

INSPECTION REPORT

ROBERT FERGUSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112242

Headteacher: Mr A. Rutter

Reporting inspector: Mr G. D. Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 13th – 17th November 2000

Inspection number: 225223

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Name of chair of governors:	Mr C. Southward
Date of previous inspection:	10 th June 1996

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Eric Langford 19727	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?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Robert Ferguson Primary School takes most of its pupils from the local area of mixed private and local authority housing, close to the centre of Carlisle. The school is much larger than most primary schools and has 48 part time children in the nursery and 400 full time pupils aged from five to 11 years old. They are taught in single age classes with mixed ability groups for most subjects. For English and mathematics the Year 6 pupils are grouped by their prior attainment. Attainment on entry to the reception class is below that normally expected for children of their age. Attainment on entry to statutory schooling varies, and to a higher degree than is usual, from below average to broadly in line with that expected.

An above average proportion of the pupils take up free school meals. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is high, particularly in certain year groups, and the proportion with statements of special educational need is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than when it is normal to start school or move on to secondary school is broadly that expected. The school's current priorities include improving provision in mathematics, continuing the improvements recently made in information and communication technology (ICT) and developing the role of subject coordinators.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Robert Ferguson is an effective school and this is illustrated by the overall improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good with a higher than usual proportion that is very good. The headteacher's leadership is good although aspects of the management need to be improved if further rises in standards are to be achieved. The school is aware of those areas of its work in need of improvement. Overall, the school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good and teachers manage their pupils very effectively.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress.
- The pupils' attitudes towards school, and the behaviour demonstrated by the majority is very good.
- The school cares effectively for its pupils and their moral and social development is good.
- The school has very effective links with parents.

What could be improved

- The progress made in mathematics is insufficient to enable pupils to attain the standards of which they are capable.
- The management structure does not ensure effective communication between parts of the school and the subject coordinators' roles are not developed sufficiently.
- The quality of planning, teaching and learning is not closely monitored enough.
- Teachers' marking does not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve and the presentation of much of the work is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996 and has achieved a good level of improvement since then. Of the key issues raised only the role of coordinators in curriculum leadership and management has not improved sufficiently. Standards of achievement and the quality of teaching have improved. The school development plan has clearer success criteria, the allocation of finances has been reviewed and spiritual and cultural development has improved. The religious education and ICT provision now meet the statutory requirements. In addition to these issues, the school has successfully introduced the literacy strategy and improved pupils' attitudes, behaviour relationships and attendance. The standards in ICT and religious education have improved and links with parents are now very good. The school has a shared commitment and sound capacity to improve.

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	A	C	C	A
Mathematics	D	B	C	B
Science	D	C	C	C

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

In the 2000 tests for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading was below the national average, while in writing and mathematics it was broadly in line with the average. The trend over five years shows that reading standards are erratic but have been maintained, while the writing and mathematics standards dipped sharply in 1998 but have improved since at a faster rate than that found nationally. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in reading was below average, in writing it was broadly average and in mathematics it was slightly above average.

The results for 11 year olds in 2000 showed that in English, mathematics and science standards were broadly in line with the national average. The trend over five years shows that in all subjects the school has improved at a faster rate than that found nationally. Although results dipped in 1997, all three subjects have shown a sharp increase since then. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment was well above average in English, above average in mathematics and close to average in science. However, when compared to their prior attainment at the age of seven, pupils' achievements were below average and this needs to be improved. The findings of the inspection are that standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with the national average for pupils at seven and 11. In information and communication technology and religious education good improvements in provision since the last inspection have enabled pupils to reach satisfactory standards of attainment. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education standards are in line with those expected for primary pupils. In geography, standards are satisfactory in the infants but unsatisfactory in the juniors. Children make good progress through the nursery and reception classes, and are reaching standards broadly in line with those expected by the time they begin statutory schooling. The school has set appropriate targets for standards in English, mathematics and science, and the ones for 2000 were achieved. Pupils with a wide range of special educational needs make good, sometimes very good, progress against their individual targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The majority of the pupils are very well behaved.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and pupils, and between pupils and adults are very good.
Attendance	Good. This has improved since the last inspection.

Pupils display a very good degree of confidence and self discipline in undertaking their work and play activities which serves to enhance the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils . Pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other, to staff and to visitors. The older pupils are very good at looking after the younger ones.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very 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.

Ninety-six per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better and only four per cent is unsatisfactory. Seventy three per cent of the teaching is good or better and 29 per cent very good or excellent. This is a better than average picture. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The teachers' management of the pupils is very good and the deployment and quality of the support staff is good and ensures full benefit to all pupils, especially those with special educational needs. The overall teaching in English is good while in mathematics it is satisfactory. Literacy skills are being well taught, and the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, although the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is not yet fully in place in all classes, and as a result of this the work is not always well-matched to pupils' needs. The learning is good. Pupils work hard, keeping up with the good pace set by most teachers and they are acquiring good skills, knowledge and understanding in most subjects. The marking of pupils' work does not make it clear enough what they need to do to improve in the future. Too often the teachers accept work that is untidy and poorly presented. In most lessons, pupils are provided with work that is matched to their needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall, with an effective focus on raising standards. The planning of learning opportunities for children who are under five is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very Good. The individual education plans are of very good quality and enable pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. For their spiritual and cultural development, provision is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and relationships are very good. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good, although not yet used fully in planning future work.

Very good links with parents are in place and they encourage their involvement in all aspects of their children's education and personal development. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection report. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive a quality standard of care and education. The curriculum planning, although carried out to ensure consistency, does not do so in practice and provision varies from class to class.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall, although the headteacher's leadership is good. The school's aims are reflected in its work and the introduction of new technology has been well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors have an appropriate role in shaping the direction of the school and a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory due to the lack of detailed monitoring of the teaching and learning. However, the school has recognised this and has begun to address it.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants are well used and the day-to-day administration of the school is effective.

There are a very good number of teaching and support staff who have a positive effect on the pupils' progress. The accommodation is good overall, although there are weaknesses in the nursery provision and for food technology. Resources are good. The school provides best value in its financial planning. The headteacher, together with the staff and governing body, has worked extremely hard to raise standards and to keep up with a variety of national and local initiatives, and this has been done successfully as the recent test results show. Weaknesses remain in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, and this is resulting in inconsistencies of provision. Although more use of data is now being made this has yet to have a significant effect on provision or on results. The management of special educational needs is very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy coming to school. • Very good standards of behaviour are achieved. • The teachers are open and approachable • The quality of information provided on pupils' progress is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more formal and consistent approach to homework.

The findings of the inspection reflect the parents' positive views of the work of the school. The homework provision is in need of review to ensure a more consistent and progressive approach as pupils move through the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the most recent tests for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading was below the national average, while in writing and mathematics it was broadly in line with the average. This represented a slight fall in reading levels but a good increase in the writing and mathematics results. The trend over five years shows that reading standards are erratic but have been maintained, while the writing and mathematics standards dipped sharply in 1998 but have improved since then at a faster rate than that found nationally. A below average proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in reading and writing in 2000, while in mathematics the proportion was broadly in line with the average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in reading was below average, in writing it was broadly average and in mathematics it was slightly above average.
2. The results for 11 year olds in 2000 showed that in English, mathematics and science standards were broadly in line with the national average. The trend over five years shows that in all subjects the school has improved at a faster rate than that found nationally. Although results dipped in 1997, all three subjects have shown a sharp increase since then. However, in mathematics standards fell from 1999 to 2000. An above average proportion of pupils reached the higher level in English and mathematics in 2000, while the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in science was below average. However, the evidence of the inspection is that the achievement of higher attaining pupils is not as high as it should be in the core subjects. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds attainment, it was well above average in English, above average in mathematics and close to average in science. However, when compared to their prior attainment at the age of seven, pupils' achievements were below average although more pupils reached the higher levels in English and mathematics. Eighteen per cent of pupils in mathematics and 16 per cent in English did not make sufficient progress through Key Stage 2.
3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with the national average for pupils at seven and eleven. In information and communication technology and religious education good improvements in provision since the last inspection have enabled pupils to reach satisfactory standards of attainment. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education standards are in line with those expected for primary pupils. In geography, standards are satisfactory in the infants, but unsatisfactory in the juniors. An analysis of attainment on entry to the school shows that children's levels of experience and expertise are below those normally expected for their age. They make good progress through the nursery and reception classes, and are reaching standards broadly in line with those expected by the time they begin statutory schooling. They continue to make satisfactory progress through the school. Although the figures demonstrate satisfactory progress, this is achieved at the cost of a lot of hard work by staff as they have a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and social and emotional difficulties. The targets set for attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2001 and 2002 are appropriate, have been agreed with the local authority and are based on pupils' previous attainment.
4. The performance of boys and girls shows no significant difference in English and mathematics. However, over the last three years the performance of boys in science has been well below that of the girls. The findings of the inspection are that there are no significant differences between boys and girls evident at present. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

5. Pupils with a wide range of special educational needs show good, sometimes very good, improvements against targets individually set. This relates across the curriculum, particularly in literacy, with some pupils attaining sound levels of national expectation. This is less apparent in numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.
6. Observations show that speaking and listening skills are at least satisfactory, sometimes good, throughout the school and pupils make good progress. Standards in reading are satisfactory, sometimes good at each key stage. These are better than the most recent test results show, largely due to the improved teaching of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils show an interest in books and enjoy reading both at home and in school. Regular use is made of the local library and book fairs. By the time they are seven, pupils read more fluently, with awareness of punctuation and basic skills are well-established. Throughout the junior years, pupils grow more confident in their reading and develop a sound range of skills. Their understanding of text is increased and choice of reading matter extended. By the end of the juniors, standards are often good. Pupils make good progress across the key stages with their reading.
7. Pupils in the infants are able to write legibly, form their own sentences and use phonic strategies or simple dictionaries to spell words. They show an understanding of rhyme and alliteration, and of past and present tense. By the age of 11, pupils successfully build on what they have learnt to produce writing that is at least satisfactory, sometimes good. There are examples of good writing throughout the juniors. High attainers can describe events as chronological, suspicious or magical. Progress in writing is good overall. Handwriting is developed through structured exercises, but the same care is not always taken to form letters in ordinary written work. Some of the written work seen during the inspection was beautifully written and very neat but presentation is inconsistent, and some work is untidy or unfinished. Spelling tends to be weak. Tests are conducted on a regular basis, but pupils are sometimes careless in their written work and rules are not followed through.
8. In mathematics, standards of attainment are satisfactory overall. The improvements made point to standards being higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with below average skills in number. They make good progress and by the age of seven, attainment is in line with that expected nationally. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to understand multiplication and its relationship to division. More able pupils understand odd and even numbers, can halve and double numbers and are beginning to use numbers confidently to one hundred. The least able pupils are helped to make satisfactory progress by carefully targeted teaching in a small group. By the age of 11, lower attaining pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in line with their abilities. Higher attaining pupils also continue to make satisfactory progress, and almost all pupils who achieve the higher level in national tests at age seven do so again at age 11.
9. In science, the evidence of the inspection is that standards are broadly in line with those found nationally, but that progress varies from year to year, due to the variations in teachers' expectations. In the infants, pupils have a sound understanding of light sources. They are able to use the equipment provided to investigate how friction affects a variety of objects movements. The high attainers are able to discuss their work at a good level, due to their withdrawal for the introductory part of the lesson. In the juniors, pupils have satisfactory skills in predicting and testing which materials have magnetic properties. They can create an electrical circuit with a switch and are able to explain the difference between conductors and insulators and how the use of a switch can save energy. Older pupils were taking part in a study of health education and fitness. In previous work they had effectively tested each other in a variety of exercises, to test pulse rates, fitness levels and strength. They turned this information into a variety of graphs and

