

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CASTERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Burnley, Lancashire

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119219

Headteacher: Mrs. Judith Williams

Reporting inspector: Mr David Carrington  
15414

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 225232

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Thames Avenue Burnley Lancashire
Postcode:	BB10 2PZ
Telephone number:	01282 435657
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neil Beecham
Date of previous inspection:	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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David Carrington 15414	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Religious education	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Christine Field 9479	Lay inspector		Quality and range of opportunities for learning
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
			Leadership and management
Peter Clark 20326	Team inspector	Science	
		Geography	
		History	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		Special educational needs	
Edgar Hastings 30144	Team inspector	English	
		Physical education	
		English as an additional language	
Peter Sandall 25771	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Art and design	
		Design and technology	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Casterton Primary School is bigger than most primary schools and has 134 boys and 147 girls aged four to eleven years. The school is situated close to Burnley Hospital, on the east side of the town and most pupils come from the local area. Most pupils are from white British homes, though an above average proportion speaks English as an additional language. There are many more pupils with statements than is usually found in schools of this size, although the proportion with special educational needs is below average overall. An above average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. The attainment of children when they start school is below average.

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

Casterton Primary School is much improved since its previous inspection in 1998 and is now a very effective school. The headteacher has a keen sense of determination, she gives excellent leadership to the school and has introduced many changes to the way things are done. She has boosted staff morale and drawn them well into the management of the school. Governors too have been given a better role in deciding policy and procedures. The key priority recently has been to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This is being achieved very well and is already showing through in terms of good progress and improved standards. Pupils make good progress in their learning and standards are satisfactory overall by the age of eleven. There are still a number of things to do, that are now included in a very well focused and thorough development plan, in order to complete the work of improving the school but everyone is committed to the pupils, and they put their best interests first. The school gives good value for money and no longer has serious weaknesses of leadership.

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

- Standards are improving at a good rate and are above average in science and religious education by the end of school and in mathematics by the age of seven.
- The leadership of the headteacher is first class and other staff join with her in the very good management of the school.
- Teaching is good, and this ensures that pupils learn well and can take advantage of their education.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, they behave very well and relationships are excellent.
- The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs get a very good deal from the school and they make very good progress.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of school, although improved, are not yet as good as in some other subjects.
- Attendance levels are below the national average.
- Pupils could be given even more chances to steer their own learning.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made very good progress with the improvements to the key issues reported in February 1998 and the interim visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors in later in 1998. It no longer has serious weaknesses in leadership. The new headteacher has turned the school around and it faces a bright future. There are still one or two things to do to slot all the improvements required by the last inspection into place. There is very good determination to complete the task at speed and the school's capacity to make continuous improvement is very good.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	D	C
mathematics	E	D	C	A
science	C	C	B	A

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

Over the last five years, standards have improved at a similar rate to that found nationally. In 2000, Year 6 pupils attained standards that were below the average of all schools in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. When these results are set against those in schools that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils at Casterton Primary school achieved average levels in English and well above average results in mathematics and science. Results also improved at the end of Year 2, to be average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics.

Inspectors judge that pupils are on course to meet the targets set for them when they take the 2001 standard assessment tasks (SATs). Attainment this year is at the expected level in all subjects and is above average in science and religious education through the school and in mathematics by the age of seven. Standards in science, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and geography have all improved well since the last inspection. Inspectors saw no differences in the achievement of boys and girls during the inspection.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like coming to school and they try hard. This means that lessons are purposeful and productive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school is an orderly place of work and play and the visitor to school is greeted politely by all pupils. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with adults and other pupils. Some pupils would gain by having even more responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The rate of attendance is below the national average. The progress of pupils who are absent frequently is not as good as that of regular attenders.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	very 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.*

Pupils make good strides with their learning because they are taught by committed and successful teachers and are well supported by the non-teaching staff. Pupils work hard in lessons, concentrate well and make good progress. They work independently when required, though they could be given more opportunities to make their own choices of equipment, methods and ways to record their work.

School managers have invested much time and effort to improve teaching and learning and today teaching is good overall. Of the 62 lessons observed by inspectors, all were of satisfactory or better teaching quality, with no unsatisfactory teaching. Over eighty percent of all lessons were of good or better teaching quality, including much that was very good or excellent. Basic skills of English and mathematics are taught well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in their work and those who speak English as an additional language have good teaching.

There are two aspects of teaching that would benefit from enhancement:

- The statement in planning of what knowledge, skills and understanding will be learned in lessons is not always precise enough.
- Marking of work is not always focused enough to show pupils how they can improve their work.

Despite these things, teaching at Casterton Primary School has far more strengths than shortcomings and the pupils are put first.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is rich very well planned to ensure that knowledge, skills and understanding are developed in a sensible and systematic sequence. The literacy and numeracy hours are having a very good effect on the progress pupils make in learning basic facts and skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and this ensures that they make very good progress. Their individual work programmes are very well constructed and are used very effectively to provide the essential experiences necessary for success. Early assessment is made to ensure timely support is given.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. All staff ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language are given good opportunities to increase their language skills and these pupils keep up well with the others in their class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils learn much of the special qualities of life and so their spiritual development is strong. They also know right from wrong, behave very well towards each other and work constructively with other pupils. They know about the poetry, drama, music, dance and art of this country, but are not given as many opportunities to discover about the richness of other cultures. Visitors to school are struck immediately by the warmth, friendliness and purposefulness of learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils are central to the life and work of the school and are very well taken care of. The monitoring of absence levels could be sharper but assessment is a strength of the school.
Links with parents	Good. Parents play an effective part in the education of their children and are welcomed into school and given very good information about the work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There are no longer serious weaknesses of leadership and management. The headteacher is an excellent leader who motivates other staff to very good things. She is very ably supported by the senior management team. The overall quality of management is very good and the school has improved very well because of this.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors support the school well and have good knowledge of its strengths and aspects for development. They ensure that the school meets its legal obligations.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and key managers have very good insights into standards and the quality of education because ways to check the effectiveness of these things are excellent. Managers set rigorous targets for improvement that all staff work hard to achieve. There is excellent shared commitment to boost standards. The school applies the principles of best value well.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Money and other resources are used very well to make sure that pupils are given a very effective education and that they progress well. The school gives good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• Their children like coming to school.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and is easy to approach if parents have concerns.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and this enables their children to make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and children become mature and responsible learners.</li> <li>• Staff have good expectations of their children.</li> <li>• Parents get good information about the work and amounts of homework are suitable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing</li> </ul>

Inspectors have no hesitation in agreeing with these positive views of parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The productive working atmosphere and the sense of purpose in school immediately impresses the visitor. This is due to the determination shown by staff and pupils alike to do the best that they can. The impact of this shared enjoyment and interest in learning is to be seen in the good progress made by pupils and the improving standards in school since the time of the previous inspection.

2. When children start school they have a lower level of skill and knowledge than is usually found. Management has radically improved the quality of teaching and learning in reception and the youngest children in school now have much improved chances to do well. They settle quickly to the demands of school, they are inquisitive and alert and they respond very well to the wide range of learning experiences provided for them. Their work is very well planned and their days are packed with stimulating and exciting opportunities, such as the hatching of chicks, that encourage them to explore, investigate and discover more about language, number and the world around them. The children in the foundation stage make good progress as they take the stepping stones to the expected level of basic skills and knowledge.

3. These advances are maintained in infant classes. In some ways, the quality of learning and teaching is best for pupils between the age of five and seven. The highest proportion of very good teaching and learning was observed in the Year 1 and 2 classes and this clearly impacts on progress. Pupils build knowledge and skills at a good rate and their attainment is consolidated and extended. By the age of seven, standards are at least at the expected level in all subjects and there are strengths in some. In the 2000 Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs), Year 2 pupils matched the national average in reading, they achieved good standards in writing and very good ones in mathematics.

4. Pupils continue to make good progress in junior classes because teaching and learning are good. By the age of eleven, pupils attain good standards in religious education and in some aspects of information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics and science. Standards are at the expected level for this age group in all the other subjects. The 2000 SATs results for Year 6 showed a mixed picture, however. Standards were good in science and at the expected level in mathematics, but they were not as strong, and below the national average overall, in English. This year's equivalent class have had longer to benefit from the improved teaching, better curriculum (especially in literacy) and redoubled sense of educational direction in school, and standards are climbing because expectation levels are good. However, the current Year 6 started from a lower base level and are still likely to score below average test results in English. They have made good progress in their studies and will achieve good results given their starting point.

5. A mark of the school's overall effectiveness is to be seen when these SATs results are set against those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals<sup>1</sup>. In this case, both seven and eleven year old pupils did well, or very well, in mathematics and science and held their own in English. Weaknesses in speaking skills and in writing are the chief factors in the generally lower level of English attainment than in mathematics and science.

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<sup>1</sup> This is between 20% and 35% in school, and as such, is above the proportion usually found.

6. There is some evidence to show that boys and girls attain at different levels in the annual SATs. This varies a little from year to year but school managers are alert to the patterns and make careful checks to show that both genders are achieving what they can. Inspectors judge that boys and girls work as hard as each other in lessons and that they make similar progress.

7. Pupils of different ability levels do equally well in terms of the progress made. Those with special educational needs receive very good provision and most make very good progress in developing their literacy skills which are the main focus of their individual education plans. Individual education plans are clear, concise and written in a style that is easy to follow against concise measurable targets. Many pupils with special needs do very well indeed.

8. Higher attaining pupils are generally set work that taxes their knowledge, skills and understanding. These pupils thrive on the challenges set and the range of activities provided fosters their intellectual development. They are not just given more of the same to learn, but they are expected to investigate, experiment and explore facts and situations, and to talk about the patterns, relationships and links that they see. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in the SATs is increasing and the school makes good arrangements to support gifted and talented pupils, including the acceleration of their learning, so that they too, shine.

