

INSPECTION REPORT

LOWCA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Lowca, Whitehaven

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112158

Acting Headteacher: Mr C Rafferty

Reporting inspector: Mr G D Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th December 2000

Inspection number: 225222

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lowca
Whitehaven
Cumbria

Postcode: CA28 6QS

Telephone number: 01946 852656

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs L Dockray

Date of previous inspection: 21st January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Geof Timms 21038	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education Religious education	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? Equal opportunities
Dr Anthony Kelly 19725	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Sheila Mawer 18027	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities? Provision for children in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lowca Community School serves an ex-mining community on the coast of West Cumbria. The school is much smaller than most primary schools and has 63 full-time pupils aged from four to 11 years old. They are taught in three classes with mixed age groups. Within the classes children are grouped by age or by prior attainment, depending on the subject. There are nine children who are under five. Attainment on entry to the reception class is below that normally expected for children of their age. The children make good progress and their attainment on entry to statutory schooling is broadly in line with that expected. The school has undergone a complete change of teaching staff since the start of the year, and now has an acting headteacher.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. No pupil has English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average, as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational need. A fairly high proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times, other than when it is normal. The school has recognised a lot of priorities for its future development, including the improvement of standards in mathematics, literacy, science and information and communication technology (ICT), improving the premises and working more closely with parents.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Although the school has been through exceptional staff changes recently, the present staff and the acting headteacher are ensuring that the education provided is effective. Standards are improving in English and science but have worsened in mathematics by the age of eleven. The quality of teaching is good and the leadership and management is very good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English are good.
- The quality of teaching is good and expectations are high.
- The leadership ensures an excellent focus on raising standards, priorities are appropriate and the school's aims and values are very clearly evident in its daily life and work.
- Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and the positive relationships in the school create a very effective environment for learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics and science are not high enough.
- The systems for effective assessment of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory, and not used in planning.
- Staff changes have disrupted the coordination of subjects and there is not sufficient monitoring and evaluation of 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

The school was last inspected in January 1997. There were a number of important issues raised, most of which have been successfully addressed and the overall level of improvement has been good. The teaching of music, art and religious education has improved. A new system of assessment was introduced but this is now in need of further improvement to become more meaningful and practical. The planning of subjects has improved. Some monitoring of teaching has taken place by the acting headteacher and governors. The provision for the children who are under five has improved and the school development plan is now a very good, practical document. In addition to these issues, standards in English have improved although standards in mathematics have fallen. The pupils' cultural and spiritual development has improved. The overall leadership and management by key staff and the governing body have improved. The school's commitment and capacity for further improvement is very good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	C	B	A
Mathematics	C	D	E	E*
Science	E	D	D	E

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

The very small number of pupils who take the annual national tests makes the comparison of results from year to year unreliable. However, it is clear that, by the time they are eleven, pupils are achieving good standards in English, especially in reading. Their writing, speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. In mathematics and science, standards are below those expected for their age. In the 2000 national tests in English, an above average proportion of pupils reached the expected level, and a broadly average proportion reached a higher level. In mathematics, the proportion reaching the expected level was well below the national average, as was the proportion that reached a higher level. In science, the proportion reaching the expected level was below average while the proportion reaching a higher level was well below average. Viewed over five years, standards in English have risen at a greater rate than that found nationally. In science standards have also risen, matching the national improvement but not improving on it enough to bring standards up to national levels. In mathematics, standards have fallen over five years from a well above average level to a well below average level. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education are broadly in line with those expected.

When compared with schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds, the school's performance in 2000 was well above average in English. It was very low in mathematics, coming within the bottom five per cent of similar schools nationally, and well below average in science. The English result is also above average when compared to pupils' prior attainment, showing good levels of achievement. However, in mathematics and science, attainment when compared to prior attainment was well below that of other schools. The school's targets for attainment in English and mathematics at the age of eleven in 2000 were exceeded in English but not achieved in mathematics. The targets for 2001 and 2002 are appropriately based on pupils' prior attainment and are sufficiently challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and take a full part in lessons and other activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved in and out of classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good.
Attendance	The attendance rate for the last academic year was above the national average.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. They approach tasks cheerfully and take a genuine pride in their achievements. A high proportion take part in the extra curricular activities offered. The number of pupils who are absent without authorisation is below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. All of the teaching is at least satisfactory. Seventy nine per cent of the teaching is good or very good, and eighteen per cent is very good. For the children in the Foundation Stage (reception), all of the teaching is at least good. For the infants the teaching is good or better in 88 per cent of lessons. In the junior classes the quality of teaching is good in 69 per cent of lessons and very good in 19 per cent. The recent teaching staff changes have not resulted in any slowing of progress, and the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. A strength of the teaching observed is the high expectations that teachers have of the pupils. The planning and delivery of literacy and numeracy is good. The teaching and progress of pupils with special educational needs is generally good. The very good relationships established in all classes enable a productive working ethos to be created. The homework policy is not being followed fully at present, and it is not used regularly to extend and consolidate work covered in school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Work on the changes to the curriculum and for the children who are under five, is in hand.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Improvements to individual education plans have been introduced recently.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good. All pupils share a positive sense of community and shared values. Cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall, but procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.

The effectiveness of links between the parents and the school are good. Parents are involved in the school and the information provided for them is good. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic development are not effective in enabling teachers to assess systematically individual pupils' achievement, or to use such information to plan future lessons.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Although appointed on a temporary basis the acting headteacher has helped the school move forward successfully through turbulent times. Together with the staff and governors, the changes he has introduced have already begun to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. The Chair of the governing body gives generously of her time, and together with other governors has provided the school with much needed stability.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory at present but improving. The school has begun to analyse results and data more closely and this is now being used to target resources.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The recent use of available finance has enabled teachers to have more modern and appropriate resources.

The staffing level in the school is good. The accommodation is satisfactory, although there is no outdoor play facility specifically for the children under five, and the condition of the field and grounds are unsatisfactory, although ideal for development as an outdoor classroom. Resources need to be improved in the library and for history and geography.

The previous senior management worked hard to bring about the changes required after the last inspection and the majority of issues in the action plan have been successfully addressed. The governors have also worked hard to keep the school progressing in a time of great change. Staff are correctly and effectively focused on raising standards and demonstrate a long-term commitment to the continued development of the school. The acting headteacher has developed an improved analysis of pupils' attainment that has enabled governors to become more aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The mission statement and aims for the school are clear and focused on providing each child with a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum, resulting in them reaching their potential and becoming a responsible, caring individual. The evidence of the inspection is that this process has already come a long way. The development plan is a very good, effective document, and much improved since the last inspection, which, together with the governors' post-inspection action plans, should help the newly appointed permanent headteacher to move the school forward and continue to raise standards.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • The quality of the teaching is good and expectations are high. • Behaviour is good. • The school is helping children to become more mature. • Parents feel comfortable approaching the school and are closely involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children do not get enough homework. • The school does not provide an interesting enough range of activities.

The findings of the inspection confirm the parents' positive views of the school. Some parents feel that there should be more homework, and the inspection team agrees that the policy is not being fully implemented. A small number of parents would like to see more extra curricular activities, but the findings of the inspection are that, considering the size of the school, a good selection of activities is offered.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The very small number of pupils who take the annual national tests makes the comparison of results from year to year unreliable. However, it is clear from the inspection findings that by the time they are eleven, pupils are achieving good standards in English, especially in reading. Their writing, speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. In mathematics and science, standards are below those expected for their age. Since the previous inspection standards in English have improved but in mathematics and science they are not as good.
2. In 2000, 13 pupils took the national tests at the end of Year 6, 10 of whom had been in the school for the whole of the junior years. This means that one pupil represents eight per cent of the total score. In English, an above average proportion of pupils reached the expected level, and a broadly average proportion reached a higher level. In mathematics, the proportion reaching the expected level was well below the national average, as was the proportion that reached a higher level. In science, the proportion reaching the expected level was below average while the proportion reaching a higher level was well below average.
3. When compared with schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds the school's performance in 2000 was well above average in English, very low in mathematics, coming within the bottom five per cent of schools nationally, and well below average in science. The English result is also above average when compared to pupils' prior attainment showing good levels of achievement. However, in mathematics and science, attainment when compared to prior attainment was well below that of other schools. An analysis of the data showing how pupils improved as they moved through the school shows that in English, all of them made the expected gains in learning, of at least two levels during their junior years.
4. When children enter the school, the baseline assessment of their basic levels of attainment shows that it is below that expected for their age. By the time they enter statutory schooling they have made good progress and are at a level broadly in line with that expected, although their personal and social skills are still below average, and a significant number continue to demonstrate immature responses to their work. The school has recognised this and is working to develop their independence and more mature learning skills.
5. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, pupils' standards were well below average in reading and mathematics, while in writing standards were in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. This represented unsatisfactory progress made on the standards of pupils on entry to the infants. When compared with schools with similar pupils, standards were well below average in reading and very low in writing and mathematics. However, the small cohort again makes comparisons difficult, and in 1999 pupils were above average in reading and well above average in writing. Results in mathematics have been consistently well below average over for three years. In science, the teacher assessments showed that in 2000 standards were below the national average although an above average proportion of pupils reached a higher level.
6. The attainment of boys and girls is also difficult to compare accurately due to the small cohort sizes and the fact that different year groups have significantly different proportions of boys or girls. However, when taken over three years it is evident that in the infants, boys do better than girls in reading and that this is opposed to the national trend. In writing and mathematics, girls' results tend to follow the national trend more closely. By the age of eleven, boys are still comfortably

doing better than girls in English, taken over three years, and also in mathematics and science. The reasons for this include the good support offered by parents and the success of the school's teaching of reading.