charts with good use of information and communication technology. In Year 6, pupils demonstrate sound knowledge of the parts of the eye, and how it works.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are eager and display very good attitudes to their work. This is an improvement over the findings of the previous inspection. The great majority of pupils listen well, demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work and many show themselves to be well-motivated and enthusiastic learners. The great majority of pupils are able to sustain high levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate well with others in group and paired activities.
11. The standard of the vast majority of the pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils display a very good degree of confidence and self discipline in undertaking their work and play activities which serves to enhance the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The well-structured system of behaviour rewards and sanctions are clearly understood by pupils, applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff and proving to be successful in promoting the very good behaviour and discipline observed during the inspection. This is also evident in the way pupils who have had severe discipline problems in other schools are now coping successfully with school life.
12. There has been one pupil exclusion in the current academic year and the developing trend is one of reductions in pupil exclusions. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection and pupils are well aware of the correct action to take if it happens. Parents and pupils agree that past incidents of inappropriate behaviour have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved.
13. A further strength of the school is the very good relationships that exist between pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other, to staff and to visitors. They demonstrate by their actions, and through conversations, that they know right from wrong. Many display a natural sensitivity and awareness to the needs of others and good examples were seen in the school of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils. Worthy of note is the care and consideration shown to younger pupils by the older pupils. Pupils happily take turns without question and willingly share with each other. They treat property and learning resources with care.
14. The school provides an appropriate emphasis on personal development for pupils with special educational needs, particularly for those with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school uses a range of individual or general incentives to motivate pupils with special educational needs to develop good attitudes towards learning and behaviour. Generally these pupils make good effort to achieve their personal targets. Particularly strong commitments were noticed during the inspection when pupils were being taught individually or in small groups by specialist staff.
15. Teachers provide pupils with a satisfactory range of opportunities for their individual development within each classroom. Pupils willingly accept their assigned responsibilities and take a pride in performing these to the best of their abilities. The system of school monitors has been suspended and this results in many lost opportunities for older pupils to take ownership for, and perform, a wide range of whole school responsibilities as part of their personal development.
16. Pupil attendance at school is good and is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and records show the level of unauthorised absence is falling. Punctuality within the school is very good and lessons were seen to start on time during the inspection week.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. Only a small number of lessons contain unsatisfactory teaching and 96 per cent are satisfactory or better. This has improved since the last inspection. Seventy-three per cent of the teaching is good or better and 29 per cent very good or excellent. In the Foundation Stage for children under five, almost half of the teaching is very good. Throughout the rest of the school the teaching is mostly good, with almost one lesson in four being very good. A major strength of all of the teaching is the management of the pupils. Teachers organise their lessons well, and control the pupils' behaviour with sensitivity as well as firmness, and this is effective in creating a positive atmosphere for learning.
18. For the pupils in the nursery and reception classes the teaching is very effective. Teachers use appropriate methods for children of this age and their planning is detailed and firmly based on the nationally agreed areas for learning. The work of the nursery nurses and other support staff is effective in helping all pupils to take a full part in activities. Good records are kept and staff base their planning effectively on the previous learning that has taken place.
19. In the infant and the junior classes, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well introduced, although in some classes in the junior school, the numeracy strategy is not followed to an appropriate degree, resulting in a lack of opportunities for some pupils. However, in most classes there is now a more effective mixture of whole class, group and individual teaching. Teachers have undergone training for the new strategies and some have had to adapt their teaching methods as a result, with varying success, especially in numeracy. Resources have improved and in most lessons these are well used. The support staff are deployed to good effect and are having a very positive effect on the attainment of the pupils. Lessons start and finish on time, and little time in lessons is wasted. Subject knowledge is sound in most subjects, although expertise is less secure in ICT, geography and art.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The writing of individual education plans is a shared commitment between all relevant staff, parents and the children themselves. The plans are exceptionally good. Careful records are kept of attainment and progress. Assessment is ongoing and is used carefully to inform planning. Specialist teaching staff show a very good knowledge and understanding of their work. They have high standards and high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Relationships with pupils are very good. All teachers work towards individual targets. Extra support is given in class whenever possible. The high incidence of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems presents difficulties in class management at times. The majority of teachers ensure careful control and promote appropriate learning situations.
21. The best lessons in both key stages are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, even those who demonstrate challenging behaviour patterns. Teachers make good, imaginative use of resources, such as in Year 1 where, linked to their science topic, the rooms display a variety of lighting effects. Throughout the school, teachers focus on imparting a good understanding of the basic skills that will enable pupils to learn successfully as they get older. Work in most lessons is planned to match the different prior attainment of different groups of pupils. Good use of extra staff is made in Year 2 to provide support for higher attaining pupils in science and support for less able pupils in literacy and numeracy. Teachers make good use of question and answer sessions to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
22. Even where the teaching is satisfactory there are inconsistencies across year groups. The marking of children's work does not always ensure they know what was correct or how they can

improve their work in future. In some cases the wrong spelling of important words is not corrected. Too many teachers accept work that is untidily or carelessly presented. When the teaching is unsatisfactory, it is due to poorly planned lessons that, for example, do not allow pupils to experience the full range of the numeracy strategy and have a very slow pace. Worksheets and other resources used are not appropriate or challenging enough. For example, in one geography lesson, the map used was too small for the purpose. Tasks are not always challenging enough particularly for higher attaining pupils.

23. The overall quality of the learning is good throughout the school. Pupils are acquiring the necessary basic skills and they generally make a good effort at successfully completing the tasks they are given. They work well where the teacher has created good relationships. However, the older pupils do not have enough independence in their learning and their research skills are at an early stage of development. The provision of homework is inconsistent and does not provide enough opportunity to consolidate and extend the work covered in school.

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

24. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for the children who are under five and for those throughout the rest of the school. There are strengths within the curriculum, particularly in English, and standards are rising following the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. There are policies and schemes of work in all subjects but, although planned for with suitable time allocations, some subjects are not timetabled and whether some subjects are taught is not monitored as fully as it should be. In some year groups, especially for the older juniors, there are differences in provision in parallel classes. In other year groups, teachers plan together but are often unaware of what pupils have learnt previously as year groups plan in too much isolation from each other. In these respects pupils' equality of access and opportunity within the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
25. Curriculum co-ordinators have a general overview of planning in their subjects but do not check sufficiently to see if the planning is fully implemented. Following the previous inspection, a key issue was to ensure that curriculum leadership and management were provided for individual subjects, in order to monitor the quality of educational provision and the standards being achieved by pupils. Although there are curriculum co-ordinators in place for all subjects, they have a limited role in monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and inconsistencies in planning still exist. Most co-ordinators are aware of deficiencies in their subjects, primarily in the juniors, but are unable to improve provision, given their limited managerial responsibility.
26. There are also inconsistencies in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. In most classes the full structure is followed, but in some classes in the juniors, teachers reduce its effectiveness by omitting the direct teaching and plenary elements. Pupils are set by ability for mathematics in Year 6. Despite this the match of work to pupils' needs is not always appropriate. For instance the lower of the two sets is following the curriculum for Year 5 rather than Year 6.
27. The curriculum for Religious Education now meets the requirements of the local authority's agreed syllabus and the National Curriculum requirements for ICT are now being fully met. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. All aspects of health education are comprehensively covered within the science curriculum. Regular circle time is established in most classes. It gives pupils a forum for expressing their views about a variety of topics and is a fundamental element in the school's successful behaviour policy.

28. The school promotes a caring and positive learning environment within which staff try to provide equality of opportunity to all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social background. Overall the staff are alert to the differing needs and capabilities of the pupils and teachers plan to deliver a standard of education that fully embraces the equality of opportunity to all. However there are some inconsistencies in the planning and differentiation strategies across the different year groups, Year 6 in particular.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are offered a broad and balanced curriculum and are fully included into every aspect of school life. There is a high proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs and they are provided with regular specialist help to develop skills in literacy and numeracy on an individual basis. A very well equipped room is set aside for this purpose. In addition small groups of pupils are taught separately as part of a 'catch-up' programme. Additional guidance is given to pupils who need help with speech and language. Exercises are set and monitored by a speech therapist and maintained by the learning support provision in school. A programme for Additional Literacy Support has now been established for groups of children from Years 3 and 4. This is running smoothly, led by two very good support assistants.
30. The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities, primarily for sport. The school enters a number of competitions with other local schools and its mixed football team is particularly successful. The school has a mini bus and this is used regularly for transporting teams and for local field trips. Pupils from the school give performances at the local arts centre. The art club is very well attended and makes a significant contribution to enhancing the school as an attractive and stimulating learning environment. It enables Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to access a variety of interesting activities that are not available in class lessons.
31. Overall, the provision for the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes positively to pupils' attitudes and learning. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The contribution of religious education to spiritual development has improved considerably as the school has increasingly worked to the guidelines provided by the local Agreed Syllabus. This is now taught in a structured way and is regularly included in the curriculum of every class. In addition, there are regular acts of collective worship and these provide added opportunities for pupils to become aware of religious beliefs and practices, for example, the festival of Hanukkah in Judaism and the Parable of the Talents in Christianity. In class assemblies pupils present work they have done on the feelings of happiness and sadness and consider what life would be like if they were without any of the five senses. They consider the meaning of trust, caring and kindness and how we are all special and must learn to live together. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the beauty of music when entering and leaving assemblies and in class lessons and the beauty of art when learning about famous artists such as Van Gogh, Picasso, Warhol, Jackson Pollock and Clarice Cliff. Pupils become aware of the variety of beliefs through the study of some of the world's faiths such as Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism.
32. The school makes good provision for the moral development of pupils and they have a good awareness of the difference between right and wrong. This is reflected in the generally good or very good behaviour and attitudes of pupils both in the classroom and in the playground. Both teachers and pupils show respect for each other in their relationships within the school. Members of each class have, in the past, been involved in setting the school's Code of Conduct and this is revised each year. In addition, each class sets their own rules to which all the pupils have contributed through discussion. Circle time plays a major part, for during these sessions pupils are not only able to discuss the school Code of Conduct and their class rules but to begin explore their own feelings. The school promotes an understanding among the pupils that they live in a

community and the pupils respond to the system of rewards and sanctions. When necessary, time is given to work on an individual basis with pupils who are experiencing difficulties.