9. A sizeable proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language, and in many cases these pupils start school with little English. The school does a good job to move them on in their mastery of spoken and written language. By the age of eleven, they have similar command of language and literacy, and achieve well when their starting point is considered.

10. The school has set finely tuned targets for attainment and pupils have risen to the challenge and done well. The rate of improvement in standards matches that found nationally, but management is resolved to do even better and the prospects for further improvement to standards looks good. A sense of this potential can be gained from close scrutiny of standards in all eleven subjects studied in school. All staff have worked hard to boost standards across the board, and it is clear from the sections later in this report that itemise how well pupils are doing in the foundation subjects, that they have been successful.

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

11. The attention of the visitor to school is also taken from the moment of entering school by the calm, orderly, yet lively nature of learning. Pupils talk amiably to each other and to adults, their enthusiasm is infectious and there is something of interest to show and share in classrooms, the entrance foyer and the library. Since the previous inspection, the school has focused much on the personal development of pupils and its successes show in their interest and involvement. Pupils are active learners and take a full role in lessons. Compared to the situation reported at the previous inspection, there are now effective procedures in place to give pupils responsibility and independence and to draw them well into their own learning.

12. All staff work hard to ensure that pupils are interested in their work and other activities in school. Lessons are motivating and they hold pupils' attention well. Special educational needs pupils and those who speak English as an additional language also display very good, positive attitudes towards school. Teachers and classroom assistants support them very well and there is clearly a sensitivity to their individual needs. Pupils say that they like coming to school and that they do not like it when they are ill and have to stay in bed because they miss the many and varied activities in school. This sense of commitment is shown in the way that even ordinary events enthuse pupils and the way that they cluster around displays, demonstrations and discussions. The staff enjoy being with the pupils and the pupils want to be with the staff. Thus, the things are in place that promote good learning and improving standards.

13. Parents agree that the attitudes and values promoted in school are good and what they themselves wish for their children. The school aims focus well on the development of pupils as good people, the achievement of good standards and the creation of a good learning environment. School rules are sensible and the pupils have clearly accepted and follow them. Behaviour is therefore, very good. This is the case in lessons, at break and lunch time, in school and in the playground. There is some good-natured boisterous behaviour outside, but the development of the adventure playground has been very successful in channelling energy into productive play. Pupils and parents speak well of the school's measures to tackle bullying and both have confidence that the school will do the right thing if bullying takes place. A further measure of the very good behaviour is to be found in the fact that no pupils have been excluded in recent years and that the school's structure of rewards and sanctions works very well in promoting good behaviour, rather than penalising bad habits.

14. The playground is a place where the very good relationships between pupils stand out. Pupils play together very well and they share things and support each other willingly. This extends inside the school. Pupils collect together in mixed-age groups, chatting about things that matter to them, poring over books or exchanging thoughts and ideas. This sense of collaboration is to be seen in lessons as well. The calibre of relationships between pupils and the staff, and with other pupils, is a major contributor to the quality of learning and the good progress made.

15. In general, the personal development of pupils is promoted very effectively. There are one or two instances where too much is done for the pupils – teachers sometimes make the choice of methods, resources and ways to record the work, rather than allowing the pupils to select their own preferences. However, pupils develop good levels of independence, responsibility and self-reliance and they know how to find information, research topics and study quietly on their own or in small groups.

16. Attendance for special educational needs pupils is no different than that for other pupils. The overall level of attendance is below that found nationally, and although it has improved recently, the amount of absence is unsatisfactory. There are a number of pupils who have too time off school and this clearly affects the progress that they make. When they return to school, these pupils have much lost ground to make up. Most pupils, however, are punctual to school and are ready to take a full part in the activities provided.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Casterton Primary School is clearly a place where learning comes first. Everyone is committed to hard work and success. Pupils work hard, enjoy what they are learning and make good progress. Teachers plan and provide good opportunities for pupils to make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Other staff lend good support in classes, the office, kitchens and around the building to make sure that the school is a settled, well-ordered place where pupils can benefit from well managed and well organised lessons.

18. The pupils rise well to the many challenges provided by teachers. Over their time in school they develop much self-discipline and self-reliance. It is very evident that by the end of school, pupils are mature and responsible learners who can be trusted to work independently. In one or two lessons, teachers control the choice of methods, resources or ways to set out the work too much and in a few others time is not used as effectively as possible. Nonetheless, the personal development of pupils is broadened very effectively in lessons. This process is enhanced by the very good quality of relationships in lessons. Pupils work purposefully together, they support each other's learning well and they value what others do for them. There is great pleasure in learning; pupils want to share their successes, encourage others to do well and they are pleased when good work is achieved.

19. The good expectation of teachers impacts successfully in other ways. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are challenged to do well. So, high attainers are set work to tax them and they meet this expectation effectively. There are many opportunities for pupils to solve problems, investigate and experiment, research and take part in quiet, reflective study. The high attainers thrive on this level of support and encouragement and their thinking skills develop well. Although the school has no additional funding or staffing to support pupils who speak English as an additional language, teachers and support staff ensure that such pupils are not disadvantaged and they draw them completely into the learning. These pupils build knowledge and skills in spoken and written English that rival those of the other pupils.

20. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good in class and in sessions where they are withdrawn for individual support. In English and mathematics, teachers meet the needs of such pupils very well, providing appropriate activities and very good classroom support. Classroom assistants and support provided by the local education authority play an important role in ensuring pupils with special educational needs benefit from activities and make very good progress against prior learning levels. On occasion, in some lessons in other subjects, for example geography, pupils with special educational needs complete the same work as others when an easier task would promote better learning. Work in these lessons is planned without direct reference to targets set in individual education plans and this affects progress.

21. Pupils are given some helpful information to help them become better learners. Teachers share the target for lessons with the pupils and some ensure that these are reviewed at the end of the session to help pupils assess their successes and remaining areas for improvement. Because the identification in planning of such learning objectives is not always as precise as it could be, some of the targets are too wide-ranging and it is then difficult for the pupils to determine how well they have done. Similarly, marking does not always indicate how pupils can improve their work in the future, though it is good at identifying how hard they have worked and what they *have* achieved. Enhancement of these elements of teaching will bring advantages to pupils in the form of even more focused learning, celebration of success and determination to do even better.

22. The strengths of learning and the ways in which good teaching promotes good progress can be seen in an excellent Year 2 geography lesson on the area around the school

that was visited, separately, by two inspectors. They agreed that the teacher was most successful in drawing all pupils into the learning. The teacher asked the pupils *why have a lollipop lady on a crossing?* They responded immediately, and with confidence, about the routes they took to school, the amount of traffic on the main road and the need for safety. Following this, the pupils took turns to write their suggested sites on the whiteboard and the teacher organised a vote to choose which place would be best. In doing this, pupils used basic numeracy very well to sort the data and thought very hard about the opinion of local residents as well as those walking and driving to school. At the end of the afternoon, the pupils had very clear ideas of how people can change the environment, and they themselves recognised this in reviewing their target for learning at the end of the lesson.

23. Teaching and learning are strengths of the school. The good quality of the first very much affects the effectiveness of the second. Inspectors visited 62 lessons during the four days of the inspection and these tight links between teaching and learning were seen in every one. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen and over eighty percent of the lessons judged were recorded to show good teaching and good learning. In over a quarter, the corresponding judgements were *very good*. These judgements were confirmed by the scrutiny of work completed before the inspection, including from the last school year, talking to pupils and the careful examination of planning and curriculum-related documents. All the evidence seen pointed to good learning and progress. Clearly, these things stem from good teaching.

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

24. The curriculum opportunities provided for pupils throughout the school are very good overall. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when there were significant shortcomings in the curriculum provided. For example, the provision for imaginative and outdoor play elements of the early years curriculum were unsatisfactory due to resource limitations. Policies and schemes were in place though some for example, design and technology, did not identify skills progression. Today, the curriculum satisfies all the statutory requirements and provides a very good programme of personal, social and health education that takes account of drugs awareness and sex education appropriately. The school is well on track with implementing *Curriculum 2000* and has targeted this for yet more attention in the development plan. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches the opportunities available for pupils. Parents are supportive of the school's policy on homework which is viewed as fair and equitable and is working successfully. The quality and range of the curriculum is very evident to the visitor to school because of the excellent attention given to reflecting it fully in the stimulating displays around the school.

25. The curriculum is broad and has been very carefully planned so that it is highly relevant for the pupils in the school. As well as ensuring that the literacy hour is effectively implemented, time has been retained for a number of the traditional skills of English, such as spelling and handwriting. The school has also given numeracy a high priority. Information and communication technology skills are being given appropriate attention, though the comparative low level of resources means that pupils do not always develop skills and knowledge quickly enough. Curriculum time is generally used well and this ensures that the balance between subjects is appropriate. However, one or two lessons start late or finish early and this reduces the potential for learning. The school itself has highlighted problem

solving and thinking skills as two areas to be developed as part of their strategy for continuous development of the curriculum.

26. Marking flagged up for improvement at the time of the previous inspection has been monitored by senior managers. The policy agreed by staff encourages them to praise effort and identify what an individual should do next to improve. Teachers tend to do both of these things when marking English work but practice is not as consistent in other subjects.

27. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Planning for these young children already incorporates the Early Learning Goals for children in the foundation stage. Lesson planning is detailed and the children have access to a wide range of suitable activities and learning experiences which prepare them very well for studying the subjects of the National Curriculum when they are ready.

28. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. Clear procedures are in place for the identification and assessment of these pupils. The information gained is used to particularly good effect in providing work for pupils in withdrawal groups. Individual education plans of good quality are provided for all pupils for whom these are appropriate. They are reviewed regularly and parents are kept informed of, and fully involved with these reviews. The pupils with statements of special educational need are provided with highly effective support, in line with the requirements of their statements. They have full access to all the subjects taught in the school.

29. The good range of extra-curricular activities, including provision for visits and visitors, makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, and includes very good links with the community. During the last year some of the visitors have included local clergy, a children's author, artists working with textiles, Asian theatre group, local colleges representatives, science road show, Ranger service and Burnley Football club. Members of staff and some parents give generously of their time providing after-school activities that include seasonal sports, chess, and a variety of musical opportunities including a choir. Systems to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to take part are fully in place.

30. A particular strength of the curriculum is the way in which the all-round education of pupils is fostered. During their time in school, pupils become pleasant people who think carefully about how their thoughts, words and action affect other people. They also learn to reflect on what is special in life and they have good knowledge and understanding of the contributions made by artists, writers, musicians and other performers from their own and other societies. The school celebrates the richness of cultural diversity and values all pupils as individuals. More use could be made, however, of the pupils' own experiences in lessons concerning other cultures and religions. The school draws out the social and moral development of pupils very well, and opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are good.

31. The school has very good links with the local community and good links with a variety of schools in the neighbourhood, which make a good contribution to the pupils' development. For example, a local hotel helped set up the gym in reception, a nearby chemical company has supported the setting up of a gardening club and are sponsoring further development of planting with the children and their Head gardener. There are also productive links with the secondary schools to which pupils' transfer when they are eleven. There are wide-ranging links with the local community and further afield that have been set up to broaden pupils' horizons. For example pupils take part in fire safety quizzes with other

schools, they visit places such as Towneley Hall as part of their history studies in Year 1/2 and take part in a residential trip to Shropshire when in Year 5/6.

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

32. The school has improved this aspect of provision from a satisfactory level in 1998 to a very good level today. The ethos in school is warm and caring and places children at its centre. All adults working in the school are vigilant and safety-conscious, making sure that written procedures are followed carefully. Pupils are taught safe practice in lessons and risks are assessed before conducting new activities. For example, close attention is paid to warming up before physical education (physical education) lessons and no jewellery is allowed to be worn. Child protection procedures are well known to teachers and follow the locally agreed guidelines. There are no children in school currently on the “at risk register” but the school maintains a close watching brief on a few who could be vulnerable. Mid-day supervisors manage lunchtimes well and ensure that the level of supervision enables safe play. They take a common sense approach to child protection matters but have had no recent training on this.

33. Assessment procedures were judged to be unwieldy by inspectors in 1998, and teachers did not use the information produced enough when planning subsequent lessons. Assessment practice is much better today. There is very good analysis of data at the whole-school and class level that results in clear targets being set that are geared to raising pupils’ achievements. Assessment procedures in school are very effective overall. Opportunities for pupils to assess their own, and where appropriate others’ achievements, have yet to be exploited to the full but the school is aware of this.

34. The headteacher and staff know the pupils and their families well. Parents told inspectors how good it is that the headteacher knows every child by name. This level of care underpins the very good educational and personal support and guidance provided for pupils, which is tailored to their individual needs. There are consistently high expectations of personal conduct that is encouraged and rewarded by a variety of incentives. For example, the use of stickers and team points, which promote the development of high standards both academically and in behaviour. The promotion of good behaviour has been a focus since the last inspection, and class rules are made known to parents to enlist their support. The consistent application of the school’s behaviour policy has resulted in very high standards of behaviour, excellent enthusiasm for school and has contributed to the excellent relationships that underpin the pupils’ increasingly successful achievements. The very visual “traffic-light” system to support pupils’ understanding of the consequences of choosing not to behave appropriately works very well. The ‘Gold Book’ and ‘Special People’ display are particularly positive features in valuing the efforts and achievements of pupils.

35. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring absences, however more could be done to target improved levels of attendance. Attendance does not figure in the school’s development plan even though the level of attendance is below average. A book is kept in which lateness is usefully recorded. It is unclear how such information is gathered consistently to track what impact lateness or absence is having on some pupils’ progress.

36. The school has made very good progress in response to the key issue of the last inspection regarding the ways in which teachers assessed the needs of individual pupils and used this knowledge when planning the next steps in learning. Indeed there has also been significant improvement in adapting the curriculum in response to areas of relative weakness as identified in the tests at the end of the infants and juniors. Good examples of this include the current emphasis on extended writing in the juniors, and on investigative work in science. Teachers now have good procedures for assessing pupils’ levels of understanding and

attainment, and they identify the next targets for improvement for individuals in the areas of reading, writing and numeracy. However the use of identified learning targets is not widespread in other subject areas. Pupils are given too few opportunities to become involved in reviewing their own progress so that they are clear about what they need to do to improve. One notable exception is that pupils with special educational needs are consistently involved in their own reviews.

37. The special educational needs policy is very good. It is clear, concise and very comprehensive. All parts are fully included with very clear guidelines for each stage of the Code of Practice – identification, assessment arrangements, parental involvement and inclusive learning. The policy also indicates the use made by the school of support services. New monitoring and evaluation procedures have been put in place and engaged with special educational needs provision throughout the school. This information will positively assist the tracking of individual pupils' progress and used to improve standards of learning for all pupils.

38. Because of the very good level of care shown, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, particularly through the later part of the juniors. Those pupils with particular gifts and skills are recognised; for example one boy in Year 1 works with Year 2 pupils in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the regular review of their own progress against agreed targets.

39. Parents value the ways in which the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The programme of personal support and guidance is very effective in not only preparing pupils well for the secondary phase of their education, but also for future citizenship.

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

40. The weak communication with parents reported at the time of the previous inspection has been improved dramatically. The school works hard to involve parents in its work as it recognises the great value that a positive home-school partnership has in supporting pupils' learning. Parents are very pleased that their children are happy at school, make good progress because of good teaching, are expected to have good behaviour, get the right amount of homework and become mature and responsible. The Home-school agreement is a positive feature in building this successful partnership. School managers are alert to the fact that a small minority of parents does not give sufficient support to their children's education and has made this a priority in the development plan for 2000-2001. The school is soon to open an out of hours care club following full consultation with parents.

41. Many parents play a beneficial part in the education of their children through supporting homework and attending meet the teacher evenings for example. During the week of inspection six parents attended an extremely useful session led by a leading maths teacher who provided information about how maths is taught and helped them become more confident to help their children with mathematics homework. Some parents give freely of their time to support both teaching and learning, such as helping with reading, organising the choir and assisting with the activities in the reception class.

42. Parents are closely involved throughout the whole process of meeting the special educational needs of their children. Individual education plans are shared with parents of these pupils at regular planned interviews and all parents receive a copy of the plan requesting support. The school is aware of the need to seek parents' acknowledgement by introducing a reply slip to be signed by parents. Parents are promptly informed if their child is identified as needing to be placed on the special needs register, or if their child will need to be moved to a different stage.

43. An active Parent Teacher Association established in 1980, raises additional funding to support the school's priorities for improvement through organising social events. A number of governors are also parents or have had children in school in the past. They show good commitment to supporting the school and use their wide range of experience to help improve the quality of education for pupils.

44. Communication at school works well overall. Newsletters written by the headteacher are upbeat in style and contain news and views that are useful to parents. The prospectus is a lively publication that shows positive images of pupils at work and play and contains all that it legally should. In comparison, the governor's annual report to parents is very factual in its style and is not enlivened by illustrations that might encourage the reader to dip in. Pupils' annual written reports provide clear information about what pupils have achieved, but do not always state explicitly what the next step is for improvement in subjects other than English and mathematics. The reports sent to parents of children in the Foundation Stage are of very high quality.

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

45. Casterton Primary School is given very strong leadership by the headteacher who was appointed after the previous inspection. Other key managers play a central role in taking the school forward. Some senior staff have changed since the 1998 inspection, and they have brought their own fresh approaches and particular talents that have helped the school build for success. Serious weaknesses in leadership and management reported in 1998 have all been remedied and there are no aspects of either now causing concern. The school's development plan has been overhauled and ties priorities for improvement into the budget-process, which is now efficiently managed. The biggest success of management so far has been in the nurturing and development of teaching so that today it is significantly better than it was four years ago, and is of much higher quality than typically found in primary schools. This is resulting in more pupils being given a much better deal and standards are improving as a result. Very good attention has been focused on raising teachers' morale through supporting professional development and cultivating a "can do" culture. Support staff are now acknowledged to be equally valued members of the school team. Monitoring and evaluation is rigorously implemented, and the outcomes used very effectively to improve performance on many fronts. The school's development of the *Investor in People* initiative has paid off as demonstrated by the excellent shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed of staff, and the very effective quality of education seen today. The visitor to school quickly detects that it is a place of productivity, purposefulness and teamwork. This approach affects learning, as pupils respond to the expectation and challenge provided in very positive ways and they work well to achieve good standards.

46. The headteacher, who joined the school in 1998, has excellent management skills. She knows exactly what she wants to achieve and how the school must improve. She has raised morale, energised and enthused staff and re-kindled their self-belief. They are united in the determination to make Casterton Primary the best school in the county. She is continually making rigorous checks to ensure that standards are at best levels through a very thorough and systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation. She is complemented in this work

by the skills of the deputy headteacher who takes a lead on curriculum matters and co-ordinates the work of the juniors. The third member of the senior management team who is the infant co-ordinator also has clear insights into the work of the school and she motivates other staff very well, leading by example and setting exemplary standards in all aspects of her work.