7. The school's targets for attainment in English and mathematics at the age of eleven in 2000 were exceeded in English but not achieved in mathematics. The targets for 2001 and 2002 are appropriately based on pupils' prior attainment. They are appropriately challenging.
8. In speaking and listening, attainment is satisfactory by the age of eleven but it develops slowly over the years. Younger children do not form correct grammatical sentences when they speak and the staff try to address this weakness by providing many opportunities in lessons to develop speaking. Listening skills are also weak and this is shown by comments teachers write in books indicating that pupils have not listened well enough to understand the instructions. In reading, standards are assisted by a good number of pupils being active members of the local public library, as well as being well supported by their parents who hear them read at home regularly. In the infants, pupils learn the sounds of letters and can sound out a growing variety of words of developing complexity. Throughout the school, the majority of the pupils are enthusiastic about reading and the older ones have quite mature tastes. They read with expression, accurately and fluently. The middle attaining pupils, although often accurate, are less fluent and expressive. Less able pupils in the juniors still have a good grasp of the basic skills and are able to describe books they enjoy reading. The basic skills of reading unknown words have been well developed, and library skills are good. Most can find a factual book quickly in the library and can describe the use of the contents and index pages. In the infant class, pupils learn the basic writing skills and begin to use full stops and capital letters correctly. By the age of seven, they are developing more mature writing styles, leaving appropriate gaps between words. Higher attaining Year 4 pupils show tidy well-punctuated writing and a developing use of speech marks. When writing imaginatively the higher and middle attaining pupils show effective use of metaphor and good rhymes. Year 3 and 4 pupils can write a play script from a prose story. By the end of one lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the different structures of a variety of traditional tales.
9. In mathematics seven year old pupils use number and measuring skills fluently in a variety of situations that includes a good recall and accuracy of mental calculations up to 100. Lower attaining pupils are secure with number sentences up to 50. Although few pupils can solve problems using numbers of more than 100 they are able to use a tally system for counting larger numbers and are beginning to use the symbols for more formal addition and subtraction. By the age of eleven, pupils are in the early stages of taking responsibility for planning, organising and recording work themselves. However the numeracy strategy is helping them to use and apply their mathematical skills in more meaningful ways. The problem is that there are lots of gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and because of this they need additional practice and reinforcement. Pupils' skills in handling data, and using it to solve problems, are not sufficiently well developed. The scrutiny of work this term shows a significant improvement in pupils' abilities to work more competently on a wide range of calculations in number and measure and to use the correct strategies to work out answers correctly.
10. In science, by the age of seven, pupils are just beginning to record their work, which is late, especially for the higher attaining pupils. They have had little opportunity to conduct an experiment although there has been lots of discussion on different topics such as the weather, hibernation and migration this term, which have helped the pupils to reach the average standards. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged as they do not have enough opportunities to participate in experiments, ask appropriate questions and explain and record their findings. Many of the pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of man-made and natural materials and can sort them appropriately, but their understanding and use of technical language is very limited and they find it

difficult to explain the reasons for their findings. Standards for 11 year olds are below average. Most pupils know the importance of fair testing in general terms and are beginning to understand the effect of variables on an investigation. They can draw the route the beam of light takes to a mirror and mark the direction the light is travelling. They can also distinguish between the source of light and the reflection.

11. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress in meeting their targets in language acquisition, mathematical skills, improved behaviour and enhanced social and personal development. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection.
12. Standards in literacy are good in reading and satisfactory in writing. They have improved since the last inspection. However, the more advanced reading skills that can be used for independent learning and research purposes are under-developed. In numeracy, standards are unsatisfactory. Pupils' mental calculation skills are under-developed and this affects their learning of more advanced mathematical concepts and skills.
13. In ICT and religious education, standards are broadly in line with those expected by the age of seven and eleven. This represents an improvement in religious education since the last inspection. Music, art and design have also improved since the last inspection and in art and design there are good standards by the time pupils are eleven. Younger pupils demonstrate good standards in their design and technology work, while making puppets. Overall, by the age of eleven the standards achieved in music, design and technology and physical education are broadly those expected for their ages. It is not possible to assess standards in history as there was too little evidence available but in geography standards are below those expected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to school and these have improved since the last inspection. They show enthusiasm for their work and this is reflected in the parents' views that their children have a very positive response to school. Pupils are keen to be involved in lessons and a good proportion take part in other activities, with very strong support for lunchtime and extra curricular activities.
15. Attendance levels are above the national average and unauthorised absence is below the national average. The school actively encourages parents not to take holiday during term time and the majority comply with this guidance. However, attendance figures are not reported in either the prospectus or annual report to parents and this needs to be addressed. Pupils come to school on time.
16. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner with older pupils providing a good example for the younger pupils. They are exceptionally polite to adults in the school and the parents and the local community value this politeness. Behaviour in class, and around the school, is very good and there have been no recent exclusions. This behaviour is underpinned by the good role models provided by all adults in the school. When a pupil does not meet the standards expected there is a rapid response from staff and clear guidance is provided for the pupil. All staff know the pupils well, and relationships between adults and children are very good.
17. The youngest pupils have underdeveloped personal and social skills when they enter the school. A great deal of time and effort is put into improving these as they mature. There are examples of pupils in all year groups being given responsibility with the collaboration between two older pupils in operating visual resources in assembly being noteworthy. Within this strong emphasis on responsibility, pupils are building skills in the understanding of their actions impact on others and

respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. A minority of pupils can be over enthusiastic in their wish to contribute and their listening skills are not as well developed as their enthusiasm to take part. The atmosphere in school is bright and positive and is aided by good displays both in the classrooms and throughout the school, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning.

18. Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems are generally well supported by the nursery nurse and class teachers. The few pupils with special educational needs in the school are totally integrated and have good relationships with their peers and adults. Everything is done to build up self-esteem and avoid highlighting the learning difficulties of any pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Seventy nine per cent of the teaching is good or very good, and almost one lesson in five is very good. The teaching has improved since the last inspection, especially in music, art and religious education.
20. For the children in the Foundation Stage (reception), all of the teaching is at least good. For the infants the teaching is good or better in 88 per cent of lessons. The good teaching found in reception and Years 1 and 2 reflects the very good teamwork in both the planning and delivery of the curriculum between the teacher and nursery nurse. In the junior classes the quality of teaching is good in 69 per cent of lessons and very good in 19 per cent. The recent teaching staff changes, which have seen a 100 per cent new teaching staff in the last two terms, have not resulted in any slowing of progress, and the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
21. A strength of the teaching observed is the high expectations that teachers have of the pupils. This was criticised at the last inspection and has now greatly improved. Work set and the questions asked of pupils are challenging and require good concentration and thinking skills. For example, in one literacy lesson, the older pupils were encouraged to work on the different structures of traditional stories. The previous lack of such challenge, especially in mathematics, still hinders some older pupils and they find the increased oral and mental methods of working difficult.
22. The teaching of literacy and numeracy has improved, although this is yet to be reflected in mathematics standards. The national strategies have been effectively introduced and resources improved to assist the teachers deliver the curriculum. The planning of literacy and numeracy lessons is good and based appropriately on the national guidelines.
23. The teaching and progress of pupils with special educational needs are generally good. Progress is often accelerated for those pupils who are supported by the nursery nurse, who works on specific aspects of literacy and numeracy. This support is good. In most lessons in the juniors pupils with special educational needs receive additional help from the class teacher to complete the work set for them. On a few occasions, however, the work set for these pupils is too difficult and more use should be made of the individual education plans to plan the work at the correct level. In a few cases this happens in the numeracy and literacy lessons, but it is more commonly seen in other subjects of the curriculum, especially where the pupils are asked to give written responses.
24. The best lessons are characterised by high expectations, appropriately challenging work and a good mix of direct teaching and pupil activity. The very good relationships established in all classes enable a productive working ethos to be created. The pupils know what is expected of them and they respond well when given responsibility. Lessons have a good pace and pupils respond to the challenge by working on task and with concentration for lengthy periods. For example, the youngest children sit through effective whole group sessions for up to half an hour. Their concentration is aided by the small size of the groups, which enables the teachers to involve

all pupils sufficiently. The teachers spend a lot of time planning and creating effective and appropriate resources for lessons, to support the learning of all pupils.