33. The school makes good provision for the social development of pupils. There are links with the local church and pupils take part in community activities such as singing at Christmas, in the city centre and for elderly people in their home. The Community Development Centre provides opportunities for the pupils to extend their information technology skills and to use and help to look after the garden. Pupils are encouraged to look after the environment of the school and given limited opportunities to accept responsibility and show initiative, such as putting benches out for assemblies and taking registers to the office. However, these are limited compared to many schools, though there are plans to extend them in the future through the re-introduction of a monitor system and by creating 'Friendship Stops' in the playground to ensure that no pupil is lonely. A residential visit to London for Year 6 pupils, a wide range of visits and visitors to school and a good range of extra curricular activities enhance the social development of the pupils.
34. The school makes sound provision for the cultural development of the pupils. This is an improvement on the previous inspection report, though there are still weaknesses in this area of the pupils' development. The school has raised the pupils' awareness of ethnic minority groups through work in religious education on Hinduism and Judaism and the visit by Year 4 pupils to a Hindu Temple in Newcastle. However, more still needs to be done to make pupils aware of the positive contributions made by ethnic minority groups and to prepare pupils more adequately for life in a culturally diverse society. Reading schemes have been audited and now more accurately reflect the multicultural society that is Britain today. The works of famous artists are to be seen around the school and those of famous musicians played during assemblies. Pupils become aware of ancient cultures during history lessons and the use of a variety of artefacts in this subject and religious education supports the pupil's development. Visiting artists and theatre groups to the school and visits to museums both locally and in London also make valuable contributions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school provides pupils with a good standard of care and welfare. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well. All staff display a high level of care and concern for the pupils and there is evidence of the very good rapport and respect that exists between pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe and happy and have the confidence and independence to raise any queries and concerns they may have with staff.
36. Very effective registration procedures are in place that fully comply with statutory requirements and incorporate very good recording and monitoring systems for the recording and follow up of all unexplained absence.
37. The very good and firmly established behaviour management routines are successfully used to develop self-esteem and to encourage and promote good behaviour. The school's behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each classroom to provide each pupil with a meaningful focus of the school's expectations and rewards for good behaviour and effort. The clear, simple and well displayed code of conduct and behaviour rules are understood by pupils, applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff and serve to promote the very good behaviour to be seen in and around the school. During the inspection there was no evidence of any bullying or harassment of pupils. Pupils are aware of the need to inform staff of any inappropriate behaviour of others, and past incidents are judged by parents and pupils to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff.

38. Satisfactory child protection procedures are in place, which are understood and acted upon by staff in the best interests of the pupils. Staff are aware of, and regularly monitor, the well being and welfare of the pupils in their care and respond in a discreet and sensitive manner to any personal queries raised with them. Very good arrangements are in place for the correct management and notification of pupil injuries and accidents that occur in school.
39. Good and effective strategies have been established to identify and support those pupils' who have special educational needs and for the ongoing review of their targets and progress in consultation with their parents. Individual education plans are completed in line with requirements and with full parental involvement. The procedures for the recording and monitoring of personal development are good and enable meaningful and up-to-date feedback reporting to parents. Good opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in discussing their children's objectives at the beginning of the year with a verbal review during the spring term.
40. In the previous report, assessment procedures were identified as a key issue for development. The school has made good progress in addressing the issue. The assessment policy has been reviewed, new systems are beginning to be put in place effectively and assessment issues are discussed regularly within the staff meeting programme. On entry into the nursery children are assessed as to their personal development using a published scheme. Records are detailed, regularly updated and passed to the reception class teachers where the children are known very well and their learning is quickly matched at an appropriate level against the early learning goals.
41. Pupils are assessed appropriately using the standardised tests at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2 and the school has recently adopted the optional tests for other year groups in Key Stage 2. Year 1 is also involved in internal school testing. The results are used effectively to identify weaknesses in mathematics and literacy. New systems have recently been introduced to enable detailed tracking of the progress made by individual pupils. However, as yet they have not been used in monitoring and planning, but have great potential. Information from testing helps to identify groups of pupils who will benefit from additional support, which has a positive impact on the attainment and learning of these pupils. Assessment is identified as integral to the learning process and incorporated into lessons through teacher observation and questioning as well as identified in some longer-term plans.
42. Class teachers maintain their own record systems effectively, however there is not enough consistency of record keeping throughout the school and they are not used sufficiently to guide planning. Individual targets are identified and set for pupils with special educational needs, which aid their good progress. Significant advantages would be gained should this be adopted for all pupils. Where marking follows the newly agreed policy it is evident how it aids the improvement in pupils' learning.
43. The school has established good health and safety procedures that embrace the whole life of the school. Staff and pupils demonstrated very good health and safety practice during their time in school. There is a good practice for fire evacuation drills to be undertaken and regular health and safety checks are carried out with all report recommendations being considered and acted upon by governors. The school has appropriate risk assessment procedures in place to ensure potential risks are identified and action taken. The school premises are maintained to a satisfactory level of cleanliness and the school site provides a safe and secure environment for both pupils and staff.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Very good partnership links are in place and they encourage the involvement of parents in all aspects of their children's education and personal development. This is an improvement on the

findings of the last inspection report. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive a quality standard of care and education.

45. Parents are welcomed into school and encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. The school benefits from the voluntary contribution of some ten regular parent helpers who provide a valuable input to the classroom activities and learning of the pupils. Of note are those parents involved in using their information and communication technology expertise to develop story boards for the pupils. The school also benefits from the many parents and friends of the school who voluntarily support the school on a more casual and ad-hoc basis.
46. The close working liaison that exists between teachers and many of the parents has a beneficial impact on the continuity and quality of pupils' learning and the steady progress they achieve. In particular, the school works hard to ensure the full involvement of parents in the development and review of those pupils who have been identified with having special educational needs and those pupils who are receiving additional literacy support.
47. A great emphasis is placed on maintaining the very good quality and frequency of information provided to parents. Informative half termly newsletters and regular correspondence are produced covering a wide range school and specific subjects, and topics relevant to the pupils' work in school. The school prospectus is comprehensive, details all aspects of pupils' life in the school and serves as an informative and valuable reference document for parents. Of worthy note are the very strong communications that exist between the nursery staff and parents designed to raise parental awareness to their child's individual development and learning potential.
48. Parents have a high regard for the very good induction programmes the school organises for the quick and smooth introduction of new parents and pupils into the daily routines of life in the school. Effective transition procedures are in place to ensure parental involvement in the smooth transfer of pupils to secondary education.
49. The autumn and spring term parent and teacher consultation meetings are highly valued by parents and provide very good opportunities for parents to discuss and review their child's progress and achievements. The teachers are very willing to listen to, and make time for, any parents who have concerns and queries about their child's education and development. Many parents praised the positive response they received from teachers and the help they were given on various aspects of their children's learning, both in the home and in school.
50. Most parents of pupils with special educational needs are very interested in their child's development. They work closely with the school and follow suggestions for improvements. Homework books are especially well devised and carefully used to promote effective home/school contact. There is good dialogue between parents and the school. Parents are fully involved with Annual Reviews.

51. An effective home-school agreement system is in place and provides for the regular and quality exchange of information between teachers and parents. Some parents would like to see a more formal approach to the allocation of homework for each year group. End of year progress reports are well written and provide good levels of detail on pupils' achievements and personal development.
52. The ongoing development of the school's partnership arrangements with parents has helped to promote the good name of the school, raise a positive awareness amongst parents to the successes being achieved in pupils' development and provides benefits and enrichment to the pupils' learning environment and individual development opportunities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory overall, and there have been significant improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher, together with the staff and governing body, has worked extremely hard to raise standards and to keep up with a variety of national and local initiatives, and this has been done successfully as the recent test results show. Weaknesses remain in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, and this is resulting in inconsistencies of provision. Although more use of data is now being made this has yet to have a significant effect on provision or on results.
54. The leadership demonstrated by the headteacher over the past four years is characterised by a desire to do the best for the pupils in his care. His good motivational skills, balanced by the organisational skills of the deputy headteacher, have helped build a strong team of staff who also have the pupils' best interests at heart. However, the school does not have a firm enough management structure, or lines of delegated authority to ensure that all staff are working to the best of their ability and to a common purpose.
55. The monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development. The headteacher has a variety of informal ways of doing this but effective systems for the regular monitoring of lessons are not in place. However, a version of appraisal has been retained until recently, including assessment meetings with staff, and the school is now preparing for the introduction of performance management, which in itself will necessitate a review of the management structure. The headteacher has recognised the need to develop this aspect of his work and has already consulted with other schools to track down effective ways of improving practice. There has been some effective monitoring in literacy teaching and learning but this good practice has not spread to numeracy or other subjects on a regular basis. However, the school has a good view of its priorities for the future and they are largely matched by those of the inspection. In addition, a lot of time, money and effort have gone into improving the resources, planning and teaching of information and communication technology. Creative use of the adult education facilities and staff who share the school site, and which are separately managed by the headteacher, have greatly improved the curriculum offered to the pupils.
56. The mission statement and aims for the school's work are clear and are largely reflected in the work of the school. They mostly focus on pupils' social and personal development and less so on standards and improvement. The action plans based on the last inspection were appropriate and most have been successfully carried out, although the monitoring aspect of the curriculum has not been fully met. The school development plan has been arrived at using a new auditing technique, involving all staff and the governing body. A more detailed action plan has been postponed until after the inspection so that any other priorities can be given detailed planning at that time. Good induction procedures are in place for new staff and newly qualified teachers. Overall, the staff

make a good team but there are communication difficulties, partly caused by its location, which do not help the nursery feel part of the school, and in some year groups teachers' planning is inconsistent. The subject co-ordinators have successfully overseen the introduction of the national strategies for literacy and, to a lesser extent, for numeracy, and this work has resulted in the improvements made to the standards pupils have achieved.