47. From time to time co-ordinators, for example, managers of English and special educational needs are invited to join the senior management team, they have a growing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they play a good part in taking the school forward. All co-ordinators work very hard to make improvement to their subjects. In a bid to improve on things that are already done well, co-ordinators are ready to take on additional roles and responsibilities. For example, extending monitoring in colleagues' lessons in order to identify and share the very best practice, strive for improvement and build on the school's many successes.

48. The provision for special educational needs is very good because of the very good management and leadership by a hard working and committed special educational needs co-ordinator (Senco) In turn she is well supported by class teachers, as they are fully involved in the writing of individual education plans. The special support assistants, outreach workers and voluntary helpers, as well as dedicated parental involvement, also give good support. All of these people are equally committed to giving pupils as much support as possible to help them do well at school. Most of the classroom support staff have undertaken additional training and this positively enhances the quality of support provided both in the classroom and around the school. The Senco ensures that the individual education plans are comprehensively documented with accurate assessment of specific needs. Documentation is very well managed in terms of directly supporting, assessing and reviewing pupils' progress in the classroom.

49. The school has very clear and detailed equal opportunities policy statements. The aims and values of the schools fully embrace social and educational inclusion. Every pupil's unique qualities are valued. There is a very strong commitment to providing all pupils with equal access to the school's activities. This is achieved by very capable leadership, which has put in place effective review processes to ensure that the needs of all pupils are well provided for.

50. Governors are also well drawn into the management of the school. They have adopted the right priorities for the school at the right time. These centre on raising standards particularly in English, mathematics and science. They are provided with good information by the headteacher through regular reports and grasp the ever-increasing demands made of them willingly. They consider a wide range of indicators, such as standards and the quality of teaching and resulting progress, to measure whether the school stands good comparison to similar schools elsewhere. For example, governors have decided to deploy additional support staff to assist learning and this is having beneficial impact on the good and often very good progress being made by pupils with special educational needs. However, the school is aware of the need to encourage greater participation in monitoring the success of the special needs policy and for governors to play a more active part in financial aspects related to the special educational needs budget.

51. The deployment of resources to provide additional literacy support for pupils in Year 3 and 4 to help combat assessed under-achievement is money well targeted and spent. Governors have sound insights into what the school does well and what could be improved, and are increasingly using data to assist them to make sure that the principles of best value are applied well in school.

52. Since the 1998 inspection, managers have improved the process of measuring the school's own performance and taking effective action to bring advancement. Comprehensive data is collected, particularly on standards, analysed thoroughly, and used to set finely tuned targets for various groups and classes. These targets for achievement are rigorous, tracked carefully and usually matched by the pupils, who achieve well. Of more recent development are the individual targets set for all pupils. Few teachers use targets to support their assessment of learning in lessons or in recorded work. The headteacher is aware that a more systematic approach to target setting at the lesson and pupil level will support the tracking and review of whole-school targets with even better focus. Key managers have good working knowledge of the process of checking for improvement, and other staff are ready to be drawn more into this process in order to maximise results. A shared strength of all staff is the commitment not just to high standards but also to a calm, friendly, supportive, yet purposeful school ethos. Staff and governors are as much concerned for the development of all pupils into mature, sensible and pleasant young people. The visitor to school is immediately impressed by the stimulating and attractive environment that promotes a warm and friendly atmosphere.

53. Managers and staff use the available finance very well in the best interests of the pupils. School improvement is targeted properly by the school development plan and this is used well to measure subsequent success. All funds, including those designated for particular use, such as supporting pupils with special educational needs or boosting standards of literacy, are used very well. Such spending achieves its intention. A key strength of the school is its staff. They are all, teaching, non-teaching, administrative, catering and cleaning staff alike, committed to the school and put the pupils first. Because this is the case, pupils have highly effective lessons and they enjoy very good chances to succeed.

54. It is evident that the school has moved well ahead since the 1998 inspection. Managers know there are a number of things that remain for improvement. These include continuing to raise standards in English, mathematics and ICT to make them the best they can be, to establish Curriculum 2000 fully, to continue to improve the school grounds, extend links with parents and introduce Performance Management successfully. The sense of shared approach to these challenges is very good and the school can celebrate its many strengths as it moves successfully towards future improvement.

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

55. Many advances have been made in school during the last four years and standards, teaching and learning have all improved. School management has been overhauled and, because of the headteacher's excellent leadership, the school no longer has serious weaknesses. Nonetheless, there are still a number of things to do to ensure that standards are totally A grade. School managers recognise that the things identified below will move them further forward, and have already incorporated most of them into the school development plan. Because the resolve to do even better is very good in school, Casterton Primary School has a bright future.

To assist the process of improvement, the team in school should:

- **Continue to raise standards in English and some aspects of mathematics and ICT**

**by the end of school.**

By:

Giving greater emphasis to the development of speaking skills from day one in school to the end of Year 6.

Developing writing even more so that by the end of school pupils write expressively as well as at length.

Emphasising the basic rule structure of grammar and standard English in the teaching of speaking and writing across the curriculum.

Encouraging the good development of pupils' thinking skills and problem solving in mathematics.

Planning time and opportunities to refine and practice skills in the communication aspect of ICT.

(See paragraphs 5, 18, 25, 57, 67, 69, 70, 78, 81, 84, 92, 108, 117 and 119).

- **Work to boost levels of attendance**

By

Actively promoting good attendance

Giving a *sharp start* to the school day

Eliminating time slippage throughout the day

Enhancing the procedures to monitor absence and track what lost time may mean for progress

(See paragraphs 16, 18, 25 and 35).

- **Give pupils even more responsibility for their own learning**

By

Sharpening the identification in planning of the knowledge, skills and understanding to be learned in lessons

Ensuring that the balance of lessons give time for independence to flourish.

Linking the already very good system of target setting more to the marking of work, so that it shows pupils ways to improve their own work

Giving pupils greater opportunities to assess and review their own work.

Allowing them to make their own choices of materials, methods and recording the work more frequently as they move through the school.

(See paragraphs 15, 18, 20, 21, 26, 33, 36, 80, 81, 94, 108, 114, 115, 120 and 139).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	26	52	19	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	281
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	69

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	38

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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	22	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	19	20	19
	Total	39	41	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (79)	95 (83)	93 (90)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	20
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	39	40	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (83)	93 (90)	91 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	15	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	15
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	27	28	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (59)	76 (72)	89 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	15
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	25	27	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (55)	73 (60)	89 (74)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	4
Pakistani	18
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	215
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	31.2

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

Total number of education support staff	12.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	208

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	444 652
Total expenditure	475 174
Expenditure per pupil	1 628
Balance brought forward from previous year	104 302
Balance carried forward to next year	73 780

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	281
Number of questionnaires returned	92

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	34	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	37	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	40	7	2	0
The teaching is good.	68	28	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	36	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	24	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	32	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	60	35	2	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	70	26	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	35	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	36	7	4	4

## **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**

56. There have been considerable improvements to the provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection when the quality of organised play was unsatisfactory. The newly established 'Play Room' with its many planned activities from gymnasium to 'café' is very well organised. The overall good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning.

57. Many children enter the reception classes with below average skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal independence. This is confirmed by the initial assessments undertaken during the first few weeks in the reception class. By the time children are ready to start Year 1, most achieve well and reach their early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematics, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. This is due to the good and sometimes very good teaching in all three areas of learning.

58. Teaching and classroom support staff work very well together in developing routines for example, a lesson observed in a Year R/1 class related to using 'senses'. The challenging questions and relationships enhanced learning at a good level for all children during a very practical food tasting session. Regular observations of children undertaking group activities in the Play Room ensure that children undertaking a specific activity successfully meet developing needs in language development. Planning is of high quality and very good overall, recording the development of skills to support future planning. The quality of written reports to parents is excellent as they give very clear details of what has been learned and how the work can be improved in the future. Children with special educational needs are very well supported and make very good progress against prior levels of learning.

#### ***Personal, social and emotional development***

59. Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time children leave the reception classes they are exceeding the early learning goals in this area. Children are encouraged to co-operate well with each other in their work and play. They display developing perseverance and concentration when listening to a story or observing the newly hatched chicks. Teachers have high expectations of very good behaviour which are constantly reinforced and supported by very positive praise. All children understand what is right and wrong and happily accept the class rules. Children's developing social development is underpinned by 'milk time'. All children drink their milk quickly and quietly without any fuss, saying 'excuse me' as they pass other children sitting on the carpet. Staff have good expectations that children clear away after activities in a very orderly, controlled manner. All adults provide good role models for the children, always treating each other and other children with high levels of respect and sensitivity.

#### ***Communication, language and literacy***

60. A very high priority is given to language and literacy skills and children make good and sometimes very good progress. In both reception classes children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with each other and visiting adults. Planned and spontaneous discussions encourage children to talk about their daily experiences. Children know their way around the 'Big Book' and can describe the front cover and what they see. However, the quality and range of spoken language observed is below average when compared with children of a similar age. Children enjoy listening to sounds for example, a tape recording of animal sounds and matching these to the animal illustration. Elements of the literacy strategy are well used by teachers in both reception classes. A good understanding of word sounds is

developed through effective word and sentence work linked to well-known stories and rhymes. Most children know that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. They show this, for example, during the shared reading of 'Humpty Dumpty'. Many children know who an author is, what the title of a book is and that an illustrator draws pictures. By the end of the reception year, most children are achieving the early learning goals in reading. Most children move from random mark making to the use of familiar letters and words to communicate their ideas and thoughts in simple three word sentences. In the reception classes books and a range of reading material are very well displayed to help children appreciate words and their meanings.