25. The pupils are usually given work that is based on their age rather than ability, although this does not happen in English, where children are grouped more by ability. This results in pupils occasionally being provided with work that is too demanding or too easy for them. Older pupils have good reading skills, but at present these are not extended enough through the provision of opportunities to use more advanced research skills, either in the library or on the Internet. The homework policy is not being followed fully at present, and there is a lack of regular homework provided for pupils, especially to extend and consolidate work covered in school.
26. The teachers record the coverage of the curriculum in a variety of ways, but there is little tracking of individual pupils' progress, or assessment procedures that enable future planning to be based on a clear understanding of what pupils know and can do. However, teachers know the pupils well and are aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses. The marking of children's work is good and often gives pupils suggestions for improvement as well as praising good work. The infant pupils have been provided with individual targets that enable staff to correctly focus their marking of corrections, and the planning of work on the previous work covered. Extending this good practice would benefit junior pupils by making clear to them what is expected in a particular piece of work.

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

27. The recent appointment of a new acting headteacher and a completely new teaching staff has understandably had an effect on the quality and range of learning opportunities in the school, but has clearly been a positive move in taking the school forward. The school's aim to provide a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum and equip each child with the skills to reach their potential is not yet being met. However some very positive strategies are being used now within the curriculum to focus on ways of raising the standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science.
28. Improving strategies for the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science are beginning to be effective and recently purchased resources are helping staff to plan the curriculum more successfully. Additional time has been allocated for the teaching of mathematics to try and address the particularly low standards in test results and this initiative along with a new scheme of work is already showing improved attainment throughout the school. In addition, information and communication technology is contributing well to the additional opportunities pupils have within the mathematics curriculum. The lack of breadth and balance within geography and history is due to the need to review current planning and schemes of work to meet the requirements of the Curriculum 2000. The new staff are currently revising and improving the existing plans, but this will take some time to complete.
29. The planning of the curriculum for the children in the foundation stage is in the early stages of implementation. This was a significant weakness at the previous inspection with no curricular guidance for the teaching of pupils under five. Substantial improvements have already taken place in the organisation of the infant class to meet the needs of reception children and the provision for them is good. Planning and assessment procedures are developing well and will be finalised soon.
30. There are no pupils at the school with English as an additional language. All curricular and other opportunities are open to pupils of any gender or ability, although there are occasions when the tasks provided for pupils are not challenging enough for higher attainers, particularly in science and

geography, although the new staff have higher expectations of pupils than were found at the last inspection. The school has maintained its satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum by means of individual education plans which are now of a good quality with clear, specific and achievable targets. In previous years the quality of the targets in the individual education plans were often too general to be of much use. Improvements are currently being made to ensure that the plans are reviewed regularly so that they remain appropriate. In the past, pupils often remained at the same level on the register without a regular review of their progress. The assessment of pupils' progress is not accurate enough.

31. The school continues to provide a good programme of extra-curricular activities to widen the experiences of the pupils. All staff help run these activities, including part time and retired staff. A significant number of pupils currently attend an art club, recorders, bridge and line and country dancing. Pupils sometimes join neighbouring schools to take part in carol singing, festivals and sports sessions. Some of the Year 6 pupils attend a residential centre in the summer term. Other educational visits and visitors help to successfully widen the curriculum.
32. Links with the community are sound but not as strong as indicated in the previous inspection. The local area is not used as productively as it could be for local studies. However the visit of the local fire service has been particularly effective in helping pupils to live safely in the community. There is regular contact and good relationships with other small schools in the area, and also with nursery schools, playgroups and local secondary schools, to help the smooth transition. A good introduction is made for the pupils to experience a science topic during their visits to the secondary schools in the summer term before their transfer. The local church contributes in a meaningful way to pupils' learning through the visits of the vicar to take assemblies. There is a valuable business link with a nearby nuclear power station that has supported the school generously with safety equipment for their cycling proficiency training. The school also works very closely with a local theatre company and currently a composer is working in school with groups of pupils on a drama and musical production to present to the local community.
33. Provision for personal, social and health education is sound and appropriate for the ages and needs of the pupils. Sex education, together with an awareness of the misuse of drugs, are planned and taught effectively within the science curriculum. There is also a good focus on health and safety education in other science topics. The school is currently working on a whole school planned approach to personal, health and social education.
34. The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good with cultural development being satisfactory. At the previous inspection both spiritual and cultural development were barely adequate so there have been some significant improvements. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very well in assemblies where a positive sense of community and shared values are celebrated together. This was particularly well done using the theme of 'pride' and the sensitive way in which the teacher reflected on one of her own proud moments to help pupils reflect on the meaning of success and pride in their achievements. The spiritual appreciation of the natural world is less evident in the planned curriculum or in the somewhat limited opportunities to explore the local environment. In religious education lessons in the infants a candle is often lit to help the pupils experience a quiet time for thinking. In this class, the recent coverage of the 'Christmas Story' is extended very skilfully to consider the meaning of love in the presents Jesus received. Music, dance and drama have an important focus in the school at the moment and the regular visit of a local composer working with the pupils on a musical performance is helping them to explore their own and other people's ideas and beliefs very well.

35. Moral development is promoted well through the caring relationships that exist between all staff and pupils. Staff provide very good role models in reinforcing good behaviour and sharing positive values. The school is generally a well-ordered community with established routines and where pupils are taught to know the difference between right and wrong. Assemblies are sometimes used to reward pupils for their positive behaviour and concern for others. All pupils feel safe and happy in the school and this has a positive effect upon the quality of learning. Moral issues are also explored successfully with older pupils through school initiatives on health and drugs awareness.
36. Provision for social education is good. All pupils, parents and staff are valued members of the school and relationships are very positive. Pupils show some initiative and responsibility in working independently during literacy and numeracy lessons. There is still scope to develop this further, particularly in giving pupils more opportunities to work collaboratively and share their ideas. Older pupils are encouraged to take on some additional responsibilities around the school and support the younger pupils at lunch times. A very good example of this was seen in the 'Line dancing' and 'country dancing' clubs when older pupils volunteer to have younger children as partners to help them improve their techniques. A good understanding of the needs of others is shown by pupils through their involvement with charities and their help with fund raising.
37. There has been some improvement in learning about life in a multi-cultural society through the celebration of religious festivals and the teaching of Christianity and other faiths. Pupils recently made Diwali cards to send to a Hindu friend. The diversity of the world is just being introduced to the pupils through the Internet. Pupils recently looked at the distances between countries and a brief look at life in Greece. Limited provision is made for pupils to appreciate the art, music and literature of other countries and the cultural heritage and richness of the wider world is not sufficiently visible through the school. This was an area of weakness identified in the previous inspection that has not been addressed. There is a particular weakness currently in helping pupils to gain a knowledge and understanding of the wider world in geography. Pupils are helped to appreciate their own cultural traditions by occasional visits and visitors to the school. Recently the pupils learnt about life in the closed coalmines around their village from a visiting speaker.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school has a good standard of pastoral care, which is underpinned by the strong knowledge staff have of their pupils and the strength of relationships in the school. Procedures for the health and safety of pupils are good and there are clear structures in place to deal with emergencies. There is an awareness of child protection and the nominated person is well aware of requirements. Further training is planned and there is a need to ensure that this training includes non-teaching staff as well as teachers. Procedures in this area are satisfactory.
39. Within the school, and at playtimes, there is a very positive ethos. Older pupils support the younger children and encourage their adherence to high standards. All pupils are well aware of what types of behaviour are unacceptable. Lunchtime assistants have been trained in behaviour control procedures and were seen to interact swiftly in the playground to modify behaviour where necessary.
40. Good attendance figures are supported by a strong procedure, whereby the school contacts parents on the first day of absence, if the school is not given notification of absence by the parent or carer. Parents were fully aware of this procedure and there is good compliance with the arrangements.