57. The leadership of the special educational needs programme is very good. The co-ordinator has been well trained and is a highly skilled practitioner. She has worked extremely hard to create a well-managed solution, where all staff cooperate to include pupils with special educational needs into all curricular areas. The co-ordinator has excellent support from a team of well qualified, totally committed, specialist teachers and very able support assistants. Their work greatly enhances the education of pupils with special educational needs and adds to the ethos of the school. The school is strongly supported by outside agencies. The governor for pupils with special educational needs is very knowledgeable, sincere, and supportive of the school's intention to provide for all aspects of development in this area of education. The headteacher is firmly committed to giving the best possible provision for pupils with special educational needs. Generous funding supports this intention.
58. The governors are very supportive of the work of the school, and they are appropriately involved in many aspects of school life. Many of them live in the catchment area, and are parents of pupils at the school. Some are ex-pupils of the school. They meet regularly and have set up an appropriate range of committees to oversee aspects of the schools' work. In particular, they have decided that as the curriculum is the most important of their responsibilities it should be overseen by the full governing body and not by a committee. The governors keep in touch with school life by visiting the school where possible, and by inviting staff to give presentations at full governing body meetings. The increasing understanding of test results and other data is enabling governors to have a clearer understanding of the school's achievements. The governors understand that one of the strengths of the school is its care for the pupils and the sense of independence and self-respect they are taught. However, governors appear less clear about the school's weaknesses, although the Chair is aware of the need for better professional development for some staff and for the school to become more aware of their needs. This is reflected in the need to improve subject co-ordinators' management skills.
59. The financial management and control is good. The work of the finance committee is effective and the administration staff carry out the day-to-day management of the finances effectively. The school applies the principles of best value appropriately. After the last inspection the school reviewed its allocation of money to year groups and classes, but decided that this offered best value in the majority of cases and so did not change the system. The evidence of this inspection is that the system is successful, as long as all staff are kept fully aware of what resources are available. The school plans and uses allocated financial resources effectively to meet identified needs. This has been shown in the use of grants to finance the developments in information and communication technology. Overall, good use is made of the available resources. Staff are well deployed generally, and the work of the support staff is very effective, especially in ensuring the good progress made by special educational needs pupils.
60. Accommodation is well used, especially for special educational needs and for information and communication technology. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage pupils, especially in the nursery class is unsatisfactory, lacking good storage and shower facilities. The resources for the successful delivery of the curriculum are good. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of improvements in the provision of resources, especially in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. Standards have successfully been raised at age 11 and the quality of teaching has improved. The school has identified mathematics as an area in need of improvement. It also intends to develop the role of subject coordinators further. The findings of the inspection agree with these priorities. In order to raise standards further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Increase the progress made by pupils in mathematics, especially in the juniors, by
 - the more consistent implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
 - by better matching the tasks to the needs of all pupils.

- (2) Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching by
 - improving the quality of the marking of pupils' work and using assessment in planning future work;
 - improving teachers' expectations of the quality of the presentation of pupils' work;

- (3) Improving the management of the school by
 - more detailed monitoring and evaluating of the quality of the planning, teaching and learning;
 - reviewing the present management structure and make up of the senior management team, and the role of subject coordinators.

In addition, the governing body should consider including the following minor issues in their action plan:

The identification of more opportunities for writing across the curriculum;

Improving the accommodation for the Foundation Stage;

Ensuring the consistent provision of homework, in line with national guidelines.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	93
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	28	44	23	4	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	YN – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	400
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	70
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	61
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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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	30	29	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	26
	Girls	25	27	29
	Total	48	50	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81	85	93
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	30	30
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	59	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83	88	83
	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	27	31	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	22
	Girls	23	19	26
	Total	40	38	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69	66	83
	National	75	72	85

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	20	25
	Girls	27	21	29
	Total	45	41	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78	69	91
	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	371
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.1
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	168

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	3
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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	758 624
Total expenditure	756 543
Expenditure per pupil	1 806
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	2081

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	400
Number of questionnaires returned	114

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	49	4	2	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	43	10	4	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	40	25	6	12
The teaching is good.	39	49	5	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	44	18	4	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	49	9	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	46	10	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	47	18	5	6
The school is well led and managed.	33	48	7	2	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	55	11	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	28	27	14	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. The Foundation Stage is made up of the nursery class and the two reception classes. At the time of inspection, the majority of children in the nursery were three years old. There are a total of 48 children attending in two sessions. There is an effective and flexible arrangement for entry to the class that benefits individual children. The majority of children in the two reception classes are four, with 13 being five years old at the time of the inspection.
63. There have been considerable improvements in the provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection when many issues were raised. The new nursery, which had only recently opened at the time of the last inspection, is now well established and the reception classes are well organised. The overall very good teaching and very good additional support from qualified nursery nurses is having a very positive impact on children's learning. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. Adults demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of young children and have increased resources appropriately for both year groups. The on-going assessment of children's knowledge, skills and understanding is used well to match activities to the needs of individuals and informs future planning. The systems and procedures which teachers follow ensure that the majority of children make good progress. The positioning of the nursery does not aid the close working of staff across the foundation stage and greater efforts are needed to ensure that the nursery is fully integrated into the school.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. Nearly all the children enter the nursery with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave the reception class they are achieving the expected level in this area. This shows good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching in both nursery and reception classes where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. In both year groups children learn to work and play together and enjoy the wide variety of experiences offered. They begin to show consideration towards each other from their entry into the nursery and are helped to recognise what is acceptable behaviour and how to apologise if they upset another child by their actions. By the time children start in the reception class they have developed good concentration and have increased in confidence and self-esteem. They are enthusiastic about their learning as, for example, when playing in 'Grandma's cottage' in the nursery class or learning the skill of sawing wood and the effect sandpaper has on it in the reception class.
65. The adults provide good role models for the children, always treating the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to a positive relationship with adults in the caring atmosphere. The children's personal development is promoted effectively, by ensuring that the resources and equipment used are easily accessible to them, which helps them to become independent. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for jobs around the classroom.

Communication, language and literacy

66. The teaching and learning are good and the majority of the pupils will achieve the expected level by the time they start statutory schooling. In both the nursery and reception classes the children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with adults. All the adults are good, active

listeners and use talk to good effect. They show the children that they value their contribution and efforts in communication. Skilful questioning by the teacher in the story 'Look out he's behind you' encourages children to look more closely at the pictures. This extends their vocabulary and imagination. At the end of the lesson in the reception class work is shared from each activity and children are encouraged to explain how the task was achieved. The teachers undertake this skilfully. Children are good at learning the meaning of new words for example, names given to parts of tools such as blade, and mathematical shapes are recalled. In the nursery supplies of paper, crayons and pencils are available on the writing table and children readily use them. Elements of the Literacy Framework are well used by teachers in both the reception classes. A good understanding of phonics is developed through effective word work. Most children can name sounds in words they use frequently and confidently 'have a go' when writing for a relevant purpose. They are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds in their reading. The children confidently use pictures to predict what may happen next in a story. Books are well displayed, conveying excitement and enthusiasm for reading. The children regularly visit the public library.

Mathematical development

67. By the end of the reception year most children will have achieved the early learning goals for mathematics. The teaching and learning are good. Children in both years enjoy and are familiar with a variety of number rhymes and games. Most children in the nursery can count to five with the support of counting aids. In the reception classes, teachers use elements from the numeracy framework, which has had a positive impact on children's learning and recall of number. Children can count to 20 and order numbers correctly. They are familiar with shapes of everyday objects and use mathematical language with confidence such as circle and square as well as 'greater than' and 'less than'. Mathematical work is carried out with enthusiasm.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Children enter the nursery with a basic general knowledge. They are keen to talk about and paint pictures of their families. The teaching and learning are good. Adults support children well in investigating their surroundings and encourage them to find things out for themselves. For example, the pictures in a story led to questions as to how the strawberry is attached to the plant. Children learn to use their senses and describe objects by their feel extending their vocabulary with words such as rough and smooth. This is extended to snack time with a variety of foods being offered for taste, and texture explored, for example a banana. In the reception class, children talk about events that have happened to themselves. They use mirrors to enable observation of themselves in the process of producing a self-portrait. They are becoming familiar with the use and control of the mouse when using programmes to support their learning on the computer. In both year groups children select materials and construct and build models. They have a good sense of how things join together and are imaginative in the way their construction can be used.

Physical development

69. The teaching and learning in this area are satisfactory. Children in the nursery have limited access to an indoor area in which to develop their physical skills. They are developing an awareness of each other within a limited space and are able to jump to music. They have a safe outdoor play area in which the children can take part in a variety of appropriate activities. They develop their muscles and improve their awareness of space when given the opportunity to ride bicycles.
70. The children in the reception classes move confidently in the school hall. In gymnastics, they use the space with increasing control and co-ordination. They run and skip, responding to instructions

quickly and recognising colours in a game of traffic lights. They participate in structured outdoor play each week using wheeled vehicles and small apparatus. Such opportunities are limited by the number of children participating at the time and the inadequate sharing of resources between the nursery and reception. The children in the nursery become familiar with sand and use paintbrushes, scissors and glue spatulas with increasing control. By the time children leave reception they have refined their fine motor skills through cutting, sticking and modelling using a variety of media and writing and working with small construction materials.

Creative development

71. This is another area in which the good teaching and learning enable children to meet the early learning goals by the time they are five. They start from a low level of skill on entry into the nursery and make good progress throughout the nursery and reception years. The children are given many opportunities to develop their creativity. In the nursery they observe colour and patterns in the environment when out in the autumn on a nature walk. They create interesting collages using a range of resources.
72. Children in reception classes use a range of media including paint, pastel, and crayon. They paint imaginatively using ready mixed paint with increasing brush control. They trace pictures from the story using good pencil control and accurate observation. Children practise cutting and sticking skills. They use a variety of methods to join things together, for example split pins on models of bears. They explore the difference between wet and dry sand. They respond well to music and move and sing with enthusiasm.

