about global warming.
98. The school's use of visits and visitors to develop the skills of fieldwork and research widens pupils' experiences in both subjects and brings aspects of them to life. For example, rangers from Beacon Country Park guide pupils when interpreting maps of the area and show them how the Park fits into the environment of Skelmersdale. Teachers involve pupils in historical enquiry when they take them to Chester to visit archaeological sites, to watch *Roman soldiers* in role-play and to handle Roman pottery.
99. When teachers are enthusiastic about geography and history, lessons have a good effect on pupils' attitudes and performance. In geography in Years 3 and 4, for example, the teacher's knowledgeable approach and high expectations aroused pupils' interest so much

that by studying the features of local Ordnance Survey maps, they made detailed maps of their own. On the other hand, pupils were so unsure of the focus of a lesson aimed at stimulating geographical enquiry that they lost interest in the work. The teacher reorganised the lesson into controlled research from atlases.

100. When teachers set the same tasks for all pupils, the most able usually find the work too easy and their thinking is not challenged. Others find the work too hard and struggle to understand the purpose of the lesson. For instance, to develop younger pupils' interest in the past, teachers expect them to draw toys from books and to sort toys from different decades into *old and new*. While most pupils had no difficulty identifying old and new toys, they were unable to explain their reasoning beyond *dirty* or *clean*. Some pupils moved on to make comparisons such as *oldest*. Others were unsure about why some toys were older than others and quickly grew tired of the task. By working closely with pupils with special educational needs, support staff help them to understand what is expected of them and they achieve as much as the rest of the class.
101. The school has made a satisfactory start to raising standards in geography and history by ensuring full coverage of both subjects for pupils in mixed age classes. However, there are not enough resources available to teach the new curriculum and insufficient use is made of ICT for research. For instance, there are no aerial photographs for use in geography and teachers have to use their own Ordnance Survey maps if older pupils are to gain the skills of mapping. Improvements to teaching and planning, and the school's commitment to improve resources, place the school in a satisfactory position to raise standards.

MUSIC

102. Standards in music are similar to those expected of seven and 11-year-olds. What is good about this is that teachers have maintained these standards since the last inspection despite shortages in resources. With better resources, teachers have the skills needed to raise standards.
103. In a good lesson in Year 6, when pupils listened to Greek music, they identified the instruments that gave the music its characteristic sound. With clear instructions from the teacher, pupils made good use of un-tuned percussion instruments, such as cymbals, wood blocks and tambourines to represent the moods and the characters of gods and goddesses such as Artemis and Zeus. Through practice, they channelled their initial enthusiasm and began to control instruments like cymbals well enough to produce sounds of varying volume. They answer questions willingly, discuss their own and one another's work and use their imaginations effectively to describe the music. Because pupils in Years 4 and 5 listened attentively to Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* most of them could talk about familiar parts of the music. They suggested that smooth, flowing passages in the music could be *clouds* or *skaters*.
104. Pupils in the infants enjoyed themselves as they clapped in time to *The Enormous Turnip* and a song about *Goldilocks*. They found it more difficult to keep in time when using instruments to sound out rhythms. Although most pupils sing sweetly, some sing too loudly. Many infants sing complicated verses and fit words well to music. Their cultural awareness grows as they sing a Zambian song in the Bemba language, which translates as *Good-bye my friend, may peace go with you*.
105. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan activities that interest pupils. For example, in Years 1 and 2, the teacher showed pupils how to pick up a musical beat by pretending that they were rowing a boat. In Years 4 and Year 5, the teacher made good use of the film *Fantasia 2000* to show pupils how the actions of characters in the film fit the music. This

enabled pupils to see if their ideas were similar to those in the film. Pupils' learning is disturbed when the teacher needs to spend time dealing with noisy, inattentive pupils in Year 4. Teachers use the skills of staff who work with pupils with special educational needs effectively to improve pupils' performances. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs reach the same standards in music as other pupils.

106. The school lacks a programme of work for music but is adapting national guidelines to take account of the needs of pupils in classes with more than one age group. Pupils' understanding of music is increased when linked to subjects, such as history and English, where it is used as a stimulus for pupils' work. Instruments such as maracas, that are made in design and technology, are played in concerts. The school misses opportunities for pupils to hear music, for instance, when entering and leaving assemblies. The school has a sound reputation for music in the area. Pupils perform regularly for parents and at the Upholland High School *Proms*. They have been invited to entertain customers at a local restaurant before Christmas.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards in physical education that are typical for their age. Standards are comparable with those seen during the last inspection and swimming remains a strength of attainment. Standards in gymnastics for older pupils, however, are not high enough.
108. Since the last inspection the school has adopted new national programmes of work for physical education. As a result, teachers have clear guidelines to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered. Another improvement lies in the provision of outdoor and adventurous activities to extend the involvement of older pupils in the subject. Teachers take good care to emphasise the need for safety in physical education. This is most effective in swimming, where it helps less confident pupils to feel safe in the water and to swim on their backs. Although teachers give clear instructions, they do not always take account of pupils who clearly misunderstand what they have to do and waste valuable time finding out. Most pupils enjoy physical education and join in activities with good sense and enthusiasm. This is especially the case in swimming, where teaching is very good.
109. Teaching that is mainly satisfactory is at its most effective when teachers ask pupils to demonstrate their particular strengths for others to watch and learn. Pupils in Year 6 improved their skills after a demonstration of effective passing in netball. However, teachers do not expect pupils to evaluate their own performances, or to involve others in suggesting improvements. So, when pupils learnt to make passes, they had no opportunity to improve their performances by learning from experience. Lessons are not long, but because teachers usually conduct them at a brisk pace, time is used well. In some lessons, however, although teachers are aware of the constraints of time and the need to prioritise what is to be taught and learned, they move from one activity to another before pupils have the chance to achieve satisfactory performances. This was noticeable in gymnastics when the teacher's acceptance and praise of older pupils' demonstrations showed low expectations of performance.
110. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs take as full a part as possible in all activities with support from classroom assistants. Teachers give freely of their time in providing pupils with a good range of sporting activities outside lessons. Pupils also benefit from professional coaching in football and netball. The subject co-ordinator provides pupils with a good programme of events that encourages many of them to take part and to gain enjoyment from sport. Consequently, in a small school where success is less likely to be gained in competitions against larger schools, pupils gain pleasure from the events, and

also have their successes. With good leadership the school is well placed to improve standards in physical education.