41. The assessment procedures were criticised at the last inspection. Following that they were improved and a variety of measures introduced. However, the changes to the curriculum, the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, and the changes to the staffing have meant that systems for accurately recording the attainment and progress of pupils, the individual tracking of their achievement and target setting for future learning, are now out of date and in need of redevelopment. The school is aware of this and a start has been made, especially in the infants on trialling a new recording system. In addition, the teacher has begun to set individual targets for pupils and it is planned to extend this throughout the school shortly. On a day-to-day basis teachers regularly assess through observation and they know their pupils well. However, the planning is not yet securely based on a clear assessment of the pupils' prior attainment.
42. The limited assessment and recording processes that are currently part of the assessment strategies for all pupils are also used in assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Improved assessment procedures that are being planned by the school are not linked closely enough to the individual education plans, to enable individual progress to be measured more accurately. Specialised staff from the local authority carry out diagnostic tests, particularly when pupils are showing limited progress or are moving up a stage on the register of children with special educational needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school has put considerable effort into communication with parents during a time of change and uncertainty. The governors held a well-attended meeting on staffing which was appreciated by parents. Parental involvement is good as is evident from the good attendance at the governors' annual meeting for parents, where they now have an opportunity to influence the school development plan, and at parents' evenings and pupil progress meetings. The information provided for parents in both the prospectus and annual report is both detailed and helpful, although neither fully comply with statutory requirements. Progress reports on pupils are informative and are beginning to incorporate targets, although this is not consistent across all year groups.
44. In school some parents help in administration and with reading, whilst there is support also with educational trips, residential visits and with extra curricular activities. Teachers' comments in reading record books praise parents for the good efforts to help their children made at home. There is good support by parents in the drama project with involvement in weekend rehearsals, and some are taking roles in the drama or providing back stage support. Financial support provided by a fund raising committee of parents is appreciated by the school and helps support improved resources for the pupils.
45. The school has a homework policy that is intended to increase homework levels from the younger pupils to those at Year 6, and home schoolbooks are in use. However, parental concerns about low homework levels are supported by inspection findings, and the school does not apply its homework policy consistently. Parental involvement in SEN is growing and the school is planning enhancements in this area.
46. There is a strong parental feeling of the community role of the school. They feel welcome in the school whilst their support is a positive factor in enhancing pupils' learning. Governors felt that parental links are a strength of the school and the findings confirm good links with parents.
47. The parents of children with special educational needs are now being involved fully in the process of identification and are kept fully informed about their child's progress at all stages. The school is very anxious to work in partnership with all the parents of pupils with special educational needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The leadership and management demonstrated by the acting headteacher and his key staff are very good. This is much improved since the last inspection, and represents a very good improvement on the unfortunate, but unavoidable, uncertainty over staffing at the school and the difficulties the governors have had in recruiting a headteacher. The previous senior management worked hard to bring about the changes required after the last inspection and the majority of issues in the action plan have been successfully addressed. The governors have also worked hard to keep the school progressing in a time of great change. They are very supportive of the school and focused on doing the best possible for its pupils.
49. The previous staff worked hard to successfully introduce the National Literacy Strategy, although the National Numeracy Strategy has been less successful in raising standards. This was due to a combination of the lack of resources, unsatisfactory schemes of work and less teacher expertise. The new staff are correctly and effectively focused on raising standards and demonstrate a long term commitment to the continued development of the school. In particular, the need to improve resources in ICT was clear, and good use of grants and other financing has enabled this to happen, improving the provision for all classes. The acting headteacher has developed an improved analysis of pupils' attainment that has enabled governors to become more aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This has particularly thrown light on the lack of achievement in mathematics. Since taking over, and with a completely new staff since September, monitoring activity has focused largely on English and mathematics, and needs to be further extended to become more effective in monitoring other subjects. However, governors have visited lessons especially in literacy and numeracy, and have reported back to the governing body on their experiences.
50. The mission statement and aims for the school are clear and focused on providing each child with a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum, resulting in them reaching their potential and becoming a responsible, caring individual. The evidence of the inspection is that this process has already come a long way. The aims were arrived at as part of the school development planning process begun by the acting headteacher soon after he took over. The process successfully involved parents and governors and has resulted in a set of good aims that are now being addressed more successfully. The development plan is a good, effective document, and much improved since the last inspection, which, together with the governors' post-inspection action plans, should help the newly appointed permanent headteacher to move the school forward and continue to raise standards.
51. The governing body are aware of the requirements of performance management. There has been little formal appraisal of staff in recent years, but since taking over the acting headteacher has introduced a performance management policy that includes regular observations and discussions with all teachers. In addition, the governing body are aware of the need to set targets for headteacher performance, although changes to the senior management over the next two terms are inevitable, as a permanent appointment is made.
52. The small size of the school means that the three full-time staff have to take on all curriculum and management responsibilities. The unsettled nature of the staffing has meant that these have all been newly organised this term, and, to some extent, on a temporary basis under the acting headteacher. However, discussion with staff makes it clear that they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their areas, and of the curriculum for the ages they teach. Little time has been available for monitoring, supporting or working alongside colleagues, but this is planned to happen more in the future. Most recent work in subject areas has been to consolidate the planning and record keeping and to ensure the mixed age classes are taught with due regard to

the ages and abilities of the pupils. The staff have already developed into an effective team which bodes well for the future development of the school and the further raising of standards. Informal monitoring by the acting headteacher and the literacy and numeracy coordinators has also taken place, together with that of the governors. The support of the local authority has also been sought in a monitoring role and this has been of good assistance in promoting improved standards. The monitoring and evaluation of subjects other than English and mathematics is underdeveloped and needs to be improved urgently. Appropriate induction procedures are in place for new staff and newly qualified teachers.

53. The management and organisation of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are improving. The administration of procedures is thorough and adequate time is allocated to the special needs co-ordinator, who is also the acting headteacher, to carry out his duties effectively. He has already made some significant improvements to the quality of the individual education plans since his appointment this year. There is an identified governor for special needs. She meets regularly with the co-ordinator and has been successful in gaining a good knowledge and understanding of the work being carried out in the school. The governors' annual report and the school prospectus provide brief but adequate information on special needs. Accommodation is adequate for pupils with special educational needs. The funds available to the school for special needs are used appropriately to promote the school's priorities for special needs.
54. The work of the governing body is based around its meetings, which are held at least termly, and often twice a term. There are all statutory committees necessary, and a finance committee that sets and monitors the school budget. The rest of the governors' work is done under individual responsibility, such as representing special needs, literacy or numeracy, or as a whole body when discussing the premises or the curriculum. Appropriate minutes are kept. A number of governors give freely of their time in supporting the school and in helping on a voluntary basis. The governors meet most of their statutory requirements, but the school prospectus does not give pupils' absence rates and the information about national tests does not include national comparative data. The school's annual report for governors does not include the targets for national tests or the attendance figures.
55. The long term financial planning has been hindered since the last inspection by falls in pupil numbers and thus a reduced budget. This necessitated a careful and prudent control of spending. However, the school was under resourced and a lot of its available resources were outdated. The effective use of the available funds, including specific grants, by the acting headteacher has resulted in better resources for teachers to work with, especially in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and these are resulting in improved standards of work and better opportunities for all pupils. Governors are provided with a satisfactory level of financial information by the local authority and this is monitored by the finance committee on a regular basis. Good use is also made of time bought from a local authority bursar in plotting the progress of the budget over the year. The school applies the principles of best value appropriately.
56. Staff are well deployed and working with appropriately aged pupils. Very good use is made of the expertise of support staff in working with youngest children, and with older pupils who need extra support with their literacy. Volunteer help provides further good support for the pupils and is used effectively by the school staff. The accommodation is in need of improvement, both decoratively and by developing the school grounds to make a more effective learning environment. Storage space is still a problem as it was at the last inspection. Resources are mostly satisfactory, although there are weaknesses in the library provision and in reading materials, both of which need updating and reviewing to enhance the pupils' learning. Since the last inspection improvements have taken place in a number of areas, but especially in ICT, literacy and numeracy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. The school has been through a period of change and uncertainty. The acting headteacher has brought much needed stability, good appointments have been made, and the staff are effectively focused on attaining the best possible standards for the pupils that they can. Standards in English are good and are evidence of the standards which pupils are capable of reaching. A number of the following issues have been recognised by the school and are part of the development plan. In order to raise standards further, and to continue the development of the school the governing body, acting headteacher and staff should:

(1) Improve standards in mathematics by:

- ensuring the planning provides work that is appropriately challenging and builds on that which pupils know and understand;
- improving assessment of pupils' work to track individual progress, and ensuring the marking is consistent and gives appropriate ideas to help pupils improve;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in practical activities and problem solving;
- improving and updating resources.

(Paragraphs 1 - 4, 6 - 8, 10, 78 – 84)

(2) Improve standards in science by:

- finalising a practical scheme of work to enable teachers to plan effectively and to provide work at an appropriate level for all pupils;
- making more effective use of information and communication technology.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 11, 85 – 90)

(3) Improve assessment procedures by:

- developing coherent, systematic and practical procedures for tracking individual pupils' progress, knowledge, understanding and skills;
- using assessment information to set individual targets for pupils and provide work that is appropriately matched to their prior attainment.

(Paragraphs 27, 31, 42 – 43)

(4) Improve the monitoring, evaluation and coordination of teaching and learning in all subjects by developing an appropriate structure for the size of the school.

(Paragraph 53)

In addition to the key issues for action, the governors should consider including the following in their action plan:

- Improve standards in geography and history through better planning, improved teaching skills and resources;

(Paragraphs 99 – 104)

- Ensure the school prospectus and annual report to parents have all the statutory information required;

(Paragraphs 44, 55)

- Ensure the homework policy is put into practice;

(Paragraphs 26, 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

32

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	18	61	21	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

63

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

9

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

7

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

4

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

10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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	5	8	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	10	4	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77	31	69
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	9	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69	77	85
	National	84	88	88

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	5	8	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	12	7	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92	54	85
	National	75	72	85

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69	69	69
	National	70	72	79

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.4
Average class size	21.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	151 716
Total expenditure	162 800
Expenditure per pupil	2 293
Balance brought forward from previous year	9 024
Balance carried forward to next year	-2 060

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	63
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	30	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	57	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	57	0	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	43	30	4	0
The teaching is good.	43	52	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	57	0	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	35	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	57	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	52	13	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	35	52	13	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	57	0	4	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	52	17	4	0

Other issues raised by parents

It is apparent from talking with parents that they are extremely concerned about the school's unsettled recent past and the uncertain future, especially with regard to the staffing issues. A permanent headteacher was appointed during the period of the inspection. The findings of the inspection show that the present staff are working very hard and successfully to raise standards and ensure pupils education is not suffering, and the school has a very good capacity to improve further in the future.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