ENGLISH

73. Standards in English in the Year 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds were below the national average in reading and broadly in line with the national average in writing. When compared to 1999 results this shows a significant drop in reading and a slight rise in writing. For the eleven-year-olds, the test results in 2000 were below the national average, although they improved on the 1999 score. Teacher assessment in 2000 was that an above average proportion of pupils reached the national average. Ten pupils were absent for this test, which could help to explain the difference. There was a marked improvement in the proportion of 11-year-old pupils who reached the higher than average level; 32 per cent of pupils taking the test achieved this as opposed to 7 per cent the year before. The target set by the school for Key Stage 2 pupils for 2000 was 72 per cent, which they just failed to gain. For 2001 the target is 77 per cent and this seems appropriate. Analysis of the progress made by the Year 6 pupils in 2000 from their standards as seven-year-olds shows at least satisfactory and often good achievement. When compared with schools with similar pupils, attainment by the time they are 11 is well above the national average. However, when based on the pupils' attainment at the age of seven, then the school's performance is close to the average.
74. In the lessons seen during the inspection attainment at both key stages in English was in line with the national average. The majority of pupils showed good or very good attitudes to their work and sustained concentration well. They displayed real enjoyment in many lessons. Pupils work steadily throughout the school and the present pupils make at least good, and sometimes very good, progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their set targets.
75. The literacy hour is in operation throughout the school and has encouraged teachers to think carefully about the content of English lessons. Pupils show a growing understanding of the basic skills, which enables them to improve their reading, writing, speaking and listening. Opportunities

are taken to develop particular aspects of literacy as teachers feel necessary. At various time there may be an emphasis on spelling or extended writing, for example. The teachers allow some flexibility within and outside the structure of the literacy hour. Additional literacy support is given regularly to groups from Years 3 and 4. Two well-trained assistants work closely with the teacher to promote progress within the literacy strategy. All pupils with a statement of educational need get individual help with literacy on a regular basis from the special needs staff. Some pupils have help in the classroom with a learning support assistant while others are withdrawn to work with a specialist teacher. Every attempt is made by the school to raise learning to an appropriate level for each child.

76. Pupils are happy to talk to visitors about what they have learnt; in classes they show a willingness to listen and respond to questions. Pupils have an inquisitive nature and are confident in asking questions. Class discussions, role play and drama productions give opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, together with classroom discussions on topics. During the inspection, reception class children were describing different fruits in terms of sight, touch, taste and talking about their own preferences with clarity and understanding. Year 2 pupils presented an assembly, reading with confidence and speaking clearly on the theme of artists who can use only the mouth or feet. Observations show that speaking and listening skills are at least satisfactory, sometimes good, throughout the school and pupils make good progress.
77. Standards in reading are satisfactory, sometimes good at each key stage. Pupils show an interest in books and enjoy reading both at home and in school. Regular use is made of the local library and book fairs. Although there are no home-school reading diaries at present, reading and library books are taken home and records kept in school. These, however, are not comprehensive, and do not contain enough diagnostic comment and target setting. When reading aloud, whilst some pupils show an understanding of the importance of clear delivery and of engaging the listener's attention, others read mechanically and without expression. All pupils are heard to read in their literacy groups. Reception children have made a good start in reading. They are happy to share books with adults, can recognise key words in text and are beginning to build words from letter sounds. By the time they are seven, pupils read more fluently, with awareness of punctuation. Pupils build regular words phonically and use picture clues to support recognition. They can break down more difficult words into syllables. Basic skills are well-established. Children can talk about plot and character but the higher order skills, such as deduction and motivation are not well developed, except by the better readers. Familiar text is read with confidence.
78. Throughout the junior years, pupils grow more confident in their reading and develop a sound range of skills. Their understanding of text is increased and choice of reading matter extended. Books, however, are not sufficiently challenging for the higher attainers. Pupils talk of having many books at home, mostly fiction but some poetry and also reference books, for example on sport. A favourite author of fiction in Year 6 is Roald Dahl. Younger junior pupils are able to explain technical terms, such as 'hibernation' and 'nocturnal' in relation to hedgehogs. They know terms such as 'contents' and 'index' and in some cases 'glossary'. Older junior pupils show very good concentration during silent reading periods. A wide variety of material is used and pupils stay engrossed in their books. Reading standards throughout the juniors are satisfactory. By the end of the key stage, standards are often good. Pupils make good progress across the key stages with their reading. Progress by pupils with special educational needs is good against individual targets.
79. Initial writing exercises are firmly established in the Reception classes. These lead to pupils in the infants being able to write more legibly, form their own sentences and use phonic strategies or simple dictionaries to spell words. They show an understanding of rhyme and alliteration, and of past and present tense. Most of them settle to their written tasks purposefully in literacy lessons.

Infant pupils can create and write simple instructions, with knowledge of punctuation and basic grammar. Examples of this were seen during the inspection when Year 1 pupils wrote instructions as a group to make a cup of juice for everyone and a Year 2 group wrote instructions for crossing the road for a hedgehog on a poster display.

80. By the age of 11, pupils successfully build on what they have learnt to produce writing that is at least satisfactory, sometimes good. There are examples of good writing throughout the key stage. Pupils use a dictionary and thesaurus to good effect to help them develop a range of vocabulary. With effective support, pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their writing. Throughout the juniors, pupils successfully build on what they have learned to produce writing which is at least satisfactory. There are examples of good standards in all year groups showing interesting narrative style, with ideas arranged appropriately, such as “Opening the door, I just managed to catch a glimpse of a black shiny thing moving swiftly into the kitchen”. Pupils explore the use of an experience to convey meaning, such as “Even though it was raining, I went outside with my friends to play”. Vocabulary has extended well. Pupils know the difference between biography and autobiography. High attainers can describe events as chronological, suspicious or magical. Pupils have developed sound knowledge of standard English with some demonstrating a pleasing, creative style. Progress in writing is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their targets.
81. Handwriting is developed through structured exercises, but the same care is not always taken to form letters in ordinary written work. Some of the written work seen during the inspection was beautifully written and very neat but presentation is inconsistent, and some work is untidy or unfinished. The school keeps a portfolio of pupils’ written work, which is used as a good reference point for teachers. Spelling tends to be weak. Tests are conducted on a regular basis, but pupils are sometimes careless in their written work and rules are not followed through.
82. The quality of teaching in English in both key stages is never less than satisfactory and often very good. Teachers plan well for lessons, show good knowledge and understanding of the subject and have high expectations. Their class management generally is very good. Specialist teachers and support staff for pupils with special educational needs show particular skills in their dealings with pupils who have behaviour or emotional problems and in their constructive attitudes to the teaching of literacy. Staff make good use of assessment and are careful to use the evaluation of pupils’ attainment and progress to guide planning. The correct match of work to pupils’ abilities has improved since the last inspection. This is still a developing area, however, and the school aims to further its ability to ensure patterns of learning are suitable for all pupils, including adding greater challenge for the more able pupils. Groups in Key Stage 2 were observed during the inspection benefiting greatly from an extended learning programme, taught separately.
83. Resources for English are good, though the school has identified a need to introduce more non-fiction books. Resources for children with special educational needs are exceptionally good. Here very careful thought has gone into the choice of materials to promote learning, including eminently suitable computer programs. The school gives equality of access for all pupils to the English curriculum. Appropriate emphasis has been given on preparation for and implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. English has a good school policy in place, which will be reviewed next year. Action plans are impressive and cover all aspects of the English curriculum very well. Planning and programmes of work have been carefully conceived. The subject co-ordinators have had the full co-operation of all staff in facilitating strategies. Lesson planning is undertaken in year groups and ensures that work builds appropriately on pupils’ prior attainment. The school conducts the appropriate national tests and these are supplemented by regular tests in reading and spelling. Test results and reading records are carefully kept, together with individual portfolios of pupils’

written work. The co-ordinators have arranged a good workable system of classroom monitoring and have visited and provided for support for all teachers.

84. The school has addressed the main weakness of the previous inspection report on English. All relevant documentation is now in place and there is a well-formed system of monitoring teaching and learning. Literacy extends across most of the curriculum although it is not always written into planning. Language development is given a priority in the education of pupils with special educational needs. There is still inconsistency in the amount of research pupils carry out, though there is some improvement since the last inspection. Variations occur in presentation, where work is sometimes untidy or unfinished. The marking does not always offer constructive comments that make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve.

MATHEMATICS

85. Standards of attainment are satisfactory overall at ages seven and 11. The results of national tests for seven year olds in 1999 show the numbers of pupils reaching the required standards in mathematics as being broadly in line with the national average, with a lower percentage than nationally reaching the higher level. The numbers of pupils reaching the national average increased in 2000, as did the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
86. The results of national tests for 11 year olds in 1999 show the numbers of pupils reaching the required standards in mathematics as below the national average, but the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was above average. The numbers of pupils reaching the required standard in 2000 was still below average but one quarter of those who did so achieved the higher level.
87. The trend in attainment over the last five years is one little improvement in 1996 and 1997, then of sharp improvement from 1998 to 1999 and, although there is a small fall in 2000, overall standards have risen. When compared with schools with similar pupils standards are above average, although when prior attainment is taken into account, pupils have made below average progress. The improvements made point to standards being higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection.
88. These results are confirmed by the evidence of the inspection. Pupils enter the foundation stage with below average skills in number. They make good progress and by the age of seven, attainment is in line with that expected nationally. In Year 1, pupils are generally confident with addition and subtraction to 20, understand the significance of zero, and are beginning to identify number patterns in a series of calculations. A wide range of interesting and challenging oral number activities is helping pupils to develop their own strategies for quick recall of number facts. In Year 2, pupils are beginning to understand multiplication and its relationship to division. More able pupils understand odd and even numbers, can halve and double numbers and are beginning to use numbers confidently to one hundred. The least able pupils are helped to make satisfactory progress by carefully targeted teaching in a small group.
89. By the age of 11, lower attaining pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in line with their abilities. Higher attaining pupils also continue to make satisfactory progress, and almost all pupils who achieve the higher level in national tests at age seven do so again at age 11. However, 18 per cent of pupils who achieved the nationally expected standards at the age of seven had attainment in mathematics below the national average at the age of 11. This is unsatisfactory progress.