### ***Mathematical development***

61. This area is well taught and by the end of the reception year most children will have exceeded their early learning goals for mathematics. All children in the reception classes can count to ten and many can count well beyond to twenty without hesitation. Having counted to ten, most children can show the required number of fingers to match the given number. Children confidently count how many can get on a bus and are beginning to understand that two and two more is four. Children develop their mathematical vocabulary well for example, when describing the shape of a musical instrument. Most children compare longest and shortest with good understanding. Children confidently compare collected information relating to eye colour and the least used method of transport. Children are actively encouraged to link work in mathematics to every day events. For example, in the baking of gingerbread men – the selection of ingredients, the cost, the weighing, the cooking temperature, the change in the mixture from wet to dry and the final preparation of shapes.

### ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

62. A range of well-planned interesting topics supports children to make good progress in developing knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Children understand the use of a variety of information sources such as books, television and computer. Many, with good adult support, are developing confident control over the mouse, the use of the arrow keys and the match of upper and lower case letters to locate hidden objects. Children observe the hatching of eggs and the need for newly born chicks to receive light, warmth, food and water. Other planned activities include the use of photographs to establish changes that have taken place since they were babies in relation to size and features. In the reception class children have a good awareness of where they live and the school grounds. Children talk about what they like about their school and the newly established play area. They are aware of different materials and that not all metal objects are magnetic.

### ***Physical development***

63. The imaginative development of the outdoor play area for reception children has a positive impact on the good development of their physical skills. During a movement lesson indoors, children changed themselves quickly, placing clothes neatly on the table. They walked to the hall in a very orderly manner, showing very good behaviour. Once inside the school hall, children displayed a confident range of movements using hands, feet and space well. Teachers make very good use of language to encourage a range of skills. In the Play Room the gymnasium provides a range of activities. Children show awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. Teachers also teach skills such as cutting and weaving to help children gain safe control of finer movements for example, the majority of children use scissors safely to cut out illustrations to match corresponding sounds.

### ***Creative development***

64. The enthusiasm of the adults in a variety of play situations for example, from the opticians to the café makes a very strong contribution to children's learning and enables them to make good progress. Children use a range of very good resources with great imagination and skill. They are able to sustain character for a long time in the newly created café. They talk about how it could be improved further. This creative ability is sustained very well by supporting adults. Children are aware of and able to identify confidently long and short sounds and, when clapping to a well-known tune, can clap to a steady beat. They create a range of interesting pictures using a wide range of materials and manufacture Diwali lamps, carefully decorating them with a range of colours. In all, the children complete the stepping stones leading to the early learning goals for creative development. However, the development of painting skills is at present underdeveloped as very limited opportunity is given for children to mix their own colours.

### **ENGLISH**

65. The school has developed some very effective strategies for literacy and as a result pupils make very good progress in English. Standards are much improved in the infants and are rising in the juniors. This demonstrates good progress since the last inspection, and is directly attributable to the good quality of teaching and the impact of very good subject management.

66. Since 1998, standards in SATs at Casterton Primary School have improved at the same rate as those nationally. However, in 2000 pupils at the end of Year 6 attained standards that were below the average for all schools though they were a significant improvement over standards reached by the school during the years 1998 to 1999. When compared with similar schools standards were average.

67. Attainment in speaking and listening on entry to school is below average, but by the end of Year 2 pupils have made good progress and developed average skills in speaking but above average listening skills. This is very evident in lessons when pupils listen attentively and respond positively to questions from the teacher in lessons across the curriculum. They speak confidently in class and are eager to contribute to classroom discussions about their personal experiences, learning or feelings. However, junior pupils have a limited range of vocabulary and do not often use standard forms of spoken English. However, listening skills are well developed and are above average, and this has a positive effect upon pupils' learning.

68. Attainment in reading is in line with national averages at the age of seven and eleven. Generally, pupils read fluently and with confidence, expression and understanding. They read with obvious enjoyment and their reading covers a wide variety of texts in addition to those of the school's chosen reading scheme, including fiction, poetry, non-fiction and plays. Younger pupils show good skills when meeting unfamiliar words and using both meaning and picture clues to help them with the text. They are able to self-correct when they make errors. Older pupils are able to express opinions about their books and can make predictions of the outcome of the story line. They have a very good knowledge of author, illustrator, publisher, and understand and use contents, index, and glossary. They read with expression paying attention to full stops, question marks and inverted commas. Pupils are heard read frequently in school and are generally well supported by parents using the Home Reading arrangements. For the smaller number of pupils who receive little support at home the school identifies them for additional attention by support staff before school starts or during registration, and this is impacting well upon their progress. Older pupils successfully use the reading skills of skimming and scanning to find particular references in their books. They talk well about characterisation and theme, read with expression that conveys the full meaning of

the text, and silently at speed with understanding. Following visits by librarians from the local public library pupils in the juniors are able to use the non-fiction section of the school library using the Dewey system to research classroom topics for themselves.

69. Pupils achieve standards in writing at the end of Year 2 that are in line with national averages, but are below average at the end of Year 6. In Year 2 pupils have started to develop a good style of handwriting that is beginning to be joined. Most sentences well punctuated with full stops and capital letters, and the higher attaining pupils are starting to use commas. Pupils write clearly about their own experiences and stories showing the sequence of events. Opportunities are provided for them to develop their writing in different forms such as recipes, poetry, lists and instructions. Spelling is generally accurate but there are some errors in the spelling of the more complex letter combinations. Lower attainers have made progress from copy-writing to writing their own words and short sentences unaided. Their letter formation has improved and clear letters are being formed. They can spell simple words and put them into simple sentences.

70. Generally by Year 6 work is of a good standard with good progress being made. High attaining pupils have developed a good level of written work including different forms, and they write in a neat joined style. Work is written in paragraphs with complex sentences and is accurately punctuated. Opportunities have been provided for them to extend their writing through summaries, evaluations and reports on visitors to school during Science Week. Evidence shows that pupils draft, edit and redraft and their final version is of good quality and neatly presented. Average attainers cover the same range of work but without the same level of accuracy of spelling, punctuation and handwriting. The quality of work is much lower but presentation is improved after redrafting has taken place. The lower attainers have a readable style of handwriting, but they often make spelling errors and inconsistent use of punctuation. There is little evidence of the use of complex sentences or of extended vocabulary in their writing. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress in all areas of English.

71. Pupils are very well behaved, enjoy coming to school and very good relationships exist between the teaching staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves. In class pupils listen attentively, for example, when the class teacher is reading the text, they maintain interest throughout the lesson and respond well to their teacher's questioning. They are able to concentrate when working independently, and work well co-operatively in group activities. During the literacy hours pupils are eager to share their opinions on the meaning of the poem they are using as a shared text, and to talk about their own experiences in relation to it. For example, when the wind is blowing hard at night how the noise it makes can be quite frightening, and they are then able to suggest a list of alternative verbs for *blowing*, including words like *moaning*, *whining* or *howling*. Boys and girls demonstrate equal interest in the subject and show very positive attitudes to learning.

72. Throughout the school the quality of teaching of English is very good, and this is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection in 1998. The National Literacy Strategy is very well taught; teachers know the material well, and employ effective strategies to aid pupils' learning. Teachers are confident in their teaching skills and plan their lessons well with clear learning objectives that they share with pupils at the start of each lesson and revisit during the plenary. The use of target setting clearly focuses on what the teachers are teaching and what pupils know they have to learn. There are whole school targets for writing and this is having a positive effect upon improving pupils' learning. The basic skills of English are taught well, and there is good support for those pupils with special educational needs from the non-teaching staff. Time is well used and every minute of the lesson is put to good use for checking spelling and vocabulary, or to develop speaking and listening at the end of lessons. Teachers use different strategies to bring the text alive to aid pupils' understanding.

For example, when Year 6 pupils were reading *Macbeth* the teacher assumed the voice of a witch. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher used a rap to introduce the sounds made by the letter *d*. The school policy on marking is very effectively used in this subject to praise effort and then to identify what needs to be done next to improve the work. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also taught well and given opportunities to develop and improve their language skills alongside the other pupils in their class.

73. Since there is a whole school target for the development of writing, opportunities to extend and develop writing skills are provided across the curriculum. The school is a language rich environment with opportunities to develop vocabulary appropriate to other subjects. To this end the school has created Casterton Gym where pupils can extend and develop language skills through dramatic play. All pupils use word-processing to present and develop their written work. The school has a fiction library with a range of good quality books for pupils of all ages and a collection of stories on tape with a bank of headphones is useful for allowing younger pupils the opportunity to select and listen to stories independently. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their research skills in the non-fiction library.

74. Teachers use good questioning skills to identify what has been learned in lessons. They also identify the effectiveness of skill development in their evaluation of lesson plans. This aids planning for subsequent lessons well. More formal assessment is in place to identify pupils who are underachieving, and allows specific targets to be set to enable them to achieve their true potential. This is very good practice. Non-statutory SATs are used to track pupils' progress and test results are analysed to inform future planning and to enable the school to set targets. This is having an extremely positive impact on standards and is ensuring the likely long-term success of the school as the improvement moves through the all year groups.

75. The subject is very well managed and is having a very positive impact upon standards throughout the school. The co-ordinator has ensured that all staff are trained and competent in teaching literacy, she regularly monitors the quality of their teaching and provides support and training for her colleagues where it is identified. Test data is analysed in both reading and writing and targets are set. The senior management team monitor pupils' work and marking twice a year. The planning and focus given to the subject by the senior management team and the school improvement plan are instrumental in moving the school forward to a successful future. Corporate and careful planning ensures the match of teaching to the needs and abilities of the pupils, and learning is continuous between all year groups. The subject has been well resourced with considerable investment over the last two years in new fiction and non-fiction books for the library and classrooms, sets of shared reading texts to support the Literacy Hour, and support for Additional Literacy training. The school is now well placed to meet the government's literacy targets in 2002.