58. There have been significant improvements in the provision for children in the reception year since the previous inspection when there was no planned curriculum. The teacher and nursery nurse plan successfully together for the different areas of learning, with the very experienced nursery nurse teaching the children for specified periods. This method of organisation works very effectively, to provide for the three age groups in one class. Children are assessed against the baseline profile on entry and informally assessed against early learning goals during the year, but a more structured and reliable system of assessment is currently being planned. There is good teaching in all the areas of learning and this is a major factor in the good progress being made. The learning environment for the nine children in reception is good and the recent purchase of additional resources has helped to enhance the provision. Further resources are still needed to provide more imaginative 'home bay' areas in which to develop further structured play. There are bright displays everywhere and the very good use of photographs showing the children working helps interest levels and encourages discussion. It is a stimulating environment and this has a positive impact on the children's learning.
59. The attainment of children on entry to school this year is below average in all the areas of learning and is well below average in personal, social and emotional development and some aspects of speaking and listening. As the cohort is small, attainment varies from year to year. The reception children have already made good progress in all the areas of learning. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 the majority achieve well and attain the early learning goals in all of the six areas of learning, apart from the area of personal, social and emotional development and aspects of speaking and listening.
60. Good home-school links have been established. Parents are welcome to come into school at the beginning and end of the day and a positive and friendly atmosphere has been established. The support parents give to their children at home with reading is having a very beneficial effect on raising standards for many children

Personal and social development

61. By the time the children start Year 1, a significant minority have not achieved the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development because of their immature skills on entry. There is a high emphasis this term by the staff in helping the children to adapt to their new environment. With constant encouragement they are now happy in school and feel good about themselves and are well motivated to learn. Not all are yet aware of the needs of others and still find it hard to take their turn and listen to what others have to say. Most can remain on task and complete their work successfully with a little help from an adult but a few have a short concentration span and are easily distracted. However with the very good support they receive from the staff they are beginning to respond positively to the well-established routines of reception and most persevere and complete their activities together and share resources. There are not enough opportunities for choosing their own activities, which would help further with the children's personal development and encourage independence and initiative.

Communication, language and literacy

62. By the time the children leave the reception year most reach the required standards in reading and writing. Children's speaking skills are less well developed than normally expected and a few of the children do not naturally speak in sentences. The staff use every opportunity to plan activities that help the children to express themselves confidently in imaginative play or retelling favourite stories. For example after hearing the Christmas story the children dressed up as some of the characters and acted out the story. In writing, higher attaining children who were copy writing in September are now beginning to write their own simple phrases although letters are not formed correctly yet. The lower attaining children who were mark making at the beginning of the term are now copy writing. They all enjoy sharing books and handle them carefully with the higher attaining and average children progressing well on the reading scheme. The adapted literacy hour is helping them to use sentences, letter and pictorial clues to read simple stories with some independence and fluency. There is a high focus in teaching on learning phonetically the key words from the reading scheme and the very good visual displays in the classroom help to add interest and learning opportunities for the children.

Mathematical development

63. This area of learning is particularly well taught and by the end of the reception year most children will reach the expected level. Well-planned and interesting activities with good resources help the children to count up to twenty and recognise numbers to 10. A very good numeracy lesson was taught using a model of Humpty Dumpty to help the children learn the correct mathematical words to describe position. By the end of the lesson most could confidently do and say 'I am going to move Humpty Dumpty to behind the wall'. The majority can write their numbers correctly. All have good opportunities for practical work experiencing a wide range of sorting and matching activities. Most children are confident in their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children are interested in their world with most reaching the required standards of attainment by the time they start in Year 1. Unfortunately the lack of an outdoor play area and limited imaginative 'home bay areas' inside the classroom restrict some opportunities, but staff still provide a good range of meaningful experiences. Children are keen to learn about things which are presented to them but do not naturally ask many searching questions and their knowledge of the wider world is limited. There are insufficient planned experiments and investigations to help the children develop their questioning skills further. However, the recent focus on baptism and the very good displays have helped the children to question and consider the meaning of belonging. Large building blocks have provided exciting opportunities to build monster trucks and the interest shown in the variety of bear stories has been heightened for the children by them making and using their own glove puppets to re-tell the stories. Children write their own sentences on the computer and use the mouse appropriately but this is done with the support of an adult and not independently. The children recently made pancakes and wrote out the recipe themselves.

Physical development

65. Most children by the end of the reception year reach the required standards of agility and co-ordination. Staff encourage the children to work successfully, with increased confidence and control. The children manipulate pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools with a growing competence and skill within a wide range of ability. In the classroom and outside most children are well co-ordinated and move freely with a good awareness of space. Although they have the use of the hall several times during the week for dance, movement and small apparatus, children miss the opportunity to experience movement on large equipment and moving vehicles. However at lunchtime many of the children join the older pupils for country dancing and line dancing. With

the older pupils as partners this helps the younger children to improve their co-ordination and confidence in their movements.

Creative

66. Children have some worthwhile opportunities to express themselves creatively with most reaching average standards of attainment by the end of reception. Most express themselves well through music making and are beginning to develop a reasonable repertoire of songs. They add actions to the songs, keep to the rhythm by clapping and are beginning to hold and name some of the instruments correctly. Children are given lots of opportunities for imaginative play within the lessons planned for them. They re-tell and perform the story of Goldilocks and the three bears and then paint a portrait of her having mixed the paints themselves. Although specific imaginative areas for the children to use independently are limited at the moment, the staff are currently preparing a Christmas shop for the children to explore and use their imaginations and the children are decorating the Christmas tree with their own decorations made from dough.

ENGLISH

67. By the age of eleven, pupils' standards are good. They are better in reading than in writing but good progress is being made in both aspects of the subject. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory on a one-to-one basis but are below those expected when required to speak out to a larger audience, in assembly for example. At the time of the last inspection, standards in English were satisfactory for seven and for eleven year olds. Since then standards attained by eleven year olds have improved steadily and at a faster rate than that found nationally. However, attainment at the age of seven is more inconsistent. Reading standards vary from year to year, while writing standards fell sharply in 2000 when previously they had been above average for three years running.
68. In the most recent national tests, seven year olds attained reading standards that are well below those expected. The proportion who reached a higher level was also well below average. In writing, standards were very low and in the lowest five per cent nationally. The proportion who reached a higher level was below average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds standards were again well below average in reading and very low in writing.
69. In the tests, an above average proportion of 11-year-old pupils reached the expected standard. A close to average proportion reached a higher level. When compared with schools which have pupils from similar backgrounds attainment was well above average. When compared with pupils' prior attainment, shown by their results when they were seven, their achievement is above average. This means a better than expected proportion of the pupils made the expected progress over the four junior years.
70. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with the other pupils, and which is at least satisfactory given their prior attainment. They benefit from the small size of classes, which enables more individual attention to be given to them, and from the teachers' good subject expertise. Teachers are aware of pupils' individual needs, and this is also evident for higher attaining pupils. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language or who need extra language support. Support staff give younger junior pupils additional literacy support sessions to help improve their basic reading and writing skills, and this is largely effective.
71. The attainment of boys and girls is also difficult to compare accurately due to the small cohort sizes and the fact that different year groups have significantly different proportions of boys or girls. However, when taken over three years it is evident that in the infants, boys do better than girls in reading and that this is opposed to the national trend. In writing, girls' results tend to follow the national trend more closely. By the age of eleven, boys are still comfortably doing better than girls

in English, taken over three years. The reasons for this include the good support offered by parents and the success of the school's teaching of reading.

72. In speaking and listening, attainment is satisfactory by the age of eleven but it develops slowly over the years. Younger children do not form correct grammatical sentences when they speak and the staff try to address this weakness by providing many opportunities in lessons to develop speaking. Listening skills are also weak and this is shown by comments teachers write in books indicating that pupils have not listened well enough to understand the instructions. Opportunities to speak in assembly and to a larger audience are provided, but again many pupils are not very clear, loud or articulate, for example, when describing something that has made them proud.
73. In reading, standards are assisted by a good number of pupils being active members of the local public library, as well as being well supported by their parents who hear them read at home regularly. In the infants, pupils learn the sounds of letters and can sound out a growing variety of words of developing complexity. The majority of the pupils are enthusiastic about reading and the older ones have quite mature tastes. For example, higher attaining readers have selected books such as 'The Secret Garden' or early science fiction by Jules Verne. They read with expression, accurately and fluently. The middle attaining pupils, although often accurate, are less fluent and expressive. Less able pupils in the juniors still have a good grasp of the basic skills and are able to describe books they enjoy reading. The basic skills of reading unknown words have been well developed, and library skills are good. Most can find a factual book quickly in the library and can describe the use of the contents and index pages. Older pupils know the use and purpose of a glossary. The records kept by teachers show progress through the reading scheme but do not record skills or targets in any detail.
74. In the infant class, pupils learn the basic writing skills and begin to use full stops and capital letters correctly. By the age of seven, they are developing more mature writing styles, leaving more appropriate gaps between words. Less able pupils cannot yet form logical sequences of sentences to retell events or make story. Higher attaining Year 4 pupils show tidy well-punctuated writing and a developing use of speech marks. When writing imaginatively the higher and middle attaining pupils show effective use of metaphor and good rhymes. Year 3 and 4 pupils can write a play script from a prose story. By the end of one lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the different structures of a variety of traditional tales. They use this knowledge to raise questions and conflicts, which need to be answered in a piece of writing based on a given illustration. In the infants and in the juniors good progress has been made this term, and clear improvements are evident in writing styles and content.
75. The quality of teaching is good, overall. In the juniors all of the teaching observed was good, while in the infants it was good in 34 per cent of lessons and very good in 66 per cent. The teaching of additional literacy with a group of lower junior pupils, intended to raise their standards to the expected level, was also good. The teachers make very good use of the National Literacy Strategy in planning, and they deliver a curriculum that is appropriate for the needs of the pupils, and is sufficiently challenging. Relationships are very good and this enables teachers to teach pupils who are interested and enthusiastic. Teachers share the objectives for the lesson with the pupils, and often recap on them at the end of a lesson to assess progress made. For example, in Year 5 and 6, the teacher summarised the purpose of a lesson on the structure of traditional tales effectively at the end and this helped the pupils consolidate and retain the learning they had made. In Year 3 and 4 good questioning skills ensured pupils understood the difference between prose and a play script. In Years 1 and 2 the work was appropriately matched to the abilities of the pupils, with the teacher providing good support for the less able. A further strength of the teaching in the infants is the correct use of phonics to teach sounds enabling pupils to try and sound out unknown words.