90. Observation of teaching and the scrutiny of work in Year 6 indicates that these particular pupils are insufficiently challenged in lessons. Although pupils in Year 6 are split into two sets for mathematics, there is still a very wide range of ability in each set. However, too often pupils are given the same work, much of which is well within the capabilities of the more able pupils and expectations of what they can achieve are too low. For instance, pupils who have already demonstrated good understanding of co-ordinates are given repeated worksheets that do not extend their learning.
91. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall in both key stages, with two thirds of the teaching good. There is consistently good teaching in Year 1 and Year 4. There are consistently good relationships between teachers and pupils, which encourage pupils to do their best. Pupils are managed well and concentrate on tasks for appropriate amounts of time. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace with the expectation that work will be completed in a reasonable time. In many lessons, particularly in the infants, teachers devise interesting oral number activities, which motivate pupils and make learning fun. Teachers expect pupils to use the correct mathematical vocabulary and many, but not all, encourage pupils to develop their own strategies for working out number problems.
92. A less satisfactory aspect of many lessons is teachers' dependence on worksheets from published schemes, which in many cases are dictating what and how pupils are learning. Occasionally there is a mismatch of worksheet to the teaching objective and pupils become confused, as the teaching point is different from the work required on the worksheet. In several lessons pupils are unable to read the worksheets without help and this further inhibits progress. In Year 2, pupils' recording of work is solely on worksheets and appropriate levels of presentation are not being learnt as no work is recorded in exercise books. In three lessons observed, the framework of the national numeracy strategy was not followed and there was no direct teaching and no plenary session. In a Year 6 lesson, for instance, there were four different topics. One of them, estimating the weight of packets by sight, was inappropriate and the final one was introduced in the last ten minutes of the lesson. In several lessons in the juniors, the mental session concentrates on written mental tests and chanting of times tables rather than the development of strategies which help pupils with the quick recall of number facts.
93. Several teachers are still unclear about what they want pupils to learn by the end of the lesson and merely list the activities that they want pupils to do. In several classes, tasks are poorly matched to the differing abilities of pupils. When pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn for specialist teaching, or work in a small group as in Year 2, they make satisfactory progress. However, in class mathematics lessons, their particular difficulties are not being addressed with specific tasks that will help develop their understanding and grasp of basic concepts. Equally, higher attaining pupils, particularly in the juniors, are frequently not challenged by the worksheets and textbooks that provide material for most of the pupils. Although since the last inspection new schemes have been bought which reflect the demands of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the school has addressed this issue in staff meetings and training, the inflexible use of commercial schemes is still limiting pupils' progress, as noted in the previous inspection report. For instance, higher attaining pupils are not given opportunities to pursue investigations or use and apply their knowledge and understanding in a range of interesting and meaningful tasks.
94. Teachers plan together in year groups and in general a similar curriculum is delivered in parallel classes. In Year 5, however, the work in pupils' books was different in parallel classes. In Year 6 the higher of the two sets is being taught a Year 6 curriculum but the work in the lower set is based on the National Numeracy Strategy for Year 5. As co-ordinators have no overall oversight of planning throughout the school, inconsistencies in planning are not identified and corrected.

Overall resources are satisfactory, although their provision and use depends on the decisions of individual teachers.

95. In the infants the mathematics co-ordinator provides good support and guidance for colleagues and sets a good example with the quality of her own teaching. In the juniors, staffing difficulties have resulted in a lack of effective co-ordination of mathematics. The deputy headteacher has observed lessons in Year 5 but other than that, no effective monitoring of teaching or learning outcomes has taken place. As noted in the last inspection report, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are not being identified and addressed and good practice is not being shared. For instance, much of the marking does not conform to the school's marking policy. In Year 2, however, marking of work by the lower attaining pupils is dated, gives details of how much help was given and how well pupils understand new concepts. The school has much to gain by spreading this good practice. It would enable teachers to set targets for individual pupils and enable pupils to appreciate what they have to do to improve their work. Sound assessment procedures are in place and are analysed to identify areas of the curriculum that need further consolidation.

SCIENCE

96. The pupils' level of attainment at the age of seven is close to the national average. The teacher assessment for 2000 showed that fewer than average pupils reached the expected level but that the proportion reaching the higher level was close to average. At the age of 11, pupils' attainment is below average overall. More pupils achieved the expected level than in most schools nationally, but a smaller proportion of the pupils reached the higher levels. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys or girls. Standards have risen sharply since the last inspection.
97. From a low point in 1997 the standards have risen from well below average to broadly in line with the average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds the school's performance was close to the average, but when compared to the pupils' previous achievement at the age of seven, the school's performance was below average. However, the overall trend in standards over five years shows very good improvement, and at a much faster rate than that found nationally. The evidence of the inspection is that standards are broadly in line with those found nationally at ages seven and 11, but that progress varies from year to year, due to the variations in teachers' expectations. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
98. The Year 1 pupils have a sound understanding of light sources. They are able to describe a variety of torches, lamps, candles and lights, which use different fuels and are from different periods. Their understanding is helped by the very good displays and use of light for discussions sessions in one classroom. On a walk around the local area they observe and comment on streetlights, car lights and a variety of lights in the hall. They know that not all of these are for giving light, but that some are warning lights. In Year 2, pupils are able to use the equipment provided to investigate how friction affects a variety of objects movements. The high attainers are able to discuss their work at a good level, due to their withdrawal for the introductory part of the lesson. The pupils are clearly developing their collaborative skills through working in groups testing different materials. They have an early understanding of the need to make the test fair and consistent. They are able to make sensible predictions about how far objects may move and which surfaces offer the most resistance.
99. In Year 3, pupils have satisfactory skills in predicting and testing which materials have magnetic properties. In Year 4, pupils can create an electrical circuit with a switch. They are able to

explain the difference between conductors and insulators and how the use of a switch can save energy. Not all pupils could incorporate a switch successfully into the circuit at the start of the lesson but by the end the majority were able to make a bulb light and be turned on and off. In Year 5 pupils were taking part in a study of health education and fitness. In previous work they had effectively tested each other in a variety of exercises, to test pulse rates, fitness levels and strength. They turned this information into a variety of graphs and charts with good use of information and communication technology. Very good resources enabled pupils to study the heart, lungs and liver of a sheep. In the lessons observed they followed up this work very effectively by experimenting to see what is the effect of smoking on a piece of cotton wool. They found the work interesting and enlightening and reached broadly satisfactory levels of attainment overall. In Year 6 pupils demonstrate sound knowledge of the parts of the eye, and how it works. They use shadow puppets to investigate how the size of shadows varies depending how close the light source is.

100. The pupils' attitudes towards the subject are mostly good. They are enthusiastic when discussing work and keen to take part in practical work. They use resources carefully and are keen to discuss their work with adults. However, their written work does not show enough pride and care and the recording of results needs to be improved. Pupils with special educational needs also have good attitudes towards the subject which, together with the good teaching, enables them to make good progress against their prior attainment.

101. The quality of teaching in the infants is mostly good and sometimes very good. Imaginative use of light and the good use of the locality in Year 1 help pupils understand more about the topic. The rooms have exciting and interesting displays that extend and consolidate pupils' understanding. In Year 2, very good experimental work is set up with well-prepared resources that enable pupils to experiment effectively to test out their predictions. Good use is made of the staffing to provide extra challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The teaching of junior pupils is good. Good teaching in Year 3 and 4 was supported by the good use of resources and a practical approach to the teaching, giving pupils good opportunities to use a variety of materials for work on magnets and electricity. This very good use of resources is continued in Year 5 where the use of sheep's heart and lungs, computer software and homemade smoking apparatus all enabled good progress to be made in their learning about healthy living. In Year 6 the teaching is broadly satisfactory but the work is not well matched to the abilities of all pupils and the higher attaining pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging work. Throughout the school, the presentation of pupils' work is not consistently neat and does not show enough pride in the finished article. The marking does not make clear exactly what is correct and how the pupils need to improve in future.

102. The policy for the subject has been recently reviewed. The school has recently adopted a nationally agreed scheme of work that is helping ensure that the work builds appropriately on what has gone before. The planning is effective and clearly shows how work is to be revisited. However, where this happens, such as with light in Year 1 and Year 6, the work evident is not always challenging enough to really build on the previous learning. The two coordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and are aware of the need for more monitoring of the teaching and learning, so that they can use their expertise to help and support other teachers. They have an appropriate plan to develop a portfolio of work to illustrate levels of attainment. This is particularly necessary for the investigative work to give all teachers ideas and an indication of the level of attainment possible.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Standards in art are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages and this has been maintained since the previous inspection. As no art lessons were timetabled during the

inspection in the infants, this judgement is based on a scrutiny of displays in classrooms and around the school. The teaching of art in the juniors is satisfactory overall, although in individual lessons pupils' attainment varies according to the interest and expertise of individual teachers. Much of the very good art displayed around the school is a product of the skill and dedication of the two co-ordinators who between them run a thriving art club for pupils in Year 5 and 6.