## **MATHEMATICS**

76. Attainment in SATs in the year 2000 was well above national averages at the end of Year 2 and in line with national averages at the end of Year 6. These results indicate that the school is performing very well when compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. The school also had a good proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 and level 5 when compared to schools nationally. Since the time of the previous inspection, when attainment and progress were judged to be satisfactory, the picture is one of continuous improvement.

77. The judgement of the inspection is that standards at the end of the infants are above national averages, and broadly in line with national averages at the end of the juniors. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, due to the effective way in which the school monitors pupil performance, the quality of the teaching and the imaginative implementation of

the National Numeracy Strategy. Given that these improvements have taken place over the last two years, it is not surprising that the effect has been seen more quickly in the infant classes. If the school maintains this level of progress it will soon be reflected by improved attainment at the end of the juniors.

78. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good throughout the school, with no unsatisfactory lessons. Of the nine lessons seen, three were good, four very good and one was judged to be excellent. This is a very positive picture and clearly makes a key contribution to the progress made by pupils and the improvement in standards. All teachers have high expectations, both of the way pupils respond and their ability to think mathematically. They make good use of mathematical vocabulary, which is often forms part of the 'maths corner' in each classroom. More use could be made of mathematical challenges and games to be solved by individual pupils in these areas, and displays do not contain much pupils' work.

79. The mental and oral sessions introducing each numeracy lesson are well taught, with teachers using a variety of methods and approaches. This helps to keep pupils alert and interested, as does the emphasis on pace and quick responses. The targets for the weeks' lessons are both displayed and referred to so that pupils know what they are learning. Teachers ask good, open-ended questions to make pupils think. Wrong answers are not dismissed, but for example in a Year 5 lesson were used to help pupils see the difference between tenths and hundredths in decimals. The strategies pupils use to find their answers are often discussed, notably in a Year 1/2 lesson where pupils were asking questions to find the number the teacher was thinking of, and beginning to realise that an answer of 'no' can be as informative as 'yes'.

80. Main teaching activities are well planned from the appropriate part of the numeracy strategy, although at times the lesson objectives are a little vague, tending to lack distinction between what is to be taught and what pupils are expected to learn. Where they are clear it is easier for teachers to focus on them at the end of the lesson and discuss with the pupils what they have learned. Teachers have a good level of knowledge and understanding, shown both by the vocabulary they use and the questions they ask. Their high expectations are matched by the enthusiasm and interest of the great majority of pupils, and as a result lessons are enjoyable and productive.

81. Teachers plan together wherever possible, and particularly where they both teach pupils who are in the same age group. They make good use of assessment during lessons to adjust demands or offer support where it is needed. There is also evidence of good analysis of more formal assessments, as when teachers of Year 2 pupils spot that any pupils are having difficulty with addition set out in a particular way and adjust their teaching programme to reinforce understanding. Lessons are regularly evaluated to judge how successful they are, and to look for ways of improving the teaching and learning. However they do not often contain planned assessment opportunities, which would also help to ensure that learning objectives are sharply defined. Teachers choose and use mathematical resources thoughtfully, and pupils treat them with care.

82. Pupils are very well managed and positive relationships make a strong contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of gentle humour, as when in a Year 4/5 lesson pupils were asked to give an example of an unlikely occurrence in a lesson on probability. The boy who put his hand up and said, "May I go to the toilet?" may not have been answering the question but it certainly helped to fix the concept in the pupils' minds!

83. Homework is used effectively and is linked with the pupils' current learning. This was seen with pupils in a Year 2 class, who were asked to look for the highest house number they

could find on the way home. This was to be used in their learning the following day, and with pupils in Year 6 who were given a practical task relating to mass which consolidated the knowledge gained in the lesson.

84. Good use is made of support staff, as well as the occasional parent helper. Non-teaching staff are aware of the teacher's intentions and provide a lot of help, especially to pupils with special educational needs, as well as those who find aspects of mathematics challenging. In their choice of tasks and resources teachers make good provision for pupils of differing ability, including the more able. Pupils with English as an additional language are able to work at the level of their mathematical ability. As a result pupils of all abilities make good progress, and are able to discuss and explain what they are doing with confidence. While pupils are encouraged to think why certain things happen, and to look for patterns which will help their understanding, most tasks are set and organised by the teacher. Higher attaining pupils in particular would benefit from occasional opportunities to decide on their own methods when solving problems.

85. There is evidence of mathematics being used in other areas of the curriculum, such as graphs of rainfall in geography, or the use of spreadsheets in information control and technology. At present this is largely incidental. Careful planning of these opportunities would reinforce pupils' knowledge by giving them the opportunity to apply their skills in a practical and meaningful way, as well as broadening their understanding.

86. The work of the previous co-ordinator gives mathematics a very strong base, which her two recently appointed successors are enthusiastic to develop. They monitor the subject through looking at planning and pupils' books, as well as observing lessons. While both teach in infant classes, they demonstrate good understanding of mathematics across the school. The analysis of results, which the school undertakes effectively, highlights areas of relative under-achievement, whether in aspects of mathematical understanding or by certain cohorts of pupils, and leads to swift and positive intervention.

## **SCIENCE**

87. In the 2000 SATs for eleven-year-old pupils, results were above average when compared with all schools and well above average compared with similar schools. Most pupils achieved the target level for their age (level 4) and a good proportion achieved the higher level 5. Standards have continued to rise over the last five years and a significantly higher proportion of pupils achieved Level 5 in 2000 than in 1999. The teacher assessments of Year 2 pupils last year show that they achieved average standards. Overall, science standards are much better than they were.

88. Raising standards in science was a key issue for action in the previous inspection report and it has been achieved. The improvement is most marked in Year 6 where standards were described as below national averages. They are now above. Standards have improved at a similar rate to those nationally. This rise in standards is due to the high quality of teaching, improved planning to support teachers' subject knowledge and the use of regular checks on pupils' progress indicating what needs to be taught next.

89. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 about their work clearly showed that their knowledge and understanding of science, and the development and application of science skills are average.

90. Pupils make very good progress in most aspects of science through the school, other than the understanding of physical processes where it is not quite as strong. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve appropriate levels. They receive good quality support from classroom assistants and other pupils in the class. During the inspection no discernible difference in the progress of girls and boys was observed. However, the lower ability groups usually contained a higher proportion of boys.

91. The amount of time provided for investigative and experimental science is high. This results in pupils having a good understanding of how to turn ideas into a form that can be investigated; how to make hypotheses and predictions; how to devise a fair test; what equipment will be needed; and how the evidence will be collected. Tasks are aimed successfully at developing pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills in this area of the science curriculum. For example, in Year 2 pupils explore the qualities of various materials. They are aware that heating, bending and twisting can change some materials. Year 3 pupils, through their work on the school environment, have a basic understanding of materials used in school to undertake certain jobs. Year 4 and Year 5 pupils enjoy their science investigations. In their work on electricity, pupils observe that the use of an additional bulb in a simple electrical circuit reduces the brightness of the bulbs and that with increased battery power the brightness is increased. They talk enthusiastically about this work and show good understanding of conductors and insulators. Year 5 and 6 pupils have a very good understanding of a fair test. When engaged in an investigation into the dissolving of sugar in water and the effects of heat to speed up the process, Year 6 pupils talked knowledgeably about solutions, evaporation, condensation and filtering as they applied their knowledge competently to the problem set them by a very confident class teacher.

92. Because the attainment in writing of a significant proportion of pupils in most classes is below that normally expected, a strength of the subject is the emphasis the school places on discussions at the start and end of lessons supported by the use of appropriate scientific vocabulary. However, many tasks use a similar format and this limits pupils' opportunities to develop their own methods of recording science experiments.

93. All pupils enjoy science. They have very positive attitudes to lessons and work very effectively in groups and can discuss the subject with growing confidence. For example, a group of brighter pupils in Year 6 working outside the classroom to undertake a range of scientific enquiry confidently without direct teacher supervision. When given the opportunity to take responsibility for collecting their resources and planning their work they do so very sensibly. Behaviour is very good across the school. Pupils take pride in their work and the quality of presentation throughout the school is good.

94. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good teaching observed several classes. There is good, detailed planning and the very effective use of questioning to reinforce, extend and challenge pupils' knowledge. A particularly good example of this was in the Year 2 class during the end of the lesson where pupils discussed the difference between various materials, the fairness of their tests and the changes observed. Teachers use a very good and effective range of techniques to manage pupils very well. Teachers have high expectations, their planning is good overall because learning targets and the range of pupils' abilities are taken into account. However, some planning is not specific enough in identifying what is to be learned. Marking gives praise to individuals and the very best examples inform them how to improve their work, though this could be more consistent. There are very effective ongoing checks on pupils' progress which inform day to day planning. Records are well kept and this works effectively to ensure that future learning builds on previously learnt skills including the development of pupils' investigation skills.

95. The science curriculum is broad and well balanced. The strong emphasis placed on investigation work is well linked to other subjects. The very well organised 'Science Week' recently held in school which incorporated a full range of science activities underpins very successfully the shared commitment to raise standards in science higher. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator who has identified weaknesses and has developed a clear and detailed scheme of work based on guidelines. The science co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and understanding, is enthusiastic and presents her lessons with considerable skill to ensure pupils make good progress and that they enjoy the sessions. Resources are of good quality, easily accessible and used very effectively to capture and hold pupils' interest.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

96. Art and design has had a lower profile in recent years because of the school's focus on literacy and numeracy. Despite this, the school has made satisfactory improvement to the subject since 1998 and standards overall are in line with national expectations by the age of seven and eleven. All pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.

97. Much of the work seen in school, in both classrooms and circulation areas, is well presented and of good quality. The focus is mainly on large pieces of work produced by groups of pupils, with individuals contributing to the overall effect. Within this there are attractive collages and mosaics, but few examples of individual work. Year 6 pupils paint portraits of the staff, working from photographs. Paintings of 'our garden' by pupils in a Year 3/4 class are linked to the school's work to improve the grounds. In Year 2, pupils make good use of a computer program to draw 'monsters', using book illustrations as an example.