76. The good reading skills found among the older pupils are not being extended through sufficient opportunities to use their skills in independent research work. The library is not well-resourced enough to be fully effective as a research base, and the use of CDROM and the Internet is still at an early stage. The newly-appointed lead teacher for the subject has a good awareness of the need to develop assessment strategies further, possibly to include a portfolio of examples of work illustrating different levels of attainment. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

77. By the time they are seven, pupils attain the standards expected for their age in numeracy and all other areas of mathematics. This represents a significant improvement from the 2000 national test results, which showed that standards were very low in comparison with similar schools. The standards for 11 year olds are below average but this is also an improvement from the 2000 national tests, which showed very low standards compared to similar schools. When the school was previously inspected standards for both seven and 11 year olds were average. Caution is needed in interpreting test results as the cohort in this small school varies each year. However, over the past three years, pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages has been consistently below or well below both the national average and that of similar schools.
78. The current levels of attainment, which are just beginning to show substantial improvements, especially in the infants, are the result of better subject knowledge, an increased time allocation, successful strategies in teaching, good planning based on the numeracy strategy and a significant improvement in resources. As a result, nearly all the teaching observed was of a good quality in both key stages. While this is being effective in raising attainment there is still greater scope to develop this further and this is why mathematics remains a key area for further improvement in the school.
79. By the age of seven most pupils use number and measuring skills fluently in a variety of situations that includes a good recall and accuracy of mental calculations up to 100. Lower attaining pupils are secure with number sentences up to 50. Pupils are encouraged to explain how they work out problems in the mental session of the lesson and most use the correct vocabulary associated with number and time. A good approach to problem solving is shown in the way in which the pupils are learning how to give clues for others to guess different numbers to 20. However, in lessons generally there are fewer opportunities for pupils to try different approaches, devise ways of recording or choose their own equipment. Although few pupils can solve problems using numbers of more than 100 they are able to use a tally system for counting larger numbers and are beginning to use the symbols for more formal addition and subtraction. Pupils gain an appropriate range of practical experience in estimating and measuring using standard measures and most understand the properties of simple 2D shapes. They are currently learning how to distinguish between symmetrical and non-symmetrical shapes. Scrutiny of work shows fewer opportunities for pupils to collect, record or interpret information on graphs.
80. By the age of eleven pupils are in the early stages of taking responsibility for planning, organising and recording work themselves. However the numeracy strategy is helping them to use and apply their mathematical skills in more meaningful ways. The problem is that there are lots of gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and because of this they need additional practice and reinforcement. For example, when calculating the differences between two large numbers by counting up and down it soon became clear that a significant minority of pupils are not secure yet with the place value of large numbers, they are slow to answer mental calculations and they generally lack confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge to problem solving without a

lot of help from an adult. However the scrutiny of work this term shows a significant improvement in pupils' abilities to work more competently on a wide range of calculations in number and measure and to use the correct strategies to work out answers correctly. This improvement has been helped by the systematic use of information technology to reinforce essential skills. It has yet to be used to support pupils' knowledge and understanding of using data handling for problem solving and interpreting the results. This is an area for development as there is insufficient coverage of this area of mathematics.

81. The quality of teaching is good and this is now beginning to have a significant effect on the gains being made in pupils' learning. Progress is good throughout the school for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Teaching and progress were judged to be only generally satisfactory at the previous inspection. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and planning is thorough and detailed. It focuses well on practising, improving and extending skills although the work in some classes is not matched accurately to the wide range of pupils' ability. In the best lessons some high quality direct teaching is used with the whole class to help pupils acquire new skills and knowledge and make gains in their learning. This was particularly successful in the infants with a very good practical session on symmetry. Before the lesson the pupils had no previous knowledge or understanding of symmetrical shapes and by the end most could distinguish between the symmetrical and non-symmetrical shapes and say what was different. This work was then followed up later in the week using mirrors to draw symmetrical shapes of mini-beasts and making and decorating symmetrical decorations for the Christmas tree. In most classes the mental work get off to a good start and teachers use effective questioning techniques. There is also a good focus on pupils using the correct vocabulary and explaining how they arrive at answers in their calculations. However not enough resources and strategies are used by the teachers to make sure that the mental session maintains a brisk pace and that all pupils take part and answer quickly. This is a significant factor in preventing pupils making enough gains in their learning. In most of the lessons seen pupils have very few opportunities to work together, share their ideas and learn from each other. They are all very dependent on the teacher and find it hard to work independently. A strong feature and strength of the teaching is the very good relationships established with pupils and the encouragement given to them to behave well and work hard in all of the classes. This helps them to concentrate and work productively to make good gains in their learning.
82. The teachers have a clear understanding of the objectives of the numeracy strategy and are confident in their teaching of the basic skills of number. The numeracy strategy is being efficiently and effectively implemented in all classes. There is a stimulating environment in all classrooms where numeracy has a high focus and displays remind pupils of the rules and language of mathematics. Numeracy skills are used soundly across the curriculum in an incidental way, rather than part of a planned programme. For example in science pupils measure temperatures as part of their work on materials and in a weather topic for geography they compare the temperatures in different countries. Literacy skills are promoted well through discussion, explaining mental strategies and recording information.
83. Good management of the subject from the coordinator has successfully prepared the new staff for the numeracy hour. The impact from training has improved teaching skills and is helping to raise standards although they are not high enough yet. Improved resources and the use of information technology are also helping staff to deliver a more effective curriculum and to motivate the pupils to think and learn. More effective analysis and tracking of test results are being carried out now and improved planning is also contributing to rising standards. This analysis is planned to lead to a formal system of target setting. There are currently no reliable assessment procedures in place to gain a precise picture of each pupil's progress and this is preventing the correct groupings of pupils by ability. The school is aware of this and identified it as an area for improvement in the school development plan. There are some good examples of marking but the practice is inconsistent and

pupils in some classes do not understand how well they have done and how they can improve. There is also a homework policy but very few examples of homework were seen. However, parents are not involved enough in their children's learning through the homework set. All the full time teaching staff and acting headteacher are new to the school this year. The acting headteacher who is also the co-ordinator for mathematics soon realised that standards were too low and that mathematics had to be a priority area for further development. This term the whole staff have worked with great commitment and skill to improve the provision and standards throughout the school and are beginning to raise achievement. It will be important that these successes and improvements are maintained and continued further.

SCIENCE

84. Standards of attainment are below average for 11 year olds, and average for the seven year olds. This represents an improvement from the national test scores of 2000 when attainment at 11 was below average and teacher assessment at seven showed below average standards. Over the past three years standards in the national tests have been below average. Caution is needed in drawing conclusions as the cohort in this small school varies considerably each year. However, the average standards seen at the previous inspection have not been maintained. There are a number of reasons for this. The school has experienced a complete change of staff this year. Planning showed many weaknesses particularly in the opportunities for older pupils to plan and record investigations. It doesn't support the teaching of skills progressively through the school. The school has understandably focused recently on an increased time allocation for English and mathematics in order to raise standards. Resources too have generally been inadequate to support successful teaching. This term improved teaching and some better resources are contributing to the raising of attainment, good progress and significant gains in learning. There is still scope to develop this further especially for the higher attaining pupils and therefore science remains as a key area for further development.
85. By the age of seven pupils are just beginning to record their work, which is late, especially for the higher attaining pupils. They have had little opportunity to conduct an experiment although there has been lots of discussion on different topics such as the weather, hibernation and migration this term, which have helped the pupils to reach the average standards. However, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged as they do not have enough opportunities to participate in experiments, ask appropriate questions and explain and record their findings. Although many of the pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of man-made and natural materials and can sort them appropriately, their understanding and use of technical language is very limited and they find it difficult to explain the reasons for their findings.
86. Standards for 11 year olds are below average. Most pupils know the importance of fair testing in general terms and are beginning to understand the effect of variables on an investigation. They have been very well motivated by the current topic on light and can draw the route the beam of light takes to a mirror and mark the direction the light is travelling. They can also distinguish between the source of light and the reflection. An analysis of previous work by the oldest pupils shows that they have not been given enough opportunities to plan their own experiments, select resources, present their own finding, or evaluate in any depth the validity of their conclusions. There is generally an absence of the formal recording of investigations in the upper junior class although in the lower junior class they are already skilled at planning and recording their investigations.
87. Literacy skills are used soundly to discuss scientific findings in experiments and observations. However, the development of pupils' scientific vocabulary and the range and purpose for writing are sometimes restricted by the over use of printed work sheets and the lack of opportunities to record their work. The use of numeracy skills is similarly restricted by the lack of recording of

work. Limited use is made of information technology to process results but this is being introduced shortly.