104. By the end of the infants, pupils are handling paint skilfully and are able to work confidently in the style of Monet and Van Gogh. Links are made to other curriculum areas but opportunities for pupils to develop essential skills are also given sufficient prominence. In Year 1, for instance pupils create their own versions of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' as part of a science topic on light. A good balance is maintained between encouraging the progressive development of new techniques and allowing pupils to express their own ideas imaginatively. In Year 2, pupils had painted sophisticated impressionist pictures of a poppy field, pictures which created a harmonious whole when displayed together but which still allowed individual pupils to work creatively.
105. In Year 3, new skills are developed and pupils develop their sense of pattern through block printing and individual mosaics. In Years 5 and 6, there is little evidence that pupils' knowledge and skills are progressively built on in art lessons. Pupils have little opportunity to choose and investigate a range of materials or experiment with colour, texture and form to create their own visual effects. There is a heavy reliance on colouring in with felt pens. There is an emphasis on instant outcomes, which hinders pupils' capacity to learn through the process of the activity. The end results make for bold displays, for example to illustrate a topic on Ancient Egypt, but contribute little to the development of pupils' artistic skills.
106. The two co-ordinators have done much to raise the profile of art in the school by improving the appearance of the school with displays of pupils' work. Many of the displays are the result of work done in the well-attended art club. It is to their credit that much of the school appears as a lively and stimulating learning environment. The hall contains a large interactive tree, with book reviews suspended from its branches. Large hangings inspired by Jackson Pollock are displayed in a corridor. Tonal range is explored in a large geometrical abstract and in industrial landscapes using chalk and charcoal. Pupils' work is carefully framed and they gain confidence from knowing that their work is valued and admired.
107. Both co-ordinators help and support those colleagues who wish to develop their own skills and expertise. A newly qualified teacher in Year 5 has already encouraged her pupils to draw some carefully observed still life pictures. The co-ordinators occasionally have opportunities to work alongside teachers in class or undertake some specialist teaching. This has been important in ensuring that all pupils get access to appropriate art teaching. At present they have had no opportunities for monitoring the effectiveness of art teaching throughout the school or for ensuring that the existing scheme of work is implemented.
108. There is a good scheme of work in place, which provides a good basis for detailed planning and the progressive development of skills and knowledge throughout the school. This will be reviewed in the light of the recently produced national scheme. It is intended that the assessment procedures embedded in the national scheme will be adopted. At present no portfolio of moderated work is kept. Resources are adequate but further resources are required to develop three dimensional work, pottery, textiles and printing. Individual teachers are allocated a class budget to cover all curriculum areas, in some classes very little is spent on art materials. There are few opportunities to visit art galleries but there are occasional visits from artists and craftspeople and there is an annual art club trip, which last year was to Greystoke Castle where there is a pottery.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection in the infants, and only one lesson in the juniors. Evidence from samples of work on display, discussions with the co-ordinators and analysis of lesson planning, indicates that pupils, including those with a special educational need, undertake a satisfactory range of activities in the subject, achieve appropriate standards and make satisfactory progress at both key stages. This is a similar judgement to that made in the previous inspection report. There are, however, weaknesses that the co-ordinators are aware of.
110. By the age of seven, pupils learn about the design process. Work planned by teachers makes good links with other subjects such as science, religious education and history. Windmills are made and pupils learn about paper folding and examine the forces that make windmills turn. Houses are made out of card and waste materials and pupils develop the skills of cutting and gluing. Year 2 pupils make a large model of their local church and also of Carlisle Cathedral. Clay 'Divas' are designed and made in links with the Hindu story of Divali.
111. By the age of 11, pupils can make effective pecking birds out of paper and fasteners. They examine the packaging for food and design and make their own. In Year 4, pupils design and make a model that lights up, buzzes or moves. They communicate their design through a labelled diagram and select appropriate tools, techniques and materials. Older pupils in Year 5 make wooden frames. They measure accurately, cut, glue and strengthen the corners. Books are made which are bound down the spine. In Year 6 coffins and pyramids are made during work on their Ancient Egyptian topic. There is some evidence that food technology is included in the curriculum. For example, pupils in the infants make sweets, and older pupils use vegetables from the school garden to make soup. This aspect of the subject is, however, underdeveloped as the school does not have a suitable food technology area.
112. In the lesson seen the quality of teaching and the response of the pupils was good. The teacher was well prepared and gave good, clear explanations to the pupils. Work done by a previous class gave the pupils a good idea of the standards that the teacher expected. All the resources needed were readily available. Due to these positive features of teaching the pupils understood what was expected of them and were able to quickly get on with their work. The standard of the work completed during the lesson was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. All the pupils worked sensibly and co-operated with each other. Though there was some talking, it was all concerned with the task they were involved in and indicated that they enjoyed the lesson.
113. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, and the subject has not been a focus for staff discussion and in-service training. As a result, the management of the subject is unsatisfactory. There are two co-ordinators but they have not yet been given the time or opportunity to manage its development. They are enthusiastic teachers who realise and understand that work needs to be done on several aspects of the subject. There is a need to adopt a scheme of work that ensures the work builds appropriately on what has gone before. The co-ordinators are examining national schemes but at the moment no formal decision has been taken by the school as to exactly which to use. The aspects of designing, making and evaluation are being carried out but not always with the consistency that is necessary for skills to be developed continually from year to year. From a scrutiny of displays in classrooms it is apparent that the quality of work produced is satisfactory but could be improved if teachers' knowledge and expectations were higher. Co-ordinators monitor planning but do not have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment procedures or the compilation of a portfolio of work are yet to be developed.

GEOGRAPHY

114. At the time of the last inspection a number of problems were identified in the teaching and learning of geography, primarily in the juniors. These were primarily the variations in pupils' attainment, even in parallel classes in the same year group, work not being matched to the abilities of pupils and variations in teachers' planning and unsatisfactory management and co-ordination of the subject. Only the last of these issues has been satisfactorily resolved. Two knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinators have recently been appointed and they are keen to raise the profile of geography within the school. However, they have had little opportunity as yet to ensure that geographical skills and knowledge are developed systematically throughout the school.
115. Although teachers' planning indicates that geography is taught in most classes this term, only two lessons were timetabled during the period of the inspection, both in Year 6. The work scrutiny also indicated that basic map skills are being taught in Year 4. As indicated in the previous inspection report, pupils make satisfactory progress in the infants but progress thereafter is more erratic. In Year 1 the travels of Barnaby Bear form the basis of work introducing pupils to different parts of the world. However, little of this work is recorded. In the juniors, different schemes of work are being followed and, in Year 6, the delivered curriculum is different in parallel classes. Although planning is monitored, there are no opportunities for co-ordinators to check that what is planned is actually taught.
116. Very little work is recorded and the quality of pupils' learning is often unsatisfactory. Tasks planned to develop pupils' knowledge are mundane and unnecessarily time consuming, particularly given geography's minimal time allocation. Day visits within the locality help to develop pupils' practical geographical skills but they are not given enough opportunities to undertake independent research projects. Work is planned for whole classes without sufficient account being taken of pupils' prior learning or the needs of differing ability groups within the class. Many pupils in the juniors are still not receiving a relevant and worthwhile experience in geography.

HISTORY

117. Due to timetable arrangements during the week of the inspection no lessons were seen in the infants. A scrutiny of teachers' planning and the work of pupils indicates that standards are in line with those expected for their age and that they make satisfactory progress. Standards by the age of 11 are also as expected for the age of pupils. However, there is evidence that with a little more emphasis on the written recording of work and the use of historical artefacts to aid research, enquiry and make deductions, standards could quickly be raised further. The coverage of historical topics, particularly in the juniors, is wide ranging.
118. By the age of seven, pupils are aware of people from the past in their own family, for example grandparents, and sequence events to develop a sense of chronology. This enables them to sequence different forms of transport from the use of a horse and cart to the present day. The history of light is studied in work linked to science and pupils know about the use of candles, gas lamps and electricity. They begin to learn about homes, schools, toys, transport and clothes during the Victorian era. They know about famous people from the past such as Guy Fawkes, Louis Braille and Florence Nightingale. In work linked to art they study Armistice Day and paint and make poppies and develop a basic understanding of the Gunpowder Plot. Recent, topical work included a brief study of the ancient and modern Olympic Games.

119. By the age of 11, pupils study the Romans and visit a local historic site. They know about Queen Boudicca and the Iceni tribe. They know where Vikings came from and study their armour, homes, gods and ships. Year 5 pupils continue the study of the Victorians by examining the lives of, for example, a portrait painter, mill worker, and farmer's boy. They apply their knowledge to write letters explaining what life was like. In links with mathematics, Year 6 pupils learn about the Ancient Egyptians mathematical system and how mathematics was used in the building of pyramids. In both key stages good use is made of visits locally. Visitors to school include a group of 'Vikings' who give the pupils direct experience of clothes, customs and their way of life. These opportunities give the pupils the opportunity to examine artefacts and bring history to life. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop sound historical research skills. Good links are made with subjects such as art, design and technology, science and mathematics and the use of information and communication technology is developing soundly. There is a lot of good discussion in classes and this has a positive impact on the development of speaking and listening skills. However, there is a weakness in the recording and presentation of work. In some classes, particularly in the infants and early years in the juniors there is an over reliance on worksheets. There is also a marked lack of opportunity for pupils to develop their extended writing skills in history or encouragement for them to present their work in a way that enables them to take pride in the finished product.
120. The quality of teaching is good in the juniors. Teachers link history well with other subjects, except extended writing, and promote very well the discussion of historical topics. They use questioning well both to encourage speaking and listening skills and to assess the understanding of the pupils. Class routines are normally well established and the relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that there are very rarely any discipline problems. Teachers show an interest and sense of enjoyment in the subject and as a result enthuse the pupils. This ensures that the pupils enjoy lessons and develop good attitudes. They always want to take an active part in lessons and willingly answer questions. There is a weakness in the marking of pupils' work. Scrutiny of previous work indicated that marking was either very brief or non-existent and rarely gave pupils any indication of how they might improve in the future.
121. The management of the subject is satisfactory though there are areas in which it might be improved. A scheme of work has been adopted and this gives suitable support and guidance to teachers. Good use is made of library project packs of books and of artefacts borrowed from a museum. The long term planning of teachers is checked by the co-ordinators. The co-ordinators are aware of the need to develop a portfolio of work and assessment procedures, and would benefit from training in their management roles.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. This was in Year 5. At other times computers were used in other subjects but no specific teaching of skills was observed. From the available evidence, including discussions with pupils and scrutiny of displays, it is possible to say that standards are broadly in line with those expected by the time pupils are 11. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection and is largely due to the much improved resources and teachers' expertise.
123. In one literacy lesson in Year 2 three pairs of pupils used a computer spelling program to consolidate and revise their learning about common three letter words. They worked well together and used the mouse and keyboard confidently to respond to the program's instructions appropriately. They could open the program and move within it from one level to another with little difficulty. By the end of the infants pupils are able to word process and to merge text with

graphics. A worksheet indicates that there has been some discussion about the role of information and communication technology in the outside world, through the medium of videos, teletext and motorway warning lights.

124. In Year 5, pupils are able to use the Internet to research a variety of questions. They are able to locate and scroll down pages and improve their understanding of the need to frame questions carefully to follow up their original query. Also in Year 5, pupils use computers in science to record and graph the results of fitness and health checks. They recorded pulse rates at the start and end of exercise, which was then turned into a bar chart for each pupil. In addition, a lot of the work was recorded on a digital camera, but this was carried out by staff. During the inspection, the result of a mathematics investigation on fitting quadriminoes was plotted on the computer making good use of colour for the different shapes. By Year 6 pupils can create sale posters or price lists by using a publishing package and merging text and graphics effectively. They use a good variety of fonts, changing sizes and colours for greater effect. Discussion with pupils shows that they are very confident in using the Internet and can download pictures and text easily. They have used CDROM for researching the Aztecs and have also made use of computer encyclopaedia and atlases. In the infants they have experience of controlling a floor robot. Throughout the school a variety of computer art packages are now used well to extend pupils' experiences.
125. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They are enthusiastic and keen to use the computers. They work well together, as was observed in Year 2, and the work helps develop their social and collaborative skills. They behave sensibly when using computers and show respect for the equipment.
126. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. However, there is clearly a need for further training for most staff and the school has recognised this and there are plans for this to happen shortly. The more consistently regular use of the new networks and suites will be of benefit to staff and pupils. Teachers use a variety of software at present, including word processing, art packages, spreadsheets and for research purposes. In addition, the good teaching in Year 5 is improving pupils' confidence and skills in the use of the Internet for research purposes. Teachers do not provide enough non-computer based work for pupils to experience and to ensure the curriculum includes enough emphasis on the use of ICT in the wider society.
127. Since the last inspection there has been a great improvement in the resources and the facilities. The use of the computer suite which is part of an adult education centre on the school site is of great benefit, as is the use made on a largely voluntary basis of the expertise of the staff. This facility is also used by school staff for delivering a variety of adult and school courses, and is clearly having a beneficial effect on pupils' progress and staff expertise. In addition, two further computer suites or networks have been set up in the school, in addition to machines in each classroom. These very good facilities are not yet fully used, partly due to their recent installation but also due to the need for further staff training. The school has planned this and is due to receive further funding for training shortly. The staff make good use of the coordinators' expertise, but due to a lack of time to support all teachers the provision is still patchy throughout the school. The school is now using a nationally accepted scheme of work that enables teachers' planning to build appropriately on what has gone before. Standards are clearly rising and the further improvements planned for the subject should enable this to continue.