98. Photographs of previous displays in school show that pupils have produced their own pictures in the style of artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh. Good use has also been made of a computer program to enable pupils to print work following the example of Mondrian. However, pupils spoken to showed limited knowledge and understanding of such artists or how they work. Pupils in Year 2 cannot name any famous artists, while Year 6 pupils only offered Monet, although they explained with some clarity the difference between a painting and a photograph.

99. Pupils appear to have a limited experience of three-dimensional work. They use sketch books, both to practise design ideas and to experiment with techniques, and Year 6 pupils explain this well. However the contents of the books seen are limited, and they do not seem to be used with any great consistency or planned overall purpose.

100. Too few lessons were seen to comment on the standard of teaching overall, although both were satisfactory, and the quality of work seen indicates there are strengths both in teaching and pupils' responses. The co-ordinator is both experienced and enthusiastic, and is aware of relative weaknesses such as drawing skills and the use of sketch books.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. It was only possible to see one lesson in design and technology during the inspection. Talking to pupils, teachers and the co-ordinator, as well as looking at teacher's planning, pupils' work and classroom displays, indicates that attainment matches the national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. The school has improved design and technology soundly during the period since the previous inspection. Pupils have experience in designing, making and evaluating and work with a range of materials and methods, although this could be extended: for example more use of wood and pneumatics. All pupils make satisfactory progress. They have opportunities to make a choice of materials and methods, and as they get older are encouraged to find their own design solutions so that their tasks remain practical.

102. In the one lesson seen, with Year 6 pupils, their enthusiasm was not matched by their confidence and, for some, level of skill. This reflects the school's commitment to the teaching of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, which for the past two years has reduced the focus on teaching some other subjects. Literacy and numeracy skills are appropriately used in design and technology, for example when measuring materials, labelling designs or evaluating the success of pupils' constructions. It is the school's intention to give a higher priority to design and technology in the future, and to this end the school is using the new national guidelines as a basis for its planning. A planned focus on the consistent development of pupils' skills as they move through the school is entirely appropriate and needs to be a priority.

103. Younger pupils in the infants practise weaving with both card and wool, learning how to make and use a simple loom. As pupils in different classes have undertaken this work, it is possible to see progress being made as they get older, particularly in the level of skill demonstrated. By Year 2 pupils produce their version of Joseph's 'dream coat', where a very effective display shows not only the design process and the finished article, but also experimentation with colours, patterns and materials. In addition, they evaluate through practical tasks the effectiveness of different methods of joining materials.

104. In Years 3 and 4 pupils produce attractive 'papier-mâché' bowls made from layers of different coloured tissue. Again at the design stage there is evidence of pupils trying to develop different textures and experimenting with the overlay of different colours to see if the effect is the one they want. In Year 6 pupils making a pair of slippers for Christmas draw their design after considering the construction of real slippers, testing different possible materials for important qualities such as insulation and strength, and deciding what style would be appropriate for the end user.

105. The co-ordinator is experienced, enthusiastic and well informed. She is aware that design and technology needs to be developed in order to ensure standards in the subject match the best found in other subjects in school. She has made an effective start with ways to tackle this. Resources are sufficient, although the lack of an area equipped with benches restricts some techniques such as sawing.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall. This is a good improvement when compared with the previous inspection when learning was judged unsatisfactory at the end of the juniors. During the last two years staff have undertaken additional training, national guidelines have been introduced to support progression of learning and the quality of teaching has improved.

107. In Year 2 pupils develop a good knowledge through the drawing of simple maps of their route to school. They learn about the jobs of people who help in the locality and collect information for traffic and car parking surveys.

108. In Year 3 pupils gain good understanding of village life in India and how children adapt to their environment. Pupils satisfactorily develop mapping skills through locating areas on a large map of the world on the classroom wall, confidently locating England, America and Australia. In Year 4 pupils locate features of a village on a map using a range of symbols and a key. They demonstrate good local knowledge about the area in which they live. Pupils recognise that map symbols give them information on what the maps are telling them about village features. They realise that the more trees there are, the greater the likelihood of a forest and the more homes, the bigger the village. In Year 6 pupils extend their knowledge of the locality through the study of river systems, and learn about the influence of geographical features such as climate on land use and economic activity. Pupils use mathematical skills well to present findings about traffic flow and use co-ordinates relating to mapping skills. However, throughout the school, pupils do not consistently focus and develop their writing skills through work of an independent nature. By the end of Year 6 pupils know the names of continents and many countries within them and can talk knowledgeably about different regions of the world and how climatic conditions affect people.

109. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of very good and excellent teaching observed in several lessons. Where teaching is most effective, such as in a Year 2 lesson about the location of school crossing patrols, the purpose of the activity is clearly explained, challenging questions promote very good learning and expectations of the pupils' contributions to learning are very high. They are positively encouraged to work together and present their views to the class in a confident manner. Teaching is less effective where lesson targets are unclear, tasks such as completing a worksheet by copying or colouring require little thought and pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to manage aspects of work for themselves. Teachers throughout the school have good subject knowledge and prepare a range of varied and interesting activities to stimulate pupils' excitement and thinking.

110. Leadership of the subject is good. Teachers are well supported with a suitable framework for planning. Assessment of pupils' progress is developing and, though the co-ordinator has an accurate picture of what is happening, she has insufficient knowledge of standards in each aspect in every year group. There is appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. There are good links with other subjects to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills for example, the scaled drawing of a headland in Year 6 which has been linked to climate and weather. The development of ICT skills is at present unsystematic and unsatisfactory in its support of geographical skills. Presentation of pupils' work is good and their work folders successfully celebrate the rising standards throughout

the school. The school has a satisfactory range of resources and project material that are in good condition and easily accessible to support the subject. There are good opportunities for pupils to gain first hand experiences of different environments through the use of the school's attractive grounds and the variety of well-planned educational visits the school provides.

## **HISTORY**

111. Pupils have the expected level of knowledge, skill and understanding at the age of seven and eleven and satisfactory standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

112. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a sound understanding of life now and in the past. They sequence events in their own and their friends' lives in chronological order. They look at artefacts and discuss the many changes that have taken place. Pupils learn about the changing aspects of their local area and its many famous historic buildings. Pupils have a sound knowledge about the lives of famous people including a range of well-known scientists and their many discoveries.

113. Pupils in upper junior classes discuss life in ancient Greece. They are aware of the historical significance of pictures illustrating ancient civilisations, the visual appearances of buildings inside and out, and the effect of erosion on some buildings. They recognise the importance of surveying the artefacts in interpreting the period and learn that Greek civilisation leaves an important legacy for example, as seen in the recent Olympic Games. In Year 6 pupils are confident in discussing their work and the historical periods they have studied using appropriate dates and correct historical terminology. They are confident in explaining important facts relating to life in Britain before and after the Second World War and the development of the European community.

114. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and most listen carefully to their teachers. Behaviour is very good and this promotes a hard working atmosphere. Pupils make good use of reference material provided. However, open access to the school library by Year 6 pupils to gain additional evidence is restricted by the location of the library because their classroom is situated outside the main building. A strength of the subject is the way pupils co-operate and listen sensitively to each other's contribution. However, independent study for the brightest pupils is not well planned to support individual historical enquiry and is at present unsatisfactory. There is an overuse of worksheets that simply require the insertion of appropriate words in the blank spaces or the colouring in of printed outlines.

115. Overall the preparation of lessons is good. Many teachers have an enthusiasm for the subject and a good local knowledge. Recently the school has introduced units of work from nationally produced material. This is giving some structure to the curriculum. The school has not, however, analysed how content can help pupils acquire specific skills in a structured way as they move up the school. Teachers' planning is good, but in many lessons all pupils are given the same task, so that the brightest pupils do not work at appropriate levels. Very good use is made of planned educational visits to the 'Weavers' Triangle' and into the centre of Burnley to enhance pupils' first hand experience.

116. Leadership of the subject is sound. The subject co-ordinator has reviewed achievement across the school including the monitoring of teaching. Resources are of good quality, accessible and appropriate.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

117. ICT is at the heart of much learning in school and is clearly a much-improved subject

since the previous inspection. To some degree, a ceiling is imposed on standards by shortage of resources, as explained below, but staff do not let this affect what they do to ensure pupils have enough opportunities to build knowledge and skills in the subject and so, teaching and learning are good.

118. Pupils attain respectable standards in ICT. They meet the expected level at the end of both the infants and the juniors and have a sound base level of knowledge, skills and understanding that will stand them in secure stead for secondary education. Strengths of achievement are to be seen in text, graphics and data processing. There is consistent and regular practice for all pupils from reception to the end of Year 6 and pupils have good command of the basic functions and features of word processor, spreadsheet, data base and graphics software. Some good work was seen in a Year 5 science lesson where pupils were using a probe and computer monitoring program to chart the trends in temperature as water was heated, or cooled. This enabled the pupils to suggest what might happen to the temperature profile when water freezes, rather than boils, as in the investigation they were pursuing. Such work illustrates clearly how ICT standards benefit from the strong cross-curricular use of computers to be found in school.

119. Standards in the communication element of the subject are weaker. There are limitations of resources that mean that pupils have not yet had enough access to the Internet to help them learn about ICT as a powerful and rapid means of communication. Also, at present, because single computers are to be found in each classroom, only a small number of pupils can use them at any one time. This means that essential skills and knowledge take time to establish, as there can be long periods between practice. This is set for redress when the school obtains the additional computers and software under the National Grid for Learning scheme. Management is already enjoying the challenge of planning the use of the existing accommodation in school to provide a learning centre of excellence to support and extend pupils' ICT capabilities.