88. The quality of teaching is good with a number of strengths that account for the good progress being made this term. Teaching is based on good subject knowledge where the exposition successfully helps the pupils to think and gain important knowledge and understanding. The teacher in the upper junior class was particularly skilled at this and challenged the higher attaining pupils who were highly motivated in carrying out their tasks. Unfortunately in this lesson there was less focus on asking probing questions to encourage the pupils to explain their thinking. Improved resources are helping to improve the quality of teaching for the infants. In the lesson on materials the practical focus, with well-chosen resources helped to heighten the pupils' motivation. Questioning skills were good and made the pupils think carefully about the differences between man made and natural materials. Because of this the progress and learning in the lesson were good. The control and management of all lessons are consistently good, and relationships with pupils, are a strength of the provision. Because of this, pupils show a good interest in their work and sustain high levels of concentration. A negative factor affecting the quality of some teaching and the progress and learning of the pupils is the lack of attention paid to providing suitably matched work to the differing abilities within the class and particularly the higher attaining pupils. There is also a high proportion of teacher directed activity that takes insufficient account of the provision for pupils to plan, carry out and record investigations on their own. This particularly applies to the pupils in the upper junior class. This results in pupils being very dependent on an adult and finding it hard to work independently.
89. The school is in the process of reviewing the current planning and adopting some of topics from the national guidelines for science to ensure adequate coverage of the National Curriculum. Planning for aspects of investigative science needs to be developed further. This particularly applies to pupils having the opportunities to carry out their own ideas in a challenging way. Procedures for assessing the progress of pupils are unsatisfactory as they were at the last inspection but this has been identified for development. There are some good examples of marking but the practice is inconsistent and most pupils do not understand how well they have done and how they can improve.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, one at each key stage. In addition, evidence was gathered from displays of pupils' past work, sketchbooks and talking to the older children. Overall, enough evidence was gathered to say that standards demonstrated by seven year olds are broadly in line with those expected, while the eleven year olds standards are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, although pupils have not had enough opportunities in the past to work in three-dimensions with clay or other materials.
91. In one very good lesson, Year 3 and 4 pupils used clay very effectively. They had previously studied the work of Paul Klee, and the pupils clearly understood the important elements of shape and colour in the works used. They drew sketches around the school in a similar style to Klee and then built on this effectively to create almost abstract collages, using a limited range of coloured papers, and designs on the computer. This was then further extended in the lesson, to the designing and making of clay plaques based on the building sketches, in which pupils were taught to shape and join the clay. The completed plaques are imaginative, well designed, carefully made, and provide a very good response to the original Klee works used as inspiration.
92. Well over 50 per cent of the junior pupils attend the art club. The staff provide good opportunities to extend the basic skills they pick up in lessons. In the session seen, pupils made Christmas

decorations using a variety of templates and cutting and sticking skills with materials such as card, coloured netting and sequins. In the past, the club has taken inspiration from Bridget Riley op-art works to create three-dimensional patterns in black and white, and used computers to design complex optical illusion patterns.

93. The school has adopted a national scheme of work, but where this has weaker areas, or aspects which do not suit the nature of the school, the staff correctly adapt the plans to be more appropriate, and this has resulted in better planned work which provides more evident progression on the skills learned previously.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Only one lesson was observed in the infants, and none in the juniors. From this evidence, together with a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and discussions with pupils it is clear that standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven are good and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. At the age of eleven standards are broadly in line with those expected for their age, and this has been maintained since the last inspection. The planning indicates that the National Curriculum is appropriately covered. For example, the lower juniors have made pop-up storybooks, but later in the year will make photograph frames and design and make an alarm.
95. In the good lesson observed in the infant class, the teacher led a good discussion about a variety of puppets, how they work and what materials were used in their making. Following this the pupils in Year 1 and 2 designed a puppet on paper, before moving on to making one in a later lesson. Pupils demonstrated a sound knowledge about how they could use materials such as felt, and by the end of the lesson knew how to use over stitching to hold two parts of a glove puppet together and they can label the different parts.
96. Good use is made of volunteer expertise with older pupils, to use more advanced materials and tools, such as wood, saws and drills. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 have made good balsa wood models of forms of transport, and a working model of a Roman catapult. Older pupils are making slippers from felt by cutting round templates and sewing.
97. Pupils have opportunities to use a variety of construction apparatus. There are not enough opportunities to evaluate work and discuss how it could be improved. The school has decided to adopt the nationally recommended scheme of work for the subject. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall.

GEOGRAPHY

98. No judgements can be made on standards for seven year olds because no lessons were observed and written evidence is very limited. For 11 year olds, standards are below the average found in most schools. There are clear reasons for these lower standards in the juniors. The school has justifiably given a high allocation of time recently to numeracy and literacy and reduced the teaching time for geography. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in teaching geographical skills and enquiry methods, particularly through fieldwork, is not good enough. The policy and scheme of work are in need of review to help to support teachers' planning and the teaching of skills progressively through the school. Progress in the juniors is unsatisfactory because of the low standards and lack of coverage.
99. Geography has not been taught to the infants this term. The pupils have looked at a map to see where Jesus was born and where he lived. By the age of eleven, pupils' skills in using fieldwork and their knowledge of places in the wider world are unsatisfactory. Although the quality of

teaching overall in the two lessons observed was sound, other evidence which includes teachers' planning, discussions with pupils in Year 6 and an examination of past and present work shows that pupils are not making sufficient gains in their learning and therefore teaching overall is unsatisfactory. Because teachers are not focusing sufficiently on teaching mapping and other geographical skills of enquiry or the knowledge and understanding of other places these areas are largely underdeveloped. However pupils can use four figure co-ordinates to locate places because these skills have been taught in mathematics. Very little evidence is seen of pupils drawing maps to scale or making their own plans. The pupils in Year 6 have a basic knowledge and understanding of the uses of water in the home and the social issues in planning and maintaining a water supply. Environmental issues have been covered briefly in the water topic and pupils recently carried out a litter sweep, but their understanding of how to improve the environment and the effect of litter and pollution on people's lives is very limited. There are very few resources to support the subject and limited opportunities to carry out fieldwork in the local area. Because of the weaknesses in coverage and provision the curriculum for geography is not sufficiently broad and balanced.

HISTORY

100. Standards in the school are broadly average for pupils aged seven. No judgements can be made on the standards of 11 year olds as no lessons were observed and very little evidence of work was seen. At the previous inspection standards for 11 year olds were satisfactory but no judgements on standards were made for the seven year olds. Progress is satisfactory for all pupils in the infants, and for lower juniors, including those with special educational needs.
101. By the age of seven, pupils make a good distinction between the past and the present. The effective use of time lines helps pupils to understand the lives of people in the past such as Queen Victoria and Guy Fawkes, and make comparisons with their own lives today. Good links have been made with English in the way the pupils have sequenced and illustrated the story of the Gunpowder Plot into their own storybooks and made a 'Gunpowder Plot' dictionary. None of the pupils are able to take their skills further yet in pursuing an historical enquiry. Pupils in the lower junior class have built up a sound knowledge of their village in the past and present and the use of photographs taken of the school in the 1950's provided a very good source of information. Although pupils were very well motivated and interested by the task it was clear that they find it difficult to ask appropriate questions about historical events or to work independently. The pupils in the upper junior class have recently begun a topic on the Ancient Greeks, but because of a lack of resources and particularly suitable artefacts to support the teaching and learning, the quality and content of the work seen lacks enough challenge. There is a lot of colouring in and completing simple worksheets. More could be done to promote extended writing in the juniors, where there are few opportunities to use good examples of literature or to record work in any detail. The use of information and communication technology to enhance the subject further is currently underdeveloped.
102. The quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons observed was good. However further evidence from the scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils show that teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. In the best lessons the pupils are very well motivated by the good use of resources such as the photographs of the school and the dressing up clothes, and by the Christmas tree used to develop role play and discussion about Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. This helps to bring the subject alive for the pupils and accelerates the progress made in their learning. Most staff have a secure subject knowledge and use probing questions, prompts and explanations to increase the historical skills of the pupils. This was well done in the work on the history of the school when the pupils had to become active and effective enquirers and examine the photographs in detail to find the information they needed. There is however a significant shortage of resources for the teaching of history and some of the work seen by the pupils shows that the historical enquiry and challenge is missing from the lesson. This results in less effort from the pupils in completing their tasks and fewer gains in their learning.
103. At the moment the curriculum for history lacks breadth and balance. The current planning is being reviewed to take into account national guidelines for the teaching of history. Resources are insufficient and there is no scheme of work to help the staff with their planning and to ensure that the subject is taught progressively through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. There are no lessons timetabled for this subject. However, teachers take many opportunities to teach skills to small groups and individuals during other lessons. The new equipment has only recently been introduced and there is clearly a training need for staff as they become familiar with the possibilities opened up to them. The lack of depth in the teaching pupils have received until recently has resulted in a lack of expertise in aspects of the subject. However, the present

teaching, especially of the older pupils, is attempting to make up for the lack of previous experiences pupils have had. This, together with the pupils' enthusiasm, is enabling some progress to be made in a variety of areas although computers are not used often enough for pupils to have sufficient time to make real progress. The staff and the governing body recognise that this has been a weakness and they are keen to address this as soon as possible. Overall, the standards demonstrated by most pupils at seven and eleven are broadly satisfactory and have improved since the previous inspection.

105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. In the infant class, the teacher is able to give close one-to-one tuition in new software to individual pupils, which enables them to make good progress in understanding how to respond to the screen instructions. For example, a new mathematics activity program was shown to a child who quickly picked up the appropriate responses, and how to switch between different activities. Pupils use the mouse and keyboard with confidence, demonstrating an awareness of the need to treat the equipment carefully. One boy is able to move between activities, respond to screen instructions, and is able to click and drag accurately.
106. Older pupils use computers easily and confidently. The recent focus for their work has been on software to help develop their mathematics skills, as this is a priority for the school. They have used software to help with shape, subtraction, perimeter and co-ordinates. They can also use a word processing package to write, redraft, change fonts, print sizes and colours. In art lessons very good use has been made of art software to create op-art pictures in the style of Bridget Riley. Very good use of a music program is made to provide backing tracks, which recorder players can control to assist their practising and which they are able to use confidently and expertly.
107. In Year 4, pupils use a word processing package to write a play script. They are able to change font, highlight text to change and redraft work and to print the finished product. One pupil has had keyboard skills teaching from software at home works much more quickly and this enables her to get much more done in the available time.
108. The recent connection to the Internet has enabled older pupils to begin some early researching into a variety of information. For example, they have researched into aspects of water for their class work, and looked at other school's websites to give them ideas for their own. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to access the website and move around it confidently following the links. They demonstrate pride in their artwork, some of which is displayed on the site. Good use of Standards Fund money, and of offers from supermarkets, has enabled the updating and expansion of the hardware.
109. The planning shows that pupils experience word processing, art software, databases and other methods of collecting and presenting information, and some modelling activities. However, it does not show clearly how much time is needed to cover this work in sufficient depth, or how this will be achieved. There are no systems in place to assess and record pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills effectively. Some use of a programmable robot has been made in the past but this work has not developed into part of a clear and progressive programme of work that builds on the skills and knowledge that has gone before. Pupils help use an overhead projector in assemblies but the use of other forms of ICT apart from computers is limited. There are opportunities for younger pupils to listen to audio stories on tape.

MUSIC

110. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection when standards were below average. Recently the school has introduced recorder lessons and almost all the pupils in Year 6 have joined. Although they have only been learning for a few months they have already learnt most of the notes, play with a reasonable tone and accuracy and can accompany with confidence the songs being practised for the Christmas concert. They have been well taught by the headteacher and have made good gains in their learning. Good use has been made of computer software to provide them with a backing track for their practices and they use this confidently.
111. Although no specific lessons were observed in the upper junior class, pupils worked during one afternoon with a local composer to prepare for a performance of some opera cameos they will be presenting with other local schools at a nearby theatre. Although in this session some of the pupils found it difficult to sing out confidently with expression on their own, the skill of the composer helped them all to explore their ideas and feeling through improvisation and to practise and present a very powerful performance. All were very highly motivated by the challenge of the task and achieved well.
112. In lessons pupils have fewer opportunities for singing or using percussion instruments although a regular hymn practice is held for all the pupils in the school when different songs are practised. Although the school has recently purchased some tuned percussion instruments they are seldom used. This limits the opportunities particularly for the higher attaining pupils to make progress. This was a weakness from the previous inspection that hasn't been addressed. In discussion with pupils in Year 6 they have a limited knowledge of composers and can describe some of the different instruments to be found in an orchestra. However, they are in the early stages of understanding the language and structure of music. Pupils in the lower junior class are preparing a composition on different aspects of the weather. They have average skills in using untuned percussion instruments to compose, but they have not been trained to work collaboratively or productively together and therefore the improvements made in their performance was just satisfactory.
113. Younger pupils by the age of seven pupils sing with enthusiasm from a good range of songs and try hard to read the words of the songs practised during hymn practice. Most pupils can recognise the changes in the speed of music, imitate a rhythmic pattern and keep to the beat of the music when playing instruments. Some opportunities are made to develop music across other areas of the curriculum such as linking the singing of nursery rhymes and other songs to reinforce the recognition and understanding of numbers. Throughout the school pupils have opportunities to hear a range of music although resources are limited. A useful comparison was made between traditional and modern African music in the assembly with the pupils able to describe a few similarities and differences.
114. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. The acting headteacher has done much in the short time he has been in the school to raise the standards and profile of music. In his teaching a good range of experiences and opportunities are provided for pupils in these lessons and good gains are often made in their learning. In all lessons the pace and organisation have improved since the previous inspection but some staff still lack sufficient knowledge and understanding to teach the basic skills and knowledge that pupils need and this was identified at the last inspection as a weakness. Tasks are sometimes delivered without considering how musical ideas should be taught and developed further to enable the pupils to make good progress. Further training and support to increase levels of confidence should help to address this weakness in an otherwise positive and improving picture.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. From this, together with discussions with staff and pupils, it is possible to say that standards are broadly in line with those expected by the time pupils are eleven years old, and that this has been maintained since the last inspection. The school has teams for football, netball and mini-bridge, and they take part in activities and matches against other schools. There is also a school sports day, which enables all pupils to take part in a variety of events and to represent their team in competition within the school.
116. In the dance lesson observed, pupils in Years 3 and 4 built on previous work to create movements representing machines. The teacher had provided appropriate music and gave the pupils the opportunity to practise and improve on their work. They also had the chance to perform before their peers and to evaluate others' work, although this tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative, and it is a skill that needs more development throughout the school. The pace of the lesson was good.
117. Lunchtime sporting activities include line dancing and country dancing. A good proportion of the older pupils take part in these, learning and practising a variety of steps and moves that require a real physical effort. Younger pupils also watch this avidly during wet lunchtimes, and they take the opportunity to take part, supported effectively by older ones. This is a good example of the older pupils developing social skills, and being given the opportunity to show initiative. In country dancing the older girls perform well, following the music appropriately and putting together a variety of traditional steps.
118. The hall is used effectively for physical education lessons, although it is small in size. It benefits from not being used as a dining room. The outdoor accommodation is mixed. The hard play surface provides good room for a variety of sports, but there are not enough markings on it to enable a good range of games to be played. However, the field area is small and, although suitable for some educational activities, it does not provide a good enough surface for sports, especially in the autumn and winter months.
119. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 go swimming for one term a year, thus getting a total of two term's time. This is barely sufficient for them to achieve the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers' planning shows that gymnastics, games, dance and athletic activities are also covered during the two year cycle.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Standards achieved by pupils at the ages of seven and eleven are broadly in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus and expected for their ages and have improved since the previous inspection. The recent improvement in planning now takes appropriate account of national guidance and the locally agreed syllabus. As well as lessons, pupils learn about their own and other religions and beliefs through assemblies and collective acts of worship.
121. Very good links are made between the Christmas Story and the literacy work. The infant teacher used versions of the story as the text for the week's work in English and this helped pupils to become familiar with the events leading up to Christmas as well as follow the National Literacy Strategy. The pupils are very enthusiastic and interested in the story, and this enables them to become familiar with the story of the shepherds and the wise men. This led into a very good discussion about toys and what would be appropriate presents for Jesus and for a modern baby in a later lesson. In one good lesson for the lower juniors, role play and drama were well used to enable pupils to re-enact the journey made by Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, deepening pupils' understanding of how difficult and tiring it must have been. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows

that older children know about a variety of sacred texts, and this work is also linked to literacy through discussion of the spread of information in earlier times. Juniors have learned about Diwali celebrations and know the story of Rama and Sita.

122. The quality of teaching observed is very good for the infants and good for the juniors, and has improved since the previous inspection. All teachers have challenging expectations of the work pupils are capable of tackling. They made particularly good use of in-depth oral work and drama without feeling the need to unnecessarily record everything on paper. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and this also encourages them to use many tasks that are active oral work rather than written paper and pencil, or colouring in, activities.
123. There has been little opportunity for the monitoring of teaching and learning by the new staff. However, they discuss work and plan together well to ensure that work is covered in sufficient depth and is not unnecessarily repeated. Assemblies and collective acts of worship are an important part of the curriculum. During the inspection pupils were presented with a variety of masks from different cultures, leading up to a session where they reflected on the 'masks' they wear to show feelings and emotions. The spiritual element is emphasised with a prayer or period of reflection. The resources for learning about different religions are insufficient.