MUSIC

128. Only one lesson in the infants was observed during the inspection, and three in the juniors. Additional evidence was gathered from discussions with staff and pupils and the scrutiny of

teachers' lesson plans. The school uses radio programmes to support the music curriculum but the more confident members of staff use their musical skills to help others when necessary. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected across both key stages, with good results observed in Year 4, and good examples of singing in assemblies. Pupils make satisfactory, and occasionally good, progress. Pupils learning to play the violin make good progress.

129. In the infants pupils are able to sing in tune with correct timing, are aware of pitch and tone and can use their voices expressively. They can alter the volume of their voices appropriately. Pupils show a good sense of rhythm. They know the difference between verse and chorus. Pupils have experience in listening to a range of musical styles and concentrate well to the end of a recording. During the inspection pupils in Year 1 were able to describe their feelings when listening to 'Mars' from the 'Planets Suite'. Their expressions showed they were awed by the power of the music.
130. By the age of 11, pupils have learnt a range of musical techniques. They can play percussion instruments – tuned and untuned – with control and understanding and can sing from a wide repertoire of songs in different styles, such as musical hall and songs from World War 2. A good example in the use of voice and percussion to illustrate the Viking invasion was seen in Year 4, with the class showing a strong sense of musicality and understanding of group performance. Junior pupils are able to read and write graphic notation. Pupils in Year 5 have knowledge of guitar playing, with understanding of raising and lowering notes.
131. Pupils are interested in music and enjoy performing. They generally work hard to create good effects and behave well. Relationships with staff and with each other are good. Pupils acknowledge the efforts of others in performance and are willing to offer appraisal. They take care of the instruments.
132. The quality of teaching in the limited number of lessons observed was good overall. Teachers with musical skills teach confidently. They have good knowledge and understanding, are able to teach basic skills successfully and make good use of time and resources. They use ongoing assessment well and are careful to praise effort as well as result. Planning in some cases is sparse, though lessons are delivered appropriately. Little evidence was seen during the inspection to develop knowledge of famous composers and this is an area in need of improvement. There are, however, good links with other subjects, such as history, as witnessed in the juniors, with an interpretation in music of the Viking Invasions. In a religious education lesson in the infants suitable music was used during learning about the Hindu festival of Light. Other instances observed were an interpretation of a story in sound, such as a rainstorm and sounds for day and night time, connecting with science. Movement and dance lessons include a variety of music, with the understanding of terms such as the number of beats counted during country dancing. Lessons contain good inclusion of speech and language work. Planning emphasises a balance between listening, appraising, composing and performing. Music computer programs are being introduced to the lower juniors.
133. Improvements have been made in music since the last inspection, and standards have risen, though some areas of development still need to be addressed. The music policy remains brief and this is due to be re-written shortly. The school is considering investment in a well-tryed published scheme of work to back up teaching and learning. Workshops for pupils are intended, as well as training for staff, such as a forthcoming course on composition. The subject co-ordinators are supported well by the deputy headteacher. Together they are forming more comprehensive plans for the future of music in the school. All recognise the importance of developing musical skills, with a particular regard for their work in the education of pupils with special educational needs.

Regular on-going assessment takes place in music. Pupils are monitored informally through performance, though there are no set procedures for evaluating attainment and progress as yet.

134. Resources have improved since the last inspection, with repairs made and instruments updated. A varied collection of recorded music is available. The school is developing some interesting musical experience for pupils, such as visits by rock musicians and a harpist. Value is placed on performance and pupils throughout the school become used to singing and playing in front of an audience. Activities regularly include musical productions for parents and participation each year in summer and Christmas concerts with the Carlisle School Music Association. Older pupils sing carols for the elderly. Pupils learning to play the violin are given a chance to demonstrate their skills in assembly and there is a regular recorder club.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Lessons in games, dance, gymnastics and swimming were observed during the week. Standards in games, dance and gymnastics are average at both key stages. There is no significant difference between boys and girls. The school has broadened its range of equipment, which was criticised at the previous inspection. This has led to teachers undertaking training in its use and teaching of skills, which has helped to maintain interest and improve the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in the juniors.

136. The infant pupils show enjoyment in their lessons, for example through controlled walking and running in different directions, making use of the space available, and when responding to music, taking the role of horses and mice. When changing direction they show awareness of others around them. Large apparatus is used to practise and perform ways of balancing with increasing control and safe landing. Overall the teaching is good. Teachers are aware of individual capabilities and match expectations accordingly. Seven year olds are aware of and can describe the effect of exercise on their body. They are able to work independently and to shadow movements with a partner. They demonstrate good co-ordination and are beginning to link movements together. However, when using apparatus in the hall pupils spend too much time being inactive waiting for their turn resulting in a slowing of the pace of the lesson. Where good teaching exists, pupils' achievements within the lesson show that good progress is made. Insufficient time is given by the teachers for pupils to reflect and refine their own and others' movements in gymnastics and dance, resulting in pupils being hindered from making greater improvement in their performance.

137. The junior pupils are confident in demonstrating skilful movement. They follow instructions to develop a sequence, for example, in performing a dance, which explores the colour of moods. By Year 6 pupils achieve well in games because they are taught skills and appropriate techniques for competitive team games, as was apparent in activities that involve passing, marking and receiving the ball. All the pupils are aware of health and safety in physical education, and concentrate very well throughout the lesson.

138. During the year pupils in Years 4 and 5 take part in swimming lessons at the local pool. The time taken in walking to the pool is effectively used to illustrate the effect of exercise on their bodies, through discussion of pulse rates and walking at different speeds. Standards are above average. They respond very well to the excellent teaching, which gives them confidence and safety in water. By the time they leave school almost all pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres and many do much more, gaining distance awards and personal survival certificates.

139. The school is active in competitive sport against local schools, with the support of parents.

Pupils have the opportunity to participate in after school activities in the juniors, such as football, badminton, netball and cricket. Since the last report the subject co-ordinators have worked with staff to give greater subject knowledge. The policy has been reviewed but is not consistently adhered to, particularly where safety is paramount, through inappropriate dress and the wearing of jewellery. A detailed scheme of work has been implemented which provides a planned progression of skills throughout the school, however, where teachers' planning does not take account of the need for evaluation, progress is less apparent. The coordinators monitor planning to ensure coverage of the curriculum but they do not monitor lessons to ensure sufficient time is given for active exercise or that teachers have high expectations of standards of pupils' work.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. The previous inspection report indicated that standards in religious education were below average and that statutory requirements were not met in following the Local Education Authority's Agreed Syllabus. Evidence from this inspection indicates that the Agreed Syllabus is now being followed and that standards are now in line with the requirements of the syllabus at ages seven and 11. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection report and is a result of the efforts made by the school to address the Key Issue of the previous report.
141. The curriculum follows a well-defined programme of study in which the pupils have regular opportunities to learn about the major festivals and key elements of the Christian faith. They also learn about other major faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. Corporate acts of worship meet statutory requirements and satisfactory links are made with class lessons. Presentations are sometimes given during class assemblies to illustrate a theme or explain a celebration. There are sound links with other areas of the curriculum such as art, design and technology. Speaking and listening skills are also encouraged but there is a weakness in the inclusion of extended writing skills.
142. Younger pupils in the infants begin to explore their own experiences of beliefs and values. They talk about themselves and their families and groups to which they belong. In circle time, they discuss and record their feelings of happiness or sadness and the ways in which they value each other, for example, of care, kindness and respect. The school's Code of Conduct is discussed and reviewed in most classes and each class is involved in discussing their own rules. In a lesson on Guy Fawkes the feelings of the Catholics and Protestants are discussed. These activities support the literacy skills of speaking and listening. By the end of Year 2, pupils visit and study their local church and Carlisle Cathedral and have linked this with work in art, design and technology. They become aware of the Christian symbols such as the cross and candle and that the Bible is used during worship. They have also studied the Hindu festival of Divali and compared this with Christian links to light and dark and good and evil. Pupils have an appropriate knowledge of Biblical stories and the major Christian Festivals.
143. By the age of 11, pupils develop a greater awareness of other religions. They continue to learn about Hinduism and also include Judaism in their studies. Year 6 pupils learn about the Jewish festivals of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Hannukah. They know that the Torah is the Jewish Bible and they learn about the Jewish Temple, the Arc of the Covenant and the Jewish Sabbath. Their awareness is raised about the similarities and differences between the Jewish and Christian faiths. Year 4 pupils visit a Hindu temple. Pupils continue to learn about Church symbols, in particular the different types of crosses such as the Maltese, Celtic Orthodox and Latin. They are aware of the baptism ceremony. Pupils know about the olive branch and the dove, and are asked to identify signs and symbols in their own lives. Important people in Christianity such as St Paul, Zacchaeus, Moses and Mother Theresa are studied and pupils become familiar with the Ten Commandments, and stories such as the Good Samaritan and the

Prodigal Son. Daily assemblies add to the pupils' knowledge through the Parable of the Talents and themes such as caring, sharing and kindness. Acts of worship always include a suitable hymn, prayer and a little time for reflection.

144. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and, in one lesson in Year 6, it was good. This reflects the pupils' learning, which is sound throughout the school. In many classes, however, pupils' learning is not so obvious in written work as it is in discussion. The best learning occurs when lessons are well planned, sustain good pace and keep the pupils meaningfully involved. Such a lesson was seen in Year 6, when astute questioning and good pace enabled the pupils to begin to develop an awareness of the similarities and differences between Jewish and Christian life. Both in assemblies and lessons, teachers use specialist vocabulary and are successful in enabling pupils to develop a respect for those who worship in different ways. Teachers show concern for pupils' understanding and offer careful explanations, which moves learning on. Where learning is slowest there is too much teacher exposition and too little pupil involvement. This happens on occasions both in assemblies and class lessons when pupils are not able to take an active part but have to sit and listen. This is due to lengthy introductions and sometimes, inappropriate match of content to the age and ability of the pupils.

145. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and with the staff have worked hard to make improvements since the previous inspection. The Agreed Syllabus is now providing good support and advice to the teachers in the planning of lessons. Good use is made of visits both in the locality and further afield. Resources within the school are not plentiful but these are supported with loans from the local education authority. The use of extended writing in religious education is not promoted enough and ICT is not used sufficiently. The co-ordinators are aware of the need to develop assessment procedures, a portfolio of work and to promote higher standards of presentation of recorded work, especially in the juniors.