120. Teaching of ICT has kept pace with the rapid changes made to technology in recent years. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they teach the subject confidently and set good expectations in the tasks provided and the pace of learning. Computers are used well to enhance learning in all classes and across the curriculum. Aspects of lesson planning (setting of clear objectives for learning) and marking might be more consistently good, but in general, the strengths of teaching contribute well to learning.

121. Pupils are keen users of computers and their prowess improves well as they move through the school. It was observed frequently by inspectors that, when working in pairs or on their own, pupils are sensible, mature and self-reliant learners. They work hard, produce a lot in lessons and build a sound platform of skills and knowledge from their low starting point when they start school. More than this, pupils are keen to share their successes with others, they are pleased for others when they excel and are proud of their own achievements. Learning is fun and it is enjoyed. This ensures that progress is good.

122. The catalogue of successes in ICT is in no small account due to the hard work and effectiveness of the co-ordinator and senior managers. The subject is very well managed and led and the priorities for the subject are well thought through and pursued tirelessly. The co-ordinator's bid to find the best use of the potentially valuable new computers and allied technology is very evident. The late availability of national funding has not stood in her way, and already the school has augmented its resources by the recent addition of a number of lap-top computers which are beginning to be used intensively for the benefit of the pupils. ICT has a clearly marked future and standards are set to rise given the potential of the drive and determination in school to succeed.

## **MUSIC**

123. Attainment in music is in line with national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and 6. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the previous inspection.

124. Younger pupils in the infants choose percussion instruments and can name many of them, showing familiarity with the different ways they can be played. They can distinguish between long and short sounds and repeat short musical patterns using different rhythms. Some are able to respond to different types of recorded music, recognising not only the speed but also the mood it creates. Older pupils in Year 2 talk confidently about playing instruments and singing, but have less experience of composing and recording music. Listening to music seems to be mainly limited to assemblies, although pupils are able to name composers such as Tchaikovsky, and name pieces of music including 'Nutcracker Suite' and 'Sugar Plum Fairy'.

125. Pupils in Year 4 work in groups to compose instrumental music to represent different animals, having listened to excerpts from 'Carnival of the animals' by Saint-Saens. They choose their own instruments from a selection of tuned and un-tuned percussion. Many show good levels of concentration, discussing and practising their ideas, although some are not very adept at playing their instrument. In one class pupils suggest sensible hand signals for their 'conductor' to use; in another some pupils decide to link their animal to a movement story which gives them the scope to alter the tempo of their music. Class teachers use appropriate musical terms such as 'tempo' and 'timbre', although these appear unfamiliar to the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to listen to each other's compositions and make constructive comments.

126. Pupils sing with enthusiasm in class lessons, infant song practice and the junior choir. They are encouraged to pay suitable attention to tone and phrasing and mainly sing in tune. The choir is open to all pupils in Years 3 to 6 and is taken by a parent. Considering rehearsals are mainly at break and lunch time there is an excellent response with over half the eligible pupils taking part, including a fair proportion of boys. The same parent takes groups of pupils to learn percussion, brass and keyboards, while there are visiting tutors for brass, woodwind and guitar. As a result all pupils have the opportunity to extend and broaden their musical education.

127. Teaching is at least sound, with two of the four lessons seen judged to be good. Lessons are planned to offer pupils plenty of 'hands on' experience, and as a result most pupils' learning is at least sound, with some making good progress. All pupils are offered the same opportunities, and pupils of differing abilities make similar progress, with teachers using interventions and questions to both check understanding and encourage original ideas. The good quality of pupil management and relationships mean that time is used productively.

128. The school has maintained breadth in the curriculum, and musical performances outside the timetable make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning in the subject. The co-ordinator is new to the post but is well informed and enthusiastic. She already has plans in place to develop resources, which at present are only just adequate, and is introducing planning that follows national guidelines.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

129. Since the previous inspection a new subject co-ordinator has been appointed and has overseen improvements to the outdoor facilities, acquired additional good quality equipment and small apparatus including mats, small bats and different sizes of balls. She has maintained the level of attainment recorded at the previous inspection in 1998 and replaced the original scheme of work and assessment procedures. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good in all lessons.

130. Standards of attainment are satisfactory and good progress is made in all classes. During the lessons, pupils in reception and Year 1 were able demonstrate ways of travelling on hands and feet safely along the floor, using the space available. Reception pupils grew in confidence during the lesson and were able to use the apparatus set up for Year 1 pupils. In Year 4/5 in a movement lesson pupils used simple choreographic principles to build up motifs and narrative. They showed some imaginative movements working together in groups of threes and fours skilfully producing a variety of different sequences using counts of eight, whilst keeping one body part fixed to the floor. In Year 6 pupils move with good control, are aware of space and use it fully to try to improve on their personal best. A positive feature of their work is demonstrated when volunteers take on the role of directing the activity. This approach helps to develop their leadership skills. They are creative in movement, curving in an orbital sequence, spinning on the spot, simulating weightlessness, and moving at different speeds and heights to give contrast. In swimming, by the end of school most pupils have achieved the school target of 50 metres which is twice the nationally expected level

131. Pupils have a very keen and enthusiastic attitude towards the subject. They find the subject interesting and challenging and work hard to reach a high standard. They listen well to instructions and behave responsibly when moving apparatus about the hall. Pupils are often required to work collaboratively, which they do well, and this assists in their personal development.

132. Teaching quality is good in physical education and this results in good learning. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. They deliver well-planned and developed lessons that move at a good pace. Teachers give clear instruction about the activity, and share the lesson objective with the class. In some cases as in a Year 4/5 lesson the teacher set a long-term target of development over the next few weeks, rewarded successful groups with praise, and expected a high quality response from pupils. She spoke to each group in turn to inform them of their progress. This approach ensured the class were focused on their task and achieved a good standard of performance.

133. The curriculum provides a balance of gymnastics, dance and games that are taught in blocks. Swimming is timetabled for junior classes at the local leisure centre. Opportunities occur for coaching in soccer and tennis when representatives of Burnley Football Club and the Lawn Tennis Association visit the school. Additional sporting involvement after school provides chances for pupils to participate in cross country running, netball and football, rounders and athletics usually in friendly sporting competition with local schools. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils get the chance to go to an outdoor adventure centre in Shropshire for a long week end during the summer term. Arrangements are in hand for the school to introduce national sports and play schemes next year to enhance the learning opportunities for the

pupils.

134. The co-ordinator is able to monitor the quality of lessons taught by her colleagues, and to offer help, advice and support to them. Effective assessment procedures are in place so that pupils' progress can be monitored carefully by their class teacher. Resources are well used to support learning. The co-ordinator is very effective in the job that she does. She supports colleagues and monitors teaching. She has ensured that an adequate scheme of work has been found to improve on what was being used at the time of the previous inspection. She has also organised an improved the supply of good quality resources for the school, and has seen improvements in the outdoor play facilities for the youngest pupils. The accommodation for physical education is adequate with a spacious hall and a hard-surfaced outdoor play area. The football pitch is problematic in that it becomes water logged very quickly when it rains. This has not improved since the previous inspection.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

135. Religious education makes a strong contribution to the life of the school. As a subject it is lively, well taught, enjoyed by pupils and staff alike and standards are good. This all marks good improvement since the previous inspection.

136. Because teaching is good, lessons are interesting, well motivating and pupils work hard. This ensures that they make good progress and over their time in school, pupils learn much about Christianity and other world religions. By the age of eleven they do not just know the facts but they understand and explain them well. Pupils in the infant classes are fascinated by the story of the nativity and they talk confidently about the differences between the birth of Jesus and how people celebrate birth today. The Year 1/2 class were exploring birth announcements in the local press and writing their own version to celebrate the birth of Jesus. They adapted the telegraphic style of the advertisement well to the facts about the nativity, and in so doing, extended their own literacy skills.

137. Because of the timing of the inspection, the focus of much of the religious education work observed in school was on Christmas. In Year 6, pupils were making advent rings and comparing the symbolism of the candles, holly, ribbon and other elements of the design to the symbolism found in other world religions. Strong links were made to celebrations of important events in different religious calendars, including Diwali, the Hindu festival of light. The pupils showed good knowledge of such joyful occasions and were able to talk about the spiritual significance of these times. The scrutiny of past work in religious education shows that such insights are developed well across the year and that pupils are encouraged to reflect on, and empathise with, people and events that have religious importance.

138. The two examples above of pupils' good learning also highlighted the very positive attitudes that pupils have towards the subject. They respond well, are very well behaved and they develop very supportive relationships with other pupils. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Highlights of this include the very firm multi-cultural dimension to the work and the sense of reflection and thoughtfulness that is to be found in lessons and assemblies.

139. Teachers do not fight shy of teaching religious education and show good subject knowledge, expectations and set a brisk pace in lessons. Teaching quality is good throughout the school because teachers bring the subject alive and set tasks that are meaningful, purposeful and enjoyable. Pupils want to learn about religious education and they do so with energy and determination. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are given good attention and support in lessons, and like the other pupils, they make good progress. Some challenging work is set for higher attaining pupils and their work in books shows how well they do. The quality of marking and the focus in planning on precisely what knowledge, skills and understanding are to be learned in lessons are two elements of teaching that could be more consistent. Despite these things, religious education is well taught and pupils advance their learning at a good rate.

140. It is evident from the successes seen, that religious education is a very well led and managed subject. The co-ordinator has a very firm grasp of the strengths and weaknesses and she drives the subject forward well. There has not yet been any direct monitoring of teaching and learning, though the school acknowledges that now is the time to introduce this. Overall, religious education has good status in school and pupils benefit well from their